STAGED EVENTS IN THE CONDUCT OF ELITE PHILANTHROPY

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THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

MAY 2021

Abstract

Drawing on Bourdieusian and Goffmanian social theory, this thesis is the first exhaustive research on *staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy*. Other scholars, within different domains, have focused on specific types of events such as festivals and meetings, but no prior researcher has conducted a systematic, field-wide study of the nature and purpose of staged events and their role in the functioning, maintenance and development of the philanthropic field. Elite staged philanthropic events are regular social occurrences and in various ways are critical to the effective management and performance of the third sector. Following consideration of relevant literature and theoretical perspectives, the thesis examines in turn the context and frequency of different types of staged events, power and the performativity of elite philanthropic events, frontstage and backstage interactions in the conduct of staged events, and the processes involved in delivering them. In conclusion, I answer the focal research question framing the thesis: *what is the role of staged events in the functioning, maintenance and development of organizational fields?*

The empirical foundation of my thesis consists of eight in-depth case studies of high-profile staged philanthropic events within the UK, four addressing local audiences and four addressing national audiences. I observed 12 staged events in total (one case study involved multiple events), attended 15 related meetings, and conducted 41 semi-structured interviews with event managers, event owners, event sponsors, venue providers and event guests. I also collected internal and external documents relating to the organization and conduct of the events sponsored by my eight case study organizations. The data were coded and analysed iteratively using abductive reasoning to identify important themes and issues. These were explored and interpreted with reference to my theoretical schema to develop fresh insights regarding elite power and the performativity of staged events within the philanthropic field.

Little has been published on the role of staged events within the philanthropic field or indeed within any organizational field. My research contributes to the literature in five ways. First, I find that elite staged philanthropic events are a form of *performative agency* connecting *entities* with *processes*, *outcomes* with *experiences*. Secondly, I specify an elite philanthropic event as *a non-routine class reproducing structuring-structure* operating through performative interactions within the field of power. Thirdly, I develop *a dramaturgical perspective on staged events* by comparing and contrasting frontstage performances with backstage interactions. Fourthly, I contribute to the process literature by identifying five generic phases through which elite staged philanthropic events unfold as *conceiving*, *preparing*, *selling*, *performing* and *learning*. Finally, I move beyond the existing philanthropy literature in putting forward a new typology of elite staged philanthropic events, classified as *ritual performers*, *societal stabilizers*, *community navigators* and *transformational change drivers*.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Professors Charles Harvey and Frank Mueller for their amazing supervision, and to the family and friends who have supported me during the course of my research.

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the empirical context of my research and explains the significance of undertaking a study on staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. It begins by introducing my research aim and objectives, overarching and subsidiary research questions, and the theoretical schema drawn on for analysis. Following this, I briefly discuss the 'new age of inequalities', which has attracted considerable interest from social scientific scholars in recent years, and how this relates to the emergence and flourishing of elite philanthropy in the context of the "field of power", defined by Pierre Bourdieu as "a gaming space in which those agents and institutions possessing enough specific capital (economic or cultural capital in particular) to be able to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields confront each other using strategies aimed at preserving or transforming these relations of power" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 224). I then move on to consider the importance of staged events and present a typology of staged events within the philanthropic field. After explaining the scope of the enquiry and the general approach to conducting the research, the chapter concludes by outlining the content of each of the following chapters of my thesis.

1.2 Research aim and objectives

Staged events – for long seen as performative social occurrences – comprise multiple structures and processes that unfold in time and space. Driven by face-to-face, moment-by-moment interactions, the unfolding flow of staged events serves as the point of departure for new trajectories, individual and organizational, as fresh opportunities are revealed. Yet, to date, little theoretically informed research has been undertaken on *the role of staged events in*

the functioning, maintenance and development of organizational fields. We know much less about how staged events shape the philanthropic field populated by elites at the apex of society. Existing studies emphasize the importance of objects such as 'events' (Hoffman and Ocasio, 2001; Isabella, 1990; Morgeson *et al.*, 2015), 'staging' (Clark and Mangham, 2004; Goffman, 1959; Whittle *et al.*, 2020) and 'elite philanthropy' (Maclean and Harvey, 2020; Ostrower, 1995, 2002; Shaw *et al.*, 2011), without considering in-depth the nature and purpose of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. It is this gap that the present thesis aims to address by answering the focal research question *what is the role of staged events in the functioning, maintenance and development of organizational fields?* Along the way, I pose and answer four subsidiary research questions, one for each of the empirical chapters of the thesis:

1. What is the context in which elite staged philanthropic events take place in the UK? (Chapter 4)

2. How is power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events? (Chapter 5)

3. What are the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events? (Chapter 6)

4. How do elite staged philanthropic events work to achieve performative purposes? (Chapter 7)

In examining the structures, processes and outcomes of elite staged philanthropic events, my theoretical position builds on the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, for whom all symbolic systems serve as sources of power, reproducing and regenerating status distinctions and social structures (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999). In what follows, I present a detailed exposition of the workings of high-profile philanthropic gatherings from a Bourdieusian perspective, considering the implications of his master constructs for interpreting the meaning and consequences of elite staged philanthropic events.

In management and organization studies, there are examples of Goffman inspired research on events (e.g. Jeacle, 2014), but there are few applications of his ideas to philanthropy, with one notable exception (Mair and Hehenberger, 2014). This thesis deploys Goffman's ideas to develop an enriched and substantive view of staged philanthropic events. It concentrates on 'performance' and explores how assemblies, conferences, fundraisers and award ceremonies operate on the front and back stages to achieve their purposes. In this way, application of Goffman's theoretical ideas helps in getting beneath the surface of events to advance understanding of presentational emphases in different situations and how these shape agendas within the dynamics of temporal agency. Drawing on Bourdieu and Goffman's theoretical frameworks in tandem allows me to cast fresh light on elite power and the performativity of staged events within the philanthropic field.

1.3 Inequality, philanthropy and the field of power

My research examines the structural and processual dynamics of elite staged philanthropic events within the context of the 'new ages of inequalities'. The 21st century has witnessed a progressive rise in inequality (Atkinson, 2015; Bourguignon, 2015; Piketty, 2014). An annual report presented by Oxfam at the Davos World Economic Forum in 2018 shows that the wealth of 26 richest individuals in the world equals that of the poorest 50% – nearly four billion people (Oxfam, 2018). According to Oxfam (2017), 42 billionaires controlled such wealth. The equivalent number was 61 in 2016 (Oxfam, 2016). Clearly, inequality is rising if measured by the concentration of global wealth. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) holds the view that persistent inequalities in incomes not only pose a challenge to social cohesion but also threaten future economic well-being (Cingano, 2014). One of the World Bank's two primary aims is "promoting shared prosperity", and the other is combating poverty. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) goes further in asserting that severe and persistent inequalities will have significant negative

impacts not only on the poor but also on the health of economies in general (Dabla-Norris *et al.*, 2015).

Pronounced gaps in income and wealth between rich and poor have existed for many centuries in Britain. Consider, for example, Friedrich Engels' (1892, p. xv) description of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*:

> But as to the great mass of working people, the state of misery and insecurity in which they live now is as low as ever, if not lower. The East End of London is an ever-spreading pool of stagnant misery and desolation, of starvation when out of work, and degradation, physical and moral, when in work. And so in all other large towns – abstraction made of the privileged minority of the workers; and so in the smaller towns and in the agricultural districts.

With globalization, inequalities within countries have risen (Bourguignon, 2015). The Institute for Fiscal Studies (2017) indicates that in the United Kingdom (UK) inequalities in income and wealth have been increasing at an alarming rate since the late 1980s when the Thatcher government held down rates of personal taxation while limiting funding for public services (Dorey, 2015; Pierson, 1996). The state has been depicted as incapable of meeting rising welfare needs, encouraging the neo-liberal idea that the private sector is more powerful in serving the social interest than the public sector (Davis and Walsh, 2017; Swalwell and Apple, 2011). Civic-minded entrepreneurs who have amassed enormous personal fortunes have since become involved in philanthropic ventures on a grand scale, ostensibly leading the way in addressing deep-seated social and economic problems that deindustrialization and the triumph of modern-day, globalized capitalism has created (Hall, 1992, 2006; Zunz, 2012). Such people, by definition, are members of international, national and local power elites. They typically have extensive social networks, and many of them, those engaged in actively shaping public opinion and influencing how resources flow, occupy dominant positions within what Bourdieu (1996) calls the "field of power", conceived as "a gaming space" (p. 264) in which elites from different fields mingle to bring about change in practice and policy.

Existing literature has identified the hidden benefits that elite agents gain from philanthropic endeavours, enhancing their overall reserves of capital (Maclean and Harvey, 2019).

In this research, I locate staged events within the macro-level space where philanthropic elites increasingly exercise power over society. My thesis aims to reveal how staged philanthropic events make possible the relationship between the power elite and wider society to be redrawn, conferring legitimacy on the former through processes of interactions, negotiations and sensemaking. To this end, I seek to demonstrate the importance of staged philanthropic events to the continuing power and authority of elites at both the national and local levels within the UK.

1.4 The importance and types of staged philanthropic events

According to Schwartzman (1989, p. 39), "meetings are an important sensemaking form for organizations and communities because they may define, represent, and also reproduce social entities and relationships". Staged events, as a form of meetings, are spatial-temporal occurrences, and each is distinctive by virtue of interactions between participants, props, agendas and setting (Getz, 2008). Much of their appeal is based on their motivational potential, given the importance of actively engaging attendees in pursuit of specified goals. They may be viewed from multiple perspectives, including the scripts of event owners, the expectations of guests, and the interests of external stakeholders (Pettersson and Getz, 2009).

According to Mannell and Kleiber (1997, p. 11), "success is based on structuring the leisure environment in such a way as to create or encourage predictably satisfying experiences". Getz (2008) identifies three factors – intrapersonal (e.g. participants' attitudes and character), interpersonal (e.g. interactions) and structural (e.g. venue, furniture, equipment, props) – that may influence the experiences of attendees at events. In maximizing opportunities for attendees to network with others and exchange ideas, events are most often designed to build and maintain "the social relationship fostered by the warm, friendly,

welcoming, courteous, open, generous behaviour of the host, creating the hospitable social environment" (Burgess, 1982, p. 50; MacLaren *et al.*, 2013). Without doubt, entertainment and hospitality constitute an important part of staged events, aiming to evoke interactions among guests and encourage repeat attendances (Lam and Chen, 2012; Levy, 2010; Nordvall *et al.*, 2014).

A starting point for understanding event experiences is the seminal work of van Gennep (1960, pp. 272-273) who develops the notion of "liminality" as "a transitory stage" loaded with *rites de passage*. Just like all the ceremonies, *rites de passage*, according to Turner (1969, pp. 168-169), "accompany any change of a collective sort from one state to another". Staged events, outside the flow of routine organizational life, are situated in this state where participants are more relaxed and open to new trajectories and ideas. Building on the anthropological theory of liminality, Jafari (2002) argues that people are willing to attend and enter into events with clear boundaries for a defined period, immersing themselves in activities and experiences that are out of and transcend the ordinary. This strikes a chord with Falassi's (1987) understanding of the nature of festivity as creating a period "out of ordinary time". Event organizers seek to achieve "peak experiences" (Maslow, 1968) and "a state of flow" (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) for maximum engagement.

A typology of staged events within the philanthropic field is presented in Table 1.1. This describes the practical purpose of each of the four types of staged events that abound within the field of elite philanthropy and equates these with the four main types of capital identified by Bourdieu. The argument made here is that elite staged philanthropic events are inextricably bound up generatively with processes of capital formation within the field. Fundraisers have the explicit goal of generating the funds needed to support the activities of front-line operating charities. Assemblies of stakeholders, which other than in exceptional circumstances appear tokenistic, in fact serve the essential purpose of generating the social

capital needed to bind the field together. Conferences, at which ideas are presented, discussed and evaluated, enliven the field by generating and diffusing new organizational models (exceptionally) and philanthropic practices (routinely). Award ceremonies, at which the achievements of philanthropic heroes are celebrated, are symbolically significant staged events, generating legitimacy through the conferment of rewards and satisfactions for participants, including award winners, nominees, nominators and the field-wide organizations that orchestrate them. Bourdieu (1990, p. 133) interprets this behaviour as a mode of capital accumulation "based on the conversion of economic capital into symbolic capital … through which dominant groups secure a capital of 'credit' which seems to owe nothing to the logic of exploitation".

Table 1.1: Typology of elite staged philanthropic events

Staged Event Type	Purpose	Capital Formation
Fundraiser	Generation of funds to support charitable activities	Economic
Assembly	Generation of solidarity through stakeholder engagement and interactions	Social
Conference	Generation and dissemination of knowledge about philanthropic models and practices	Cultural
Award ceremony	Generation of legitimacy through the conferment of philanthropic rewards and satisfactions	Symbolic

Elite staged philanthropic events, with clear point and purpose, have become increasingly important as they are institutionalized, woven into the structure of wider society. National staged events convene assemblies of top-tier philanthropic elites, aiming proactively to address complex social problems such as enduring poverty through far-reaching interactions behind an inventive "theory of change" (Rogers, 2014), typically in collaboration with government agencies and powerful private companies. In contrast, staged philanthropic events at the local level with relatively modest purposes tend to focus on specific causes or issues, seeking to regenerate communities to which participating elites feel allegiance.

Attended by members of the national or local power elites, staged philanthropic events constitute loci of agency in organizational settings.

1.5 Scope of enquiry and general approach

The roles played by various types of staged events within different fields of human endeavour are generally under researched. This is surprising given the now voluminous body of scholarly work on the role of *routine* meetings in shaping organizational fields. For example, Whittington (2006) finds that strategy praxis occurs in episodes like board meetings and team briefings. The rich descriptions of strategy work offered in these studies have helped us to identify potential elements that influence the process of change (Carter *et al.*, 2018), but their findings are unlikely to be applicable in other contexts, particularly with respect to staged events. In concentrating on relatively stable and unchanging patterns of interaction, research on organizational meetings fails to recognize the importance of *non-routine* staged events and the transformations they engender. Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, although staged events are the main places where the macro-level change is proposed and implemented, they have attracted surprisingly little attention from organizational researchers. My research addresses this lacuna.

In this thesis, I consider the role of staged events within the philanthropic field through consideration of eight staged philanthropic events, each bringing together a diverse cast of elite actors from different fields from banking and finance, the corporate sector, law, academia, politics and the nonprofit sector. My case studies include two prestigious award ceremonies celebrating achievements in philanthropy, two conferences at which philanthropy professionals exchanged ideas about best practice, two assemblies – annual general meetings (AGMs) – that satisfied accountability requirements and approved policies, and two glamorous fundraising gala dinners organized to raise money for charitable causes promising social betterment. Each case has been contextualised using documents such as event

brochures, seating plans and promotional materials. I observed 12 individual elite staged philanthropic events (one case study involved multiple events) and 15 related meetings including briefings, debriefings and planning meetings. Semi-structured interviews – 41 in total – were conducted with eight event managers, eight event sponsors, seven event owners, eleven event guests and seven venue providers over the period February 2017 to March 2019.

1.6 Outline of chapters

The following chapter offers a critical assessment of the literature informing the study, and demonstrates how the thesis engages with, and contributes to, existing research and scholarship in the field. First, it provides a review of the extensive body of literature on Bourdieusian social theory, focusing specifically on studies relating to class, field theory, capital theory and doxa (e.g. Bourdieu, 1993a, 2014), which are particularly essential for my purposes. Secondly, it investigates the literature on the power elite (e.g. Maclean *et al.*, 2010; Mills, 1956; Zald and Lounsbury, 2010) as well as networks and social capital (e.g. Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Harvey and Maclean, 2008). Elite philanthropy is explored, to highlight the importance of entrepreneurial philanthropy, the identities that capital rich individuals assume during their philanthropic journeys, and how and why they engage in philanthropy on a grand scale (Harvey *et al.*, 2011; Maclean and Harvey, 2020; Shaw *et al.*, 2011). Finally, the chapter evaluates the literature on Goffman's core concepts, including framing and frontstage/backstage (e.g. Goffman, 1959, 1974), which have inspired a vast body of work in management and organization studies (e.g. Ringel, 2019; Ross, 2007; Ybema and Horvers, 2017).

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology and methods employed in this research. It sets out the philosophical foundation of the study and describes in detail how the research is designed in order to address the research questions posed. The chapter provides details of my

fieldwork and the eight staged philanthropic events researched in-depth, elaborating on the specific ways of collecting and analysing data.

Four empirical findings chapters follow, presenting the results of my comparative cases research. Chapter 4 explores the macro-space wherein philanthropic micro-processes operate. It presents a broad overview of the philanthropic field and outlines the present 'state of play' in charitable giving as well as the characteristics of big philanthropy in the United States (US) and the UK. Later in the chapter, the population of elite staged philanthropic events is quantitatively assessed, to demonstrate their ubiquity and distribution across different parts of the UK. Chapter 5 presents findings from an analysis of types of elite staged philanthropic events, revealing how power is manifested within assemblies, conferences, fundraisers and award ceremonies examined. Face-to-face interactions are explored in Chapter 6, which contrasts and compares the frontstage performances performed by various groups of event organizers to their guest audience and the backstage interactions where guests are not present. Moving away from the analysis of stage performance, Chapter 7 focuses more specifically on the actual processes of unfolding elite staged philanthropic events within the dynamics of temporal agency. It documents the generic phases transition through assemblies, conferences, fundraisers and award ceremonies to fulfil performative functions.

The last chapter, Chapter 8, offers an outline of the key findings from the research and summarizes how the thesis contributes to knowledge of both philanthropy and more generally to research on staged events. It also provides practical implications for event professionals on how elite philanthropic events can be better organized and conducted to increase impact and attract more charitable funds. The thesis is concluded by discussing the research's limitations and suggesting potential opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2
Conceptualizing Elite Staged Philanthropic Events

2.1 Introduction

There has been little research hitherto on the role of staged events in elite philanthropy. In this research I take up the challenge of breaking fresh ground, and in doing so strive to make an original contribution to knowledge – theoretical and empirical – to the field of organization studies. I begin by making three observations on the state-of-play within the literature. First, I observe that in spite of some promising developments, organizational analysis has hitherto paid little attention to the role played by staged events in the functioning and development of organizational fields. Secondly, I observe that while recent elite studies have drawn extensively on Bourdieusian social theory, analysing the activities of elites within the field of power, no consideration has been given to how their work is facilitated by professionally managed events. Finally, I observe that while multiple types of face-to-face interactions have been studied extensively in process research, including frontstage/backstage performances, the full theoretical potential of such research has yet to be realized. There is a crucial but substantially overlooked role of staged events in establishing new agendas and directions within the dynamics of temporal agency.

To help address these issues, I survey three areas of literature to explicate and elaborate on discussions and debates surrounding the structural and processual dynamics of staged philanthropic events. The first is *Bourdieusian social theory*. I set forth a detailed narrative of what a Bourdieu-inspired perspective for organization studies might look like to offer a theoretical foundation for my subsequent examination of staged philanthropic events. The second concerns the *elite philanthropic networking*. I review the literature on elite philanthropy and relate this to Bourdieu's construct of the field of power with a particular focus on the role of social capital and networks. The third body of literature relates to *events*

and process theory. I draw on the well-established literature on sociology of interaction, the frontstage and backstage performances, and framing and sensemaking. These literatures are drawn together in conclusion as an intellectual framework for conceptualizing and analysing the role of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy.

2.2 Bourdieusian social theory

Bourdieu's repertoire of 'thinking tools' was developed through extensive empirical research in Paris, Béarn and Algeria, with a goal of understanding the dynamics of power in an unequal world. His work has attracted considerable attention from organizational researchers (e.g. Golsorkhi *et al.*, 2009; Harvey *et al.*, 2011; Kerr and Robinson, 2012; Oakes *et al.*, 1998). One of Bourdieu's remarkable gifts to organizational scholars is his capability to reveal the hidden instruments of social stratification, which are often invisible in social and organizational life. In this thesis, I employ Bourdieu's constructs together as a framework, while foregrounding specific notions to illuminate different aspects of the research, in the manner recommended by Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) and Swartz (2008).

Class

Bourdieu (1984) develops a class model relating primarily to the interplay of four forms of capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic – each of which expresses certain advantages. He holds that while these four types of capital can overlap, they are nonetheless different, and it is possible to formulate relatively fine-grained distinctions between individuals who possess different reserves of each type of capital. It is this that Bourdieu diverges from Marx whose seminal influence he acknowledges. Stocks of cultural and symbolic capital are not simply determined by possession of economic capital. The distribution of social classes, according to Bourdieu (1984, p. 108), "runs from those who are best provided with both economic and cultural capital to those who are most deprived in both

respects". Recognizing that class is a multi-faceted concept demonstrates that it is not only an economic phenomenon, but also plays a role in cultural distinction and social reproduction.

Bourdieu (1984) sees *Distinction* as "an endeavour to rethink Max Weber's opposition between class and *Stand*" (p. xii). In his development of a general social theory which can be used by all groups and societies, Bourdieu (1985) posits an "invariant, or indeed universal, content of the relationship between the dominant and the dominated" (p. 737). He argues that classes often emerge as status groups, and their culturally and symbolically stratified goods confer legitimacy on the economic domination system by demonstrating it as "misrecognized as such" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999, p. 41). Bourdieu develops the idea that different class members "naturally" have their own interests in terms of the continuation of the current social structures that underlie the doxic condition of a group. While the dominated class takes approaches to "pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant class have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 169).

Social class is classified by Bourdieu (1984) into three categories – the bourgeoisie, the petite bourgeoisie and the working class – each of which is bound by members having similar stocks of capital. By virtue of the highest level of capital resources its members possess, the bourgeoisie class stays away from the economic necessity of making livings. These material conditions give rise to "tastes of luxury" that occurs "whenever one ignores the modality of practice" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 174).

The bourgeois taste of luxury is contrasted to working-class "tastes of necessity" that "inevitably serve as a mere foil to every distinction" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 174). Members of the working class possess the lowest level of capital, frequently facing challenges posed by material scarcities. However, Bourdieu (1990) takes the view that such economic necessity is ingrained as a habitus, "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures,

that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations" (p. 53). Working class members, for Bourdieu (1984), are down-to-earth folks tending to cut practices to their purposes, indifferent to the "game of distinction" (p. 50).

Acquiring modest capital resources differentiated by "the anxious pretension" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 362), the petite bourgeoisie is situated between the bourgeoisie and working class. The petite bourgeoisie (relatively low in economic, cultural and social capital) seeks to mimic the bourgeoisie but does not have enough resources to really achieve it. These upstarts therefore attempt to embrace a lifestyle not their own in order to "distinguish themselves from the other categories by the importance they give to the minor forms of legitimate culture" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 327).

The value that society allocates to each of the distinct classes, for Bourdieu, is rigorously arbitrary and determined purely by power. The dominant class has the capacity to manipulate its lifestyle to be the sanctioned level of judgement by naked force, or "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, pp. 4-8). However, this arbitrary deed of violence is invisible and therefore accepted by the dominated as a natural order whose existence is presented in the world discerned through "a principle of dissimulation and misrecognition" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 336). In consequence, those with the dominant culture legitimate and reproduce their power. Power and social influence held by dominant agents is concealed behind a mask of individual giftedness, behind what Bourdieu (1984, p. 389) terms the "ideology of charisma".

Capital theory

Organizational researchers who focus on lived experiences and cultural aspects of social class are heavily indebted to Bourdieu (1986), for whom it would be "impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory" (p. 81). Bourdieu provides a

comprehensive analysis of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital, which forms a relational "world of objectification" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 189) that determines the social structure and therefore the positions occupied by actors. As a generalized resource, capital may be non-monetary or monetary in form, "objectified or embodied" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 81). Capital, as Bourdieu (1985) asserts, "represents a power over the field (at a given moment) … The kinds of capital, like the aces in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a given field" (p. 724). Actors with a low volume of capital are constantly exposed to material and authority scarcities, while those "possessing enough specific capital (economic or cultural capital in particular)" are "able to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields", "using strategies aimed at preserving or transforming these relations of power" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 264). The proximity of actors in the social space implies that possession of similar volumes of capital, which leads to similar social positions within the social structure. For Bourdieu, even the state is the "*culmination of a process of concentration of different types of capital*: capital of physical force or instruments of coercion (army, police), economic capital, cultural capital or (better) informational capital, and symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 41).

Economic capital, distinctively material, consists of both tangible and intangible types of resources "that are directly and immediately convertible into money" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 82). Other forms of capital "produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal (not least from their possessors) the fact that economic capital is at their root" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 89). The doxa of capitalism stays a doxa for the reason that the process which facilitates the sustained inequalities of wealth and income is concealed by converting economic capital into other forms of capital (Eagleton and Bourdieu, 1992). Bourdieu (1990) finds "the theory of strictly economic practices" to be "a particular case of a general theory of the economy of practices" and develops a sociology that "abandon[s] the economic/non-

economic dichotomy" through concentrating on practices "oriented towards non-material stakes that are not easily quantified" (p. 122).

Bourdieu (1984, p. 291) describes cultural capital as "a dominated principle of domination" in modern stratified societies. Cultural capital, existing in various forms, can be *embodied*. Cultural capital in this condition is produced by "external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 83). In this state, cultural capital exists "in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 82), for example, in the form of language skills and bodily comportment. In contrast, cultural capital in the *objectified* condition is often identified in "cultural goods" like "pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc." (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 82). It is worth noting that possessing embodied cultural capital serves as a precondition for how objectified cultural capital can be profitably applied. Finally, the *institutionalized* state "confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 82). This manifestation, unlike the other types of cultural capital, involves "the performative magic of the power of instituting" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 86). For example, an educational qualification, namely, a certificate of cultural capability, "separates the last successful candidate from the first unsuccessful one" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 86). The stock of cultural capital "determines the aggregate chances of profit in all the games in which cultural capital is effective, thereby helping to determine position in social space" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 724).

Another crucial "ace" in the distinction game is social capital. Not just about know-who, "[s]ocial capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to possession of a durable network of essentially institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 86). The distinction between inclusion and exclusion, membership and non-membership, for Bourdieu (1984), is critical. As Laird (2006) states,

nobody can win the game entirely alone, "what the rare rags-to-riches story and *all* success stories prove is another rule, one to which there is no exception: that of the necessity for connections and connectability – the rule of social capital" (pp. 1-2). Many organizational theorists who have appropriated Bourdieu's concept of social capital have developed two types of social capital: concentrating on internal relationships within a collectivity foregrounds what Coleman (1988) calls "bonding" types of social capital, while concentrating on external relationships foregrounds what Burt (1992) calls "bridging" types of social capital.

The type of capital that most engrosses Bourdieu is symbolic capital, a complex type of capital, which emerges from economic, cultural and social capital. To put it another way, economic, cultural and social capital are translated into symbolic capital the instant they are considered legitimate. Bourdieu (1977) argues that wealth can exercise power and exercise it constantly only in the type of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital can be identified in the form of reputation, status, renown, prestige and personal authority, giving actors "the power to consecrate or to reveal things that are already there" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). Philanthropy is a trump card in the acquisition and accumulation of symbolic capital (Harvey *et al.*, 2011; Maclean and Harvey, 2019). The magnitude of giving by elites sets them apart and offers them access to prized networks denied to others.

The power afforded by economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital is not static and stable. For Bourdieu (1984), capital formation is a dynamic and continuous process, contingent on "transmission and accumulation" (p. 84). In spite of differing in their liquidity, the various forms of capital are convertible to some extent. As explained earlier, symbolic capital is "always additionally associated with possession of the other kinds of capital" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 183) and has been the most valuable type. Of all these types of capital, economic capital is particularly relevant, since its possession "gives immediate access" to

social, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 89), which can boost the elite power

of wealthy individuals. These forms of capital are normally operative within a field, serving

as both weapons and stakes in the contestation to ascend the pecking order within the selected

field (Swartz, 1997). Viewed in this light, Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field are

intrinsically interlinked: "a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field"

and the distribution of capital "constitutes the very structure of the field" (Bourdieu and

Wacquant, 1992, p. 101).

Field theory

Bourdieu defines a social field "as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations

between positions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). A field, according to Bourdieu

(1987b, p. 808), serves as "the site of struggle, of competition for control". Fields can be

considered as a type of game or market in which actors have stakes or vested interests

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Fields are shaped by both the dominated and the dominant,

two types of social actors who seek to seize, exclude and create "the monopoly of the

legitimate violence (specific authority) which is characteristic of the field in question"

(Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 73). It is worth noting that social actors have to tacitly accept "the rules

of competitive engagement within the field", as well as "its *de facto* stratification into a

hierarchy of more or less dominant and subordinate positions" (Maclean *et al.*, 2010, p. 331).

For Bourdieu, fields are dynamic and relational social spaces, contingent and never

stable and invariant (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This means that we have to think

dialectically or relationally when understanding a field. Any field should be understood as a

network of relations between the positions that actors occupy within a given network, rather

than between the actors themselves. These positions within the field as well as the forces that

bring them together comprise "a *structure* or a *temporary state of power relations* within

what is … *an ongoing struggle for domination* over the field" (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008,

p. 6). Misrecognizing the real nature and purpose of relations that underlie a field and how it is regenerated and reproduced is obvious given the fact that actors are not allowed to voice its real nature and purpose publicly or to talk about any contradictions or inconsistency intrinsic to the field (Everett, 2002).

The fact that fields are sites of contestation that lead to constant change enable them to be different from "systems", which "postulate common function, internal cohesion, and self-regulation" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 103). When organizational researchers examine a field, they tend to examine a "totality of relevant actors", who jointly constitute "a recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991, pp. 64-65). For Bourdieu (1984), the national society is a field, a broader social space within which there are multiple less extensive spaces, including the philanthropic field. Exceptionally restricted and more microcosmic fields like individual organizations also belong to the social space. The inter-field configuration emerges as a server which seeks not only to define the rules that govern the new field, but also to consolidate power and develop logics of the existing field (Wadhwani, 2018). A socially constructionist perspective of organizational fields has been developed by institutional theorists who emphasize the solidary nature of understandings shared by different types of social actors, recognized as positional equals (e.g. Jepperson, 1991).

Fields, according to Bourdieu (1985), may be autonomous and restricted. The economy of practices in such fields is to be based "on a systematic inversion of the fundamental principle of all ordinary economies, that of business, that of power, and even that of institutionalized cultural authority" (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 320). In fact, social actors tend to reverse the economic world in a totally autonomous field. There exists a rejection of the profit-oriented and therefore an anti-economy governed by "an interest in disinterestedness" (Maclean and Harvey, 2019, p. 15).

Doxa

Bourdieu defines doxa as the natural attitude in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). For Bourdieu, it is doxa that enables the arbitrary and relationally embedded nature of symbolic power to be misunderstood or misrecognized, which in turn creates the doxa. Hence doxa operates as a field in conventional societies and is accepted widely therein. This is described by Bourdieu (1977, pp. 165-166):

> "In a determinate social formation, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in agents' dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of doxa, of that which is taken for granted".

For Bourdieu, doxa is far more dynamic and high-powered in modern cultures. Bourdieu refers to it as relating to the specific fields where it emerges, rather than being in general expressions, calling them as "doxais" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu (1990) improves his understanding of doxa in *The Logic of Practice* by focusing on anthropology of culture and society in France. Doxa serves as "the unanimity effect, which is a quite irreducible to an effect of imitation of fashion" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 111). In *Distinction,* the doxic modality refers to the "sense of limits … a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons and so forth from which one is excluded" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). In spite of acknowledging that such perception is often "an act of cognition" instead of "mechanical reflection", it continues to be "an act of misrecognition, implying the most absolute form of recognition of the social order" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). In *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue that different social fields are marked by different forms of doxa, which perform to direct proper systems of perception. Furthermore, as a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 66) acquired by skilful actors, doxa can be viewed in a far more conscious type of opinion: "just as the 'right opinion' 'falls right', in a sense without knowing why or how" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 128).

Bourdieu (2000) defines doxa in later works like *Pascalian Meditations* as the "natural attitude", "the primary experience of the social world as self-evident" (p. 172). As in

his empirical research on Algeria, Bourdieu (2000) focuses again on issues of "wretchedness" and therefore re-examines everyday life and its doxa. Bourdieu insists that the socially and symbolically dominated nature of the natural attitude as well as its consequent mask of "misrecognition" is defined by doxa. According to Bourdieu (2000, p. 185),

> "The sense of one's place is a practical sense (having nothing in common with what is generally referred to as "class consciousness"), a practical knowledge that does not know itself, a "learned ignorance" (*docta ignorantia*) which, as such, may be the victim of that particular form of misrecognition, *allodoxia*, consisting of mistakenly recognizing oneself in a particular form of representation and public enunciation of the *doxa*".

In summary, if contests for power do not take place and legitimacy is not being challenged, we can identify a doxic state in which "the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, that is, as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 166). The doxic state, if it exists, is rare, which is why questions regarding legitimacy are often raised.

Concluding thoughts

Pierre Bourdieu could be the most distinguished social theorist following the classical generation of Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber. He developed not just a series of concepts such as class, capital, field and doxa, but a fresh relational way of studying struggle and domination, a pioneering approach to understanding the operation of power within social life. However, elite philanthropy does not feature strongly in Bourdieu's writings, despite its apparent role as an instrument of social control and potential to shore up the existing social order. Others have recognized this and have applied his ideas in the analysis of various aspects of elite philanthropy. This thesis adds to this body of knowledge by demonstrating the value of Bourdieu's approach in analysing the power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events. It sketches in bold strokes what a Bourdieusian analysis of elite philanthropic events might look like and how this might contribute to understanding the role

of staged events of conduct within organizational fields, specifically the world of elite philanthropy.

2.3 Elite philanthropic networking

Bourdieu's (1993b, 1996) construct of the field of power is fundamental to his understanding of society and economy. Entering into the field of power marks membership of the highest status in society. The field of power is seen by Bourdieu (1996) as a social realm that transcends individual actors; functioning as a meeting place which brings together different types of elites, discerned as positional equals. It is a "meta-field" working "as an organizing principle of differentiation and struggle, while designating those who dominate in society" (Maclean *et al.*, 2010, p. 332). The field of power is described by Bourdieu (1996, p. 264) as:

> "A field of power struggles among the holders of different forms of power, a gaming space in which those agents and institutions possessing enough specific capital (economic or cultural capital in particular) to be able to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields confront each other using strategies aimed at preserving or transforming these relations of power".

Here, elite actors intervene to covertly direct agendas, fashion policy debates, influence resource flows and wield discretion in advocating the present 'ruling ideas', creating "a theodicy of their own privilege" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 266). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), this reinforces their legitimate right and freedom to rule. In this section, elite philanthropic networking is critically considered, including the role of elites, the importance of social capital and networks, and the formation and function of elite philanthropy.

Elite theory

A surge of elite studies have been conducted by organizational researchers, as the wealthy draw away and inhabit their more privileged worlds (Brass *et al.*, 2004; Maclean *et al.*, 2015b; Zald and Lounsbury, 2010). In fact, earlier generations of social theorists have contributed greatly to revealing the importance of elites for the dynamics of society. One major work by Max Weber (2009) focuses on the challenge to patriarchal relationships on landed properties

in Prussia in the late 19th century. Karl Marx's (1978) prominent study of the German ideology shows that not only is the economic realm, so too are the ideological and political realms controlled by elites to a certain degree that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (p. 172). Classical elite theorists, notably Pareto and Mosca, found the extent to which elites are integrated and diversified to be important for the shaping of western, industrialized societies.

Organizations emerge as powerful social actors, which leads to the investigation of how corporate elites affect important decision-making processes and, more importantly, how "institutional and societal command posts" are staffed (Zald and Lounsbury, 2010, p. 967). Charles Wright Mills seminally signalled this program more than sixty years ago when he sought to understand the key role played by organizational leaders, while calling for an informed and comprehensive analysis of elite actors at the highest level in society. Mills (1956) argues that "[n]ot 'Wall Street financiers' or bankers, but large owners and executives in their self-financing corporations hold the keys to economic power" (p. 125). Those occupying eminent positions "often seem to know one another, seem quite naturally to work together, and share many organizations in common" (Mills, 1956, p. 294). Mills developed an important insight "that the existence of this mutually acquainted power elite did not require a conspiracy among bankers or anyone else but emerged out of the structural tendency toward concentration of powerful institutions at the national level" (Davis *et al*., 2003, p. 308). The power elite share understandings of the world with positional equals through common membership of boards and elite clubs. According to Mills (1956, p. 284), "[t]he question is not: are these honourable men? The question is: what are their codes of honour? The answer to that question is that they are the codes of their circles, of those to whose opinions they defer". Hence the power elite become a compact and high-powered social entity which has

shared frames of reference that influence the decisions made by its members (Maclean *et al.*, 2015b).

Useem (1984) argues that the British economy is "increasingly dominated by a relatively small number of large companies linked in inclusive and diffusely structured networks" (p. 26). The configurations of the aggregate networks are shaped by the efforts of individual organizations that strive to work with multi-positional actors to enhance their "business scan" (Useem, 1982), rather than by conscious plan. "An inner circle" of elites is created by a small number of executive directors who sit on the boards of different organizations and institutions (Useem, 1984). Inner circle members can represent and understand the interests of different businesses through their experiences in multiple organizations, strengthening "the cohesiveness of the capitalist class and its capacity for common action and unified policies" (Zeitlin, 1974, p. 1112). It is worth noting that such agents place a great value on philanthropy, bringing social and economic resources to nonprofit organizations (Useem, 1984, 1987).

While Mills and Useem highlight the role played by national elites, some of their contemporaries pay attention to the importance of local elites (Zald and Lounsbury, 2010). For example, Hunter (1953) finds that community policy and politics are dominated by the combined block of real property developers and corporate elites. Domhoff (1974) highlights the role that the socially integrative mechanisms play in shaping local power relations – elite preparatory schools and exclusive men's clubs. These institutions serve as "a repository of the values held by the upper-level prestige groups in the community" as well as "a means by which these values are transferred to the business environment" (Domhoff, 2010, p. 32). Domhoff (2009) traces the linkages among individuals, organizations, policy proposals and financial donations, identifying the existence of a charitable network – comprising dozens of policy-discussion groups, think tanks and philanthropic foundations – which is directed and

financially supported by corporate leaders. This is a form of assembling both material and symbolic leverage (Lindsay, 2008) through which the powerful can establish networks and acquire social capital beyond the boundaries of their respective field and organization.

Social capital and networks

Initially emerging in community studies, the term 'social capital' emphasizes the importance of networks of strong, personal relationships fostered over time that offer the basis for cooperation, trust and collective action in city neighbourhoods (Jacobs, 1965). Additionally, early researchers show how the web of social networks of communities facilitates the development of young people (Loury, 1977). Since its early usage, the notion has been applied to illuminate a variety of social phenomena, despite more attention paid to the role that social capital plays in affecting nations (Fukuyama, 1995) and geographic regions (Putnam, 1993, 1995).

The social capital analysis is predicated on the proposition "that networks of relationships constitute a valuable resource for the conduct of social affairs" (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). Their members are provided with "the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 86). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) find the deep embeddedness of social capital in networks of mutual recognition and acquaintance. Indeed, Bourdieu (1986) highlights the long-lasting obligations emerging either from friendship, respect and gratitude or from the institutionally warranted rights gained from membership of a social group. There are other resources available through connections or contacts brought by networks. For instance, members of a network are able to obtain privileged access to opportunities and information through "friends of friends" (Boissevain, 1974) and "weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973).

Despite the acknowledgment of the crucial role played by relationships as a resource in organizing and conducting social activities, there is no consensus about how to define

social capital precisely. Some scholars describe social capital as any resource that can be assembled through memberships in networks of individuals and organizations (Putnam, 1995), while others restrict the scale of social capital to network structures only (Baker, 1990). For my present purposes, I follow the former perspective and describe social capital as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit" (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). Hence social capital is made up of both networks and assets that can be accessed through networks (Burt, 1992).

Within such inclusive conceptualization, there exist various definitions which highlight different respects of the notion (e.g. Leana and Van Buren, 1999). Some, mainly social network scholars, highlight the structural considerations (A in Figure 2.1) and concentrate primarily on the general pattern of connections and relationships between actors, namely, "who you reach and how you reach them" (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, p. 244). Among the most crucial aspects of the structural dimension is the absence or presence of network ties, network configuration which depicts the pattern of connections with respect to measures such as hierarchy, connectivity and density, as well as appropriate organization, namely, the existence of networks developed for multiple aims.

Figure 2.1: Three dimensions of social capital

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                        │     SOCIAL CAPITAL      │
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           ┌──────────────────────┼──────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────────┐
│ (A) Structural        │ │ (B) Relational       │ │ (C) Cognitive        │
│     dimension         │ │     dimension        │ │     dimension        │
│   Network ties        │ │       Trust          │ │  Shared narratives   │
│ Network configuration │ │       Norms          │ │  Shared codes and    │
│    Appropriable       │ │    Obligations       │ │     language         │
│    organization       │ │   Identification     │ │                      │
└──────────────────────┘ └──────────────────────┘ └──────────────────────┘
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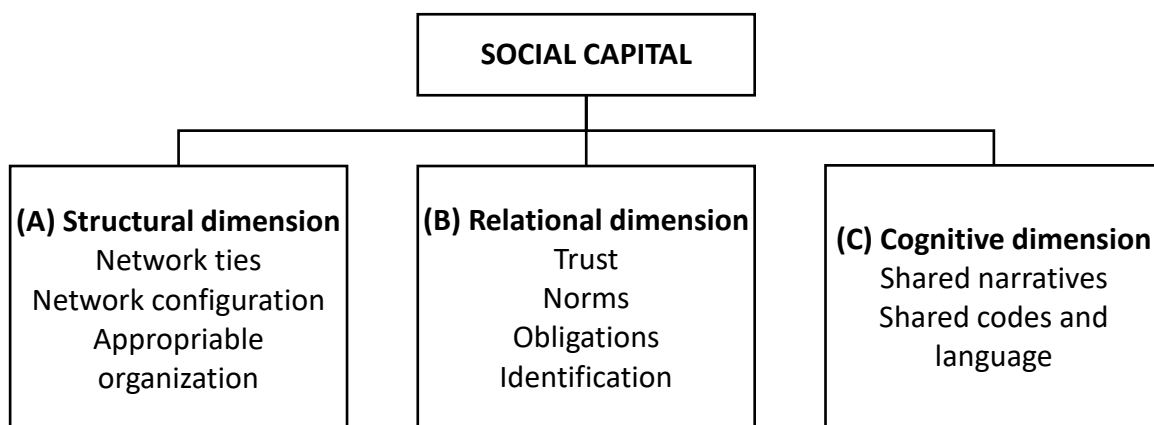
Source: Adapted from Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998)

In contrast, some researchers pay attention to the relational dimension of social capital (B in Figure 2.1), specifying the true nature of the complex relationships in social structures as generating certain benefits for actors, instead of the structure itself only. For instance, social capital is considered by Putnam (1993) as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (pp. 35-36). In Fukuyama's (1995) conception, similarly, social capital is the "capability that arises from the prevalence of trust in a society or in certain parts of it" (p. 27). Fukuyama (1995) further argues that social capital can be acquired variously by actors because "it can be embodied in the smallest and most basic social group, the family, as well as the largest of all groups, the nation, and in all other groups in between" (p. 26). Social capital, from this relational perspective, reflects the certain benefits that social agents can gain from the content of their network ties, as shown by the attitudes and beliefs held by agents. Among such attitudes and beliefs are norms, trust, identification and obligations (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). These relationships tend "to lead to positive and cooperative behaviours since they create a psychological environment conducive to collaboration and mutual support" (Kostova and Roth, 2003, p. 301).

The third aspect of social capital, which is labelled as the 'cognitive dimension' (C in Figure 2.1), refers to those resources which offer shared interpretations, representations and systems of meaning among social actors (Cicourel, 1973). Shared systems of language and meanings further the progress of information exchange, which allows actors to share thinking processes with each other. These common approaches to seeing the organizational world help social actors make sense of new knowledge and information (Nonaka, 1994).

Despite many forms taken by social capital, each of these forms comprises some respect of the social structure, while facilitating the actions of actors within the structure (Coleman, 1990). First, social capital, as a social resource different from other types of

capital, inheres in the structure of a relationship and is jointly possessed by actors in the relationship. No one can own social capital exclusively (Burt, 1992). Furthermore, people cannot trade social capital readily in spite of its value in use. Obligations and friendships do not easily pass from one individual to another. Secondly, social capital facilitates "the achievement of ends that would be impossible without it or that could be achieved only at extra cost" (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, p. 244).

Existing research has used social capital to distinguish individuals who advance in business from those who do not (Finskelstein *et al.*, 2007). It shows that British power elites present a tendency towards more external network ties, equivalent in such a way to a perspective of "bridging" social capital, while the French cohort is willing to build relationships with internal stakeholders of "bonding" social capital (Harvey and Maclean, 2008). Harvey *et al.* (2011) argue that their emergence as powerful social agents active within the local, national and international fields of power, filled with social capital, largely owes to their philanthropy. The following section will explore the literature on how and why wealthy elites engage in large-scale philanthropy.

Elite philanthropy

Elite philanthropy is the province of wealthy individuals, couples and families who have become rich primarily through the acquiring and amassing of entrepreneurial fortunes, either by expanding inherited businesses or by building up companies from scratch. Harvey *et al.* (2011, p. 428) define entrepreneurial philanthropy as "*the pursuit by entrepreneurs on a not-for-profit basis of big social objectives through active investment of their economic, cultural, social and symbolic resources*". Entrepreneurial philanthropists are active within the field of power and distinguished both by their desire to accumulate substantial personal wealth and by an impulse to use a share of their fortunes to pursue philanthropic ventures that they can keep control (Bandura, 1997; Ostrander, 2007). Their primary focus, therefore, is directed

toward "the (entrepreneurial) creation of wealth and the (philanthropic) redistribution of that wealth to serve specified social goals" (Acs and Phillips, 2002; Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 639). Harvey *et al.* (2020, p. 13) identify and examine the role played by rhetoric in facilitating elite philanthropy in its entrepreneurial form: "Elite philanthropy is heavily implicated in justifying extreme inequalities, within and between nations, because it is through the persuasive use of ethically charged language that toleration of the *status quo* is increased. Elite philanthropists are the white knights of capitalism and vocabularies of motivations instrumental in the weaponization of philanthropy".

Maclean and Harvey (2020) develop a typology of identities crafted by wealthy individuals during their philanthropic journeys, labelled "local heroes", "pillars of society", "social crusaders" and "game changers", depending on the scale of giving and the adopted orientation. *Local heroes* are philanthropic elites with institutional minds who have previous experience of the organizations and institutions that they support, including their Alma Mater and local hospitals (Maclean and Harvey, 2020). They hold faith in giving fortunes back to actors who once supported them and to whom they owe a debt of gratitude. The identities local heroes craft "speak of loyalty, selflessness and dependability", locally focused, and therefore "worthy of a place of honour within the local community" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 643; Marshall *et al.*, 2018). *Pillars of society* tend to make differences to society in the long term by establishing their own foundations based on sustainability. They tend to invest in established causes of special interest, typically endorsing prestigious hospitals, universities and scientific researchers (Ostrower, 2002; Schervish, 2005). In return for their generosity, pillars of society "gain passage through inclusion boundaries" (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010, p. 36) to join elite circles where they make common cause with others of similar disposition in philanthropic endeavours. The identities crafted by pillars of society "are expressive of foresight, virtue, and commitment" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 643).

At the transformational level, *social crusader*s invest charitably in systematic solutions to issues identified on the ground in their localities. In effect, they are embroiled in mimetic social movements by which innovations not only take place but also diffuse from one place to another in order to achieve similar philanthropic goals. Social crusaders create new organizational templates by building alliances between wealthy donors, political elites and local authorities (Kahler, 2009; King, 2004). Their identities are therefore "expressive of entrepreneurialism, reforming zeal and social solidarity" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 645). *Game changers* engage in world-making for social equity on a grand scale (Juris, 2004). The emphasis here is on scalability, more importantly, on enacting a "theory of change" (Rogers, 2014) simultaneously in difference places through collaboration with local partners. The philanthropic identities crafted by game changers "speak of vision, leadership and love of humanity" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 645).

Rewards of elite philanthropy are important to the processes of developing identities (Maclean *et al*., 2015a). Elite philanthropy yields accumulative rewards in social, cultural and even symbolic capital, which may in turn be converted, when skilfully guided and in the right conditions, into further economic capital (Harvey *et al*., 2011). Indeed, wealthy individuals' leverage in society is boosted by their philanthropic activities in a way that offers them 'special power', which is not always used for social good (Piff *et al.*, 2012). According to Schervish (2005, p. 267), "the wealthy are well aware of their special power and … most take special steps to be careful about its effects. But such concern provides no guarantee that the effects will be salutary. Hyperagency presents a formidable temptation to manipulation". Elite philanthropy, in directly seeking solutions to deep-seated social and economic problems, inevitably extends the power held by wealthy donors from the economic realm to the social and political realms (Ball, 2008; Bosworth, 2011). "The empowerment gap" between

philanthropists and the general public" is widened as the latter "feel shoved aside by elites and the wealthy" (Callahan, 2017, p. 9).

Elite philanthropy and the field of power

This section has assessed the literature on elites, social capital, and how and why elite actors active within the field of power engage in philanthropy on a grand scale. I have shown that the manner in which elite philanthropy is presented, as giving back to causes intended to regenerate societies without direct material benefit for donors, belies a more important but obscured role as consolidating current positions and maintaining the *status quo* (Bourdieu, 1977; Maclean and Harvey, 2019). The concept of elite philanthropy is focal to this thesis. My principal aim is to examine the role of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. I seek to show that the true nature, purpose and outcomes of staged philanthropic events can be greatly understood in the setting of elite philanthropy and the field of power. The findings chapters will elucidate similarities and differences between main types of staged events in the UK philanthropic field, revealing how different focused gatherings perform themselves through elite philanthropy. My contribution here is to show how elite staged philanthropic events work and function to contain and sustain inequalities rather than alleviating them within countries.

2.4 Events and process theory

Process researchers' contribution to management and organization studies stems from their observation that the social world, including the subject, is fundamentally processual (Langley *et al.*, 2013; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Accordingly, they break with the concept of concrete entities and instead develop a theoretical framework concerning the "becoming" of objects in which processes consist not of physical entities, but of 'actual occasions'. For processual theorists, events do not take place linearly. In their view, time-space is pluralistic and atomistic, comprising multiple processes which unfold in time and space. Implicit within the

assumptions underpinning elite staged philanthropic events is the idea of interaction, which leads me in this section to explore the literature on the processual dynamics of actor-performing-on-stage.

Sociology of interaction

There is a separate, but in some ways cognate, tradition of micro-sociology and sociology of interaction. This stream is associated with Randall Collins (interaction ritual chains), Herbert Blumer and Gary Alan Fine (symbolic interaction), and Erving Goffman (interaction ritual). For Collins (2004), macro-level organizations and institutions are fundamentally abstract heuristics, which cannot be directly seen in their entirety. To put it another way, in order to know the nature and purpose of an organization or institution that exists at the macro level, we need to understand how actors make sense of it at the micro level. According to Collins (1980, p. 190)

> "'Organisations' and 'positions' are thing-like in their solidity only because they are continuously and repeatedly enacted in a series of micro-situations. They are solid to the extent that they are taken for granted and thus smoothly re-enacted, minute by minute and day after day; but without this process of continual social definition, they cease to exist".

Building on Durkheim and Goffman, Collins (2001, 2004) develops a concept of emotional energy, engendered in face-to-face interactions, which provides people with awareness of teams and motives to take part in collective actions.

The human act, according to Blumer (1966, p. 537), "is self-directed or built up means in no sense that the actor necessarily exercises excellence in its construction". Blumer (1969, p. 8) developed the theory of symbolic interactionism, which "recognizes social interaction to be of vital importance in its own right". Symbolic interaction rests on three fundamental propositions: "that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them", "that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one

has with one's fellows", and "that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). More recently, there have been revived efforts among scholars in the tradition of symbolic interactionism to investigate the outcomes and consequences of emotional experience along with affect control (Fine, 1993). A common purpose of these theoretical frameworks is to highlight the role played by subjective experience in individual action, in the context of social interaction.

Interaction ritual, for Goffman (1967), is a pursuit – whether casual or profane – constituting "a way in which the individual must guard and design the symbolic implications of his acts while in the immediate presence of an object that has special value for him" (p. 57). Goffman examines rituals in the everyday-life face-to-face interactions that constitute substantial social experience. For Goffman, the social object that has special value is not just the cross or waterhole but profoundly the self in micro-level interactions.

The self is described by Goffman (1959) as a "*character*" – "a product of a scene that comes off … The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited" (pp. 244-245). Building on prominent social theorists like William James and George Herbert Mead, Goffman (1963) fundamentally raises a social construction view of the social self as a social product in essence, which inhabits "the special mutuality of immediate social interaction" (p. 16). Individuals become the self when they are "mobilized" as "self-regulating participants in social encounters" through ritual (Goffman, 1967, p. 44).

Goffman devotes sections and a book to analysing face-to-face encounters. A face-to-face encounter or a social event, according to Goffman (1961), entails "a single visual and

cognitive focus of attention; a mutual and preferential openness to verbal communication; a heightened mutual relevance of acts; an eye-to-eye ecological huddle that maximizes each participant's opportunity to perceive the other participants' monitoring of him" (pp. 17-18). "Some social occasions … have a fairly sharp beginning and end, and fairly strict limits on attendance and tolerated activities" (Goffman, 1963, pp. 18-19). They are often begun and ended with "some ceremony or ritual expression" (Gamson, 1985, pp. 607-608), what Mueller (2018, p. 24) terms "temporal brackets". The beginning is frequently marked by certain acts that create a focus of attention, while the end involves some acts or gestures that indicate a close of the focus (Gamson, 1985).

Goffman (1961) claims that there are some special events in which the involvement of participants and the rules of engagement are oriented towards converting face-to-face encounters into something relating to status. He argues that admission to such focused gatherings is predetermined by the status system. The "outside world" might subsequently be considered as "irrelevant", according to the "rules of irrelevance" whereby certain properties of participants are considered as non-existent or, at least, "held at bay" (Goffman, 1961). Mangham (2005, p. 95) recognized that in some situations, "managers – like actors – could and did put as much effort into promoting, reinforcing, repairing or restoring the special status of such encounters as they did into creating and re-creating it".

One can mention a wide range of examples of face-to-face encounters. For instance, a long chapter in Goffman's *Encounters* is allocated to "fun in games". However, one type of encounters that is of particular interest in the organization and management literature is the project team meeting (Mueller *et al*., 2013; Samra-Fredericks, 2003, 2004; Whittle *et al*., 2015). According to Solomon *et al.* (2013, p. 195), private meetings are "a predominantly cosmetic, theatrical and empty exercise" bracketed by ritualistic beginnings and closings. Martin (2014, p. 177) describes regular morning meetings at Royal Bank of Scotland as "a

wearing litany of problems, game-playing and blame-dodging". Each organizational meeting is a frontstage and has a corresponding backstage "where each game played, each blame-allocation accomplished" (Mueller, 2018, p. 24).

Frontstage and backstage performances

Perhaps the most prominent work in the dramaturgical study of face-to-face interactions is Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), wherein he seeks to understand social life with respect to the crafting of stage performances. Goffman's theatrical performance is based on two basic premises: first, performances should be addressed to a group of audiences, and the role of the audiences is crucial; secondly, any performance consists of a "frontstage" and a "backstage".

In Goffman's (1959) conception, a performance includes "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (p. 32). Those to whom the performance is presented are seen as the "audience". A performance, for Goffman (1959, p. 32), is enacted through the usage of "front", to put it another way, through the employment of "expressive equipment" like "furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items", which create the setting for the action that unfolds. Front also includes a more personal character regarding the "insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like" (Goffman, 1959, p. 34). Goffman (1959, p. 40) sees any performance as a "dramatic realization" wherein performers convey to audiences what they wish to express.

Audiences have certain expectations and standards of a performance and therefore of actors who deliver it. Communicative actions are subsequently converted into moral ones (Goffman, 1959). As Goffman (1959, p. 243) puts, "[a]s performers we are merchants of

morality". Through face-to-face interaction, stage performance is "selectively presented, selectively responded to, and selectively adequate to sustaining the working consensus on which interaction depends" (Manning, 2008, pp. 680-681). The space of the performance is a "liminal" space (Turner, 1969) that is "neither here nor there"; it is "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention" (p. 95).

If a performance is "well oiled" and successful, "impressions will flow" (Goffman, 1959, p. 245) to the extent that the performer's projection of a given situation is compatible with the audience's definition and expectation of it. A working consensus on performance will emerge between performers and audiences. In most cases, performers need to undertake some "defensive practices" (Goffman 1959, p. 24) in exchange for a successful performance. For instance, "a certain bureaucratization of the spirit is expected so that we can be relied upon to give a perfectly homogeneous performance at every appointed time" (Goffman, 1959, p. 64). The performer should also be circumspect and prudent in their organization and conduct of the performance. Furthermore, a certain degree of "dramaturgical loyalty" (Goffman, 1959, p. 207) is needed to protect the impression if the performance is enacted by a team. In turn, audiences will be expected to undertake some "protective practices" in order to stabilize the situation. This will include, for instance, "saving the show" (Whittle *et al.*, 2020) by presenting tact along with pretending not to detect a gaffe on the part of performers.

The organization and conduct of any performance involve a certain degree of uncertainty and risk. A performance's success depends crucially on remaining a marked distinction between the "frontstage" and the "backstage" (Goffman, 1959). The frontstage is the part of the performance that can be seen by audiences; it is the place where "the audience can be held in a state of mystification in regard to the performer" (Goffman, 1959, p. 74). In most cases, frontstage performances are designed to provide signs that hinted at capability and knowledge, as Goffman (1959, p. 36) explains, "[m]any service occupations offer their

clients a performance that is illuminated with dramatic expressions of cleanliness, modernity, competence, and integrity". Frontstage performances include philanthropic activities, which generate a "sense of higher purpose" (Mandis, 2013, p. 238) that resource-rich actors are like charities, about more than money.

By contrast, the back stage is the region in which the performance is prepared and rehearsed. Within this region, performers can "drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character" without being concerned about the observation by audiences (Goffman, 1959, p. 115; Tomazos *et al.*, 2017). Indeed, "performers act in a relatively informal, familiar, relaxed way while backstage" (Goffman, 1959, p. 132). Backstage is variously used in organizations. For example, Compernolle (2018, p. 900) finds that "[t]he construction of impressions of consistency and transparency takes place mainly backstage, through time-consuming teamwork shared by auditors and CFOs". The backstage is also used by management accountants to prepare, craft and rehearse their client-facing performances (Goretzki and Messner, 2019). In the backstage interactions, team members "might converse in confidence about their separate, or joint, suffering" (Mueller, 2018, p. 24).

According to Goffman (1959, p. 126), backstage workers strive to "achieve technical standards", whereas frontstage workers are expected to "achieve expressive ones". This has become the basis for Meyer and Rowan's (1977, p. 358) argument that "assuring that individual participants maintain face sustains confidence in the organization, and ultimately reinforces confidence in the myths that rationalize the organization's existence". The frontstage requires to keep "pure", maintain an appropriate "public decorum", and "dirt" is often restricted to the backstage, the "private places" where performers are allowed to "let expression fall from their faces" (Goffman, 1963, pp. 9-25). This is confirmed by Mair and Hehenberger (2014, p. 1174) who find that "front-stage interactions in public spaces are

important in making models accessible to a broad audience, whereas backstage interactions in protected spaces allow models to be deconstructed".

It is worth noting that the backstage is not considered as "more real" than the frontstage (Goffman, 1959, p. 72). Goffman (1961) does not argue that the frontstage is constructed for profane interactions while the backstage is constructed for sacred interactions: in most cases, "it may not even be necessary to decide which is the more real, the fostered impression or the one the performer attempts to prevent the audience from receiving" (Goffman, 1959, p. 72). Rather, they can be considered as different approaches to "framing" the situation (Goffman, 1974), namely, offering "different ways of defining the situation, i.e. 'what is going on here?' and 'what sort of behaviour is expected?'" (Whittle and Mueller, 2009, p. 133).

John Austin developed the idea of performative utterance in his famous book *How to Do Things with Words*. This idea and the associated notion of performativity have been used and interpreted by management and organization scholars to understand performance (Guérard et al., 2013), organizational routines (Feldman and Pentland, 2003) and rational decision-making (Cabantous and Gond, 2011). From Austin's (1962) view, utterances are delivered to convey meaning (locutionary acts), intent (illocutionary acts) and effect (perlocutionary acts). Building on Austin, Searle (1969) identified five illocutionary points speakers can achieve in a speech – assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declaratory. Speakers meet the *assertive* point by representing the situation of the world, the *directive* point by attempting to enable listeners to do something, the *commissive* point by committing themselves to something, the *expressive* point by expressing their attitudes about facts and objects in the world and the *declaratory* point by carrying out things in the world when speaking merely because of saying that they carry out. While there exists a body of research into illocutionary acts, we know much less about how events are performed to

achieve the points. In this thesis, I seek to shed light on the asymmetries between frontstage and backstage and how these asymmetries are amplified through the performative agenda presented in the staged event content.

The empirical literature on events in organizational life

Events – for long seen as temporal social occurrences – take place in time-space at multiple levels, from the micro individual level to the macro contextual level, and their outcomes and consequences can move throughout organizational life (Morgeson *et al*., 2015). What is surprising is that organizational researchers have largely failed to provide a detailed analysis of the role played by events in the functioning and development of organizational fields. This is a major gap in our extant understanding of organizational phenomena. Although some events have been investigated and considered as belonging to the broader process flow (Langley *et al.*, 2013), the primary focus of scholars has been on the enduring characteristics of the work context as the main cause of organizational phenomena. Some researchers have studied events in different types, including affective events (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), anchoring events (Ballinger and Rockmann, 2010), daily life events (Langston, 1994), embedded organizational events (Peterson, 1998), justice events (Rupp and Paddock, 2010), momentous events (Pillemer, 2001), novel and disruptive events (Morgeson, 2005), work events (Ilies *et al.*, 2011; Mignonac and Herrbach, 2004), daily negative events (Lavallee and Campbell, 1995), stressful life events (Holmes and Rahe, 1967) and rare events (Latané and Darley, 1969), yet without particular focus on staged events.

Events, discrete and bounded in time and space, differ widely from one type to another. Harvey and Maclean (2020) propose a typology of events that become meaningful and have capacities to influence organizational life. In their conceptualization, the event system is defined as a complex of two interacting components: event duration (whether an event is fixed or open-ended) and event orchestration (whether an event is highly or lowly

orchestrated). When these distinctions are juxtaposed, four generic event types emerge, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2, labelled 'rendition', 'sequence', 'bout' and 'perturbation'. Renditions and bouts typically take place at a prescribed time and last for a set period, while sequences and perturbations extend over time, with a stronger impact. Examples of renditions include orchestral and theatrical performances where the outcome substantially is known at the beginning. Examples of bouts include sporting contests where the outcome is uncertain at the beginning or meetings called between conflicted parties to resolve a problem. Marches and protests within the context of social movements like black lives matter are examples of sequences to which there is no predetermined end. Crises emerging seemingly out of nowhere like the COVID 19 pandemic are illustrative of perturbations. Staged events, considered here in relation to elite philanthropy, are of fixed duration and involve differing degrees of orchestration, and thus fall into the categories of rendition and bout, as will be seen in later chapters.

Figure 2.2: Generic Typology of Events

	Duration	
	Fixed	Open-ended
High	Rendition	Sequence
Low	Bout	Perturbation

(Orchestration is the vertical axis label, High/Low)
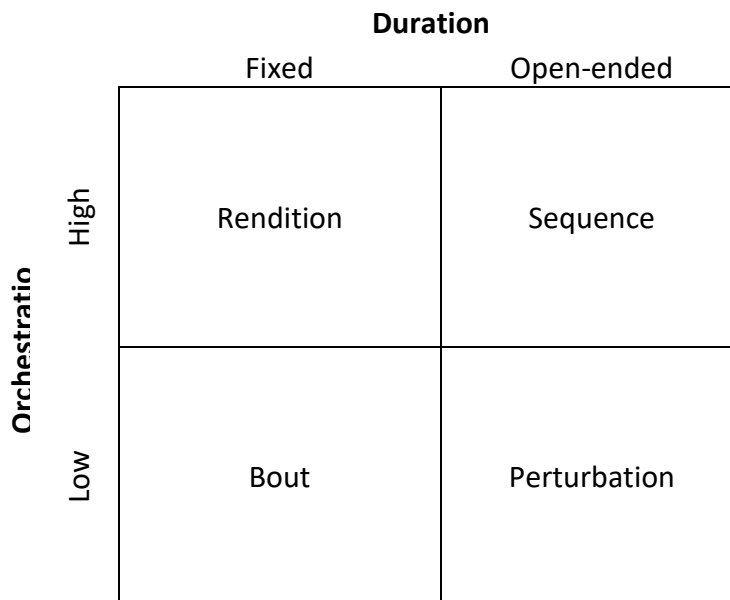
Source: Harvey and Maclean (2020)

Process theory involves understanding event patterns and how they result in particular outcomes (Pentland, 1999). This indicates a research tradition which comprises "stories about

what happened and who did what when – that is, events, activities, and choices ordered over time" (Langley, 1999, p. 692). As a more recent contribution to organization studies, process theory has been developed based on the philosophical assumption that "natural existence consists in and is best understood in terms of processes instead of things – of modes of change rather than fixed stabilities" (Rescher, 1996, p. 7). Process scholars see events as fundamental to the process of sensemaking, describing them as complex (Cornelissen, 2012), confusing and uncertain (Sonenshein, 2007), discrepant (Weick, 1995), disruptive (Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012), interrupted (Weick, 1995), surprising (Louis, 1980; Maitlis, 2005), unusual (Vaara, 2003) and unexpected (Nigam and Ocasio, 2010).

Events fabricate organizational structures (Morgeson and Hofman, 1999), which can be dynamic, bringing about change that has macro impacts. Recent research on organizational meetings has captured the process of change by understanding strategizing and strategy work. The focus of this body of literature is on project team meetings wherein "strategies are proposed, debated, modified, contested, agreed upon, and argued over" (Mueller, 2018, p. 24). Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) revealed how "closed meetings" are used by top managers to "prepare their responses to the agenda for open meetings" (p. 1403) and to "stage-manage" (p. 1412) the appeal of strategic ideas. Whittle *et al.* (2020) also identify the role of an "informal update" meeting held by strategists both as "a frontstage audience" and as "a backstage rehearsal" (p. 25). The detailed analyses of strategy work and strategizing provided in these studies have helped us to identify the factors that might influence organizational life; however, their findings are unlikely to hold in other situations, particularly in staged events. Although staged events have been the main social occurrences through which organizational fields are shaped and developed, their role has not been fully studied and understood. This lacuna is addressed in this thesis.

Framing and sensemaking

Goffman (1974) elaborated a sociological version of framing, which has attracted considerable attention from literature in the field of organization studies (Cornelissen *et al.*, 2011; Creed *et al.*, 2002). In his *Frame Analysis*, Goffman (1974, p. 127) holds that "[t]he first issue is not interaction but frame". He highlights "the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events" (Goffman, 1974, p. 10). It "appear[s] to be what is really going on, in fact what is actually happening is plainly a joke, or a dream, or an accident, or a mistake, or a misunderstanding, or a deception, or a theatrical performance, and so forth" (Goffman, 1974, p. 10). For Goffman (1974), activities like "stage plays, planned con operations, experiments, and rehearsals, once begun, tend to foreclose other frame possibilities and require sustaining a definition of the situation in the face of diversions" (p. 499).

Goffman (1974) defines frames as "schemata of interpretation" through which social actors can "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete situations" (p. 21). Frames help to give occurrences or events meanings and therefore serve to organize experience and facilitate interaction. Collective action frames also accomplish this function through simplifying and compressing respects of the "world out there", yet in a way that is "intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support" (Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 198). The scale and scope of such frames are often restricted to a collection of linked issues or to a particular group's interests. However, some frames are broad with respect to scope and scale, "functioning as a kind of master algorithm that colors and constrains the orientations and activities of other movements" (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 618).

Drawing on William James and Alfred Schutz's insights, Goffman develops a highly complex analysis of framing. He argues that just like actors on the front stage often voice aloud their purposes so that audiences can follow them, sometimes agents in organizational

life do the same "most evidently when an individual finds he must do something that might be misconstrued as blameworthy by strangers" (Goffman, 1974, p. 564). Building on the earlier framing of Goffman, Abolafia (2004) identifies a related group of "framing moves", conceived as the "strategic actions" taken by team members "to contest or maintain existing frames" (p. 351). Framing moves involve actions such as "casting doubt, pre-empting the old frame, and 'spinning' the new one" (Abolafia, 2004, p. 351). For Abolafia (2004), "policy meetings are largely about meaning work", namely, "the struggle over ideas and meaning construction" (p. 351).

Sensemaking is a crucial organizational activity that takes place when agents encounter events that are complicated and obscure (Weick, 1993, 1995). According to Weick (1993), "[t]he basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs" (p. 635). By examining how actors understand the events in which they participate, many sensemaking studies have advanced our knowledge of how social actors seek to "structure the unknown" (Waterman, 1990, p. 41). This is accomplished either by activating extant narratives (Gioia and Thomas, 1996) or by discursively constructing realities to create new narratives (Antaki, 1994). In either case, sensemaking enables individuals to handle the ambivalence and vagueness through the production of plausible narratives of the social world that facilitate interaction. Hence "sensemaking both precedes decision making and follows it" (Maitlis, 2005, p. 21). As Weick (1993, p. 636) puts, sensemaking offers "clear questions and clear answers" that seek to strengthen decision making, which in turn stimulates the unexpected that create situations for sensemaking.

2.5 Conclusion

This section summarizes the components of the conceptual framework I use to study elite staged philanthropic events. It outlines the key theoretical notions, and how they inform the

research project. These key notions are employed to frame the study's guiding research questions, as well as, in the following chapter, the overall design of the research. The challenge for this research is to formulate its work at the processual level, while acknowledging that activities at the structural level represent a fundamental causal force that produces effects and consequences. Accordingly, this study draws on Bourdieusian and Goffmanian social theory, with the goal of examining both the structural and processual dynamics of actors-working-a-room for the purpose of philanthropy.

Staged philanthropic events are full of attempts to bring together a diverse cast of elite actors from different business and professional fields for a temporarily purposeful interaction that can mobilize actual and potential resources to make a difference to the lives of people. Unsurprisingly, one cannot take-for-granted entry to staged philanthropic events without a high level of capital and the proper dispositions that signal membership of elite groups. In other words, attendance at staged philanthropic events is predetermined, and high-profile attendees are situated in a matrix of power relations where they are invited to mingle with social and positional equals. A cornerstone of my conceptual framework addresses the manifestation of power within elite staged philanthropic events, and for this I draw on Bourdieusian social theory. Bourdieu's concepts of class, field, capital, doxa and the field of power are used to explore the internal logic and structure of staged events within the field of elite philanthropy.

Further, I draw on Goffman's concept of frontstage/backstage to capture the processes through which elite philanthropic events unfold. Unintended consequences of staged events partly come about unnoticed, since certain acts have lives on the back stage before being performed on the front stage. In this study, I examine both the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events in the manner of *as-they-enact*. How participating elites discuss philanthropy in the event (the public transcript) and what they actually think

(the hidden transcript) are explored to reveal the role of staged philanthropic events in fashioning new agendas and directions within the dynamics of temporal agency.

While staged philanthropic events undoubtedly play a crucial role in the lives of elite members of society, there is no systematic explanation currently available as to how they contribute to the shaping of elite agendas and the strategic mobilisation of resources within the field of power. The rules, purpose and outcomes of the 'staged event game', the dynamics of networked collective action and, most importantly for my purpose here, how and why staged events are conjured up and orchestrated are issues on which the literature is largely silent. In fact, the research on focused gatherings has drawn much attention to organizational meetings where strategy praxis takes place. By focusing on relatively stable and routine patterns of action, however, existing studies of organizational meetings lack recognition of some of the exogenous and dynamic aspects of focused gatherings.

I adopt this nuanced understanding of staged events in this thesis. The objective of this literature review has been to bring concept clarity and theoretical discipline to an important but overlooked topic of 'elite staged philanthropic events'. This thesis aims to fill this gap by addressing the following research questions:

1. What is the context in which elite staged philanthropic events take place in the UK? (Chapter 4)

2. How is power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events? (Chapter 5)

3. What are the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events? (Chapter 6)

4. How do elite staged philanthropic events work to achieve performative purposes? (Chapter 7)

The four guiding research questions are explored in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 respectively on *context*, *power*, *performance* and *process* of elite staged philanthropic events. Each of these

chapters is focused on answering a single core research question. Moving away from theoretical discussions relating to staged events and elite philanthropy, the next two chapters lay the empirical foundations for my research. Chapter 3 describes how I pursue the research from a methodological point of view, introducing the specific methods used in collecting and analysing data. This is followed by a contextual chapter in which I examine the composition and dimensions of the philanthropic field in the UK. I compare the situation in the UK with that in the US and present original data on the frequency of philanthropic events. In doing so, I establish that staged events of different types are a prominent feature within the philanthropic landscape, occurring sufficiently often to constitute what Bourdieu (1990) might call a dispositional structuring-structure within the field of elite philanthropy.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes elite staged philanthropic events as a research domain and explains how I approach the subject from a methodological standpoint. I begin by clarifying and elaborating on the philosophical foundation of this research before introducing my research questions, which have been framed to guide the related theoretical and empirical lines of enquiry. After describing my research design, I explain the methods used to collect data and analyse the cases selected for examination.

3.2 Research philosophy

This research is guided by the philosophical assumption that reality in the field of elite staged philanthropic events is socially constructed and defined by knowledgeable agents in the field, including event professionals, foundation leaders, leading philanthropists and high-profile attendees from different business and professional fields. This constructivist ontological approach to the empirical world "deals best with *what* people construct and *how* this social construction process unfolds" (Charmas, 2008, p. 397; Holstein and Gubrium, 2008). Following the manner suggested by Silverman (2016), I treat what happens in elite staged philanthropic events as a theme in its own right, focusing attention on how different types of participants "fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). In line with existing studies of staged events, I see action as a key focus and view it as emerging within socially constructed situations "that are developed from whole cloth in the mind of the constructor" (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p. 239).

Epistemologically, novel insights have been developed through my interactions with event actors – in observations and interviews – but also through hermeneutics, more

specifically, the interpretation and reflection of the meanings of event-specific documents, including event brochures, meeting minutes, seating plans and promotional materials. I have taken the approach that generally starts with hermeneutics, then moves to dialectically understand the construction of event actors' individual realities, expecting that findings will appear through this dual-track research process.

3.3 Research questions

Some time ago, Piketty and Saez (2003) observed that wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated and that inequality has proved a stubbornly persistent segment of the human condition. I agree with this observation and have become aware that elite staged philanthropic events, from fundraising dinners to charitable award ceremonies, provide opportunities for transferring the structures and practices of institutionalized inequality by engaging dominant agents from a wide range of professional and business fields. However, while we understand the importance of organizing and conducting staged events for society, we know little about the role that they play in functioning, developing and maintaining the field. This thesis seeks to address this gap by revealing the micro-processes that different types of elite staged philanthropic events unfold within the field. Specifically, I pose four guiding research questions:

1. What is the context in which elite staged philanthropic events take place in the UK?
2. How is power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events?
3. What are the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events?
4. How do elite staged philanthropic events work to achieve performative purposes?

3.4 Research design

I pursued my research qualitatively employing a multiple case design to address the focal research questions at hand. This section begins with a brief explanation of the rationale that

underlines the research. After outlining my overarching research design, I introduce a diverse set of cases which were purposively selected from a population of high-profile staged events in the UK philanthropic field.

Rationale

Conducting the research in a single field, UK philanthropy, minimized potential variance caused by comparisons between two or more fields. Using qualitative procedures was considered as being appropriate for this research for three reasons. First, staged events in the philanthropic field were organized and conducted in complex relational settings where temporal dynamics were not transparent and the motivations, expectations, and perceptions of participating actors were obscure. Secondly, the data needed to be collected at both the structural and processual levels. Face-to-face interactions may fruitfully be analysed through use of abductive reasoning by which event patterns emerged and micro-processes unfolded. Thirdly, this study was motivated by "theory elaboration" (Lee *et al.*, 1999), a process through which I compared pre-existing understandings with examined events with a goal of extending existing theory. Mintzberg (1979) suggests that "theory building seems to require rich description, the richness that comes from anecdote … it is only through the use of this 'soft' data that we are able to 'explain' them" (p. 587). A qualitative approach is particularly valued as providing what Geertz (1973) terms "thick description" in which "the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard" (Denzin, 1989, p. 83).

Overarching research design

The study design involves academic literature, structured empirical inputs, less structured empirical inputs and grey literature (see Figure 3.1), each of which is used to understand how staged philanthropic events are organized and managed by elite actors operating within the local or national field of power.

Figure 3.1: Research design

Academic literature

- Bourdieusian social theory – class, capital theory, field theory, doxa, field of power
- Elite philanthropic networking – elite theory, social capital and networks, elite philanthropy
- Events and process theory – sociology of interaction, frontstage/backstage, framing and sensemaking

Structured empirical inputs

- Core cases: 8 staged philanthropic events
- Observations: 12 staged events and 15 related meetings
- 41 interviews: 7 event owners, 7 venue providers, 8 event managers, 8 event sponsors, 11 event guests
- Documents

Less structured empirical inputs

- Observations: 2 staged philanthropic events
- 4 interviews: 1 event manager, 2 event owners, 1 event guest
- 9 philanthropist interviews conducted by other members of the Newcastle Centre for Research on Entrepreneurship, Wealth and Philanthropy (REWP)

Grey literature

- Websites – Charity Times, City Philanthropy, Institute of Fundraising, Inside Philanthropy, Third Sector, Third Force News etc.
- Newspapers and magazines – The Chronicle of Philanthropy, Philanthropy News Digest etc.
- Social media – Twitter

At the theoretical level, I draw on three bodies of literature – Bourdieusian social theory, elite philanthropic networking, events and process theory. These literatures serve as my points of departure for theorizing the role of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. At the empirical level, my on-site fieldwork involves two types of data collection and analysis – structured and less structured – the latter allowing me to gather miscellaneous materials for the study. On the structured side, I incorporated eight cases of

elite staged philanthropic events into the research. Among the sources of data that I used to construct these case studies were observation, interviews and documents. On the less structured side, I consulted notes from observations conducted at one national book launch and one local scholarship showcase as well as interviews with four event actors and nine philanthropists for contextual information regarding how staged events work in the UK philanthropic field. As the research proceeded, I attempted to validate the emerging insights by employing supplemental data, especially reports and commentaries from government, social media and practice related sources. Throughout the research period, I used idea booklets to record reflections and interpretations of data collected and analysed. These ongoing, iterative theorization efforts led to the development of fresh understandings of staged philanthropic events and provided the building blocks for the conceptual framework that finally emerged.

Cases

Lack of previous research on staged events in the philanthropic field means the subject is open to original theorization. By the same token, however, great uncertainty exists at the outset as to what theoretical framework might ultimately emerge from the data. Using case studies is well suited to my goal of generating theory in a field where few studies or theory exists (Yin, 2009). I have been able to study processes as they unfolded over time (Langley, 1999), using the "controlled opportunism" approach to respond flexibly to novel insights gained when collecting and analysing data (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The research draws on a multi-case design that enables a replication logic by which the selected cases are used to confirm or disconfirm observations (Yin, 2009). I identified four types of staged philanthropic events – fundraisers, award ceremonies, assemblies, and conferences – and collected data on two events (one national and one local) for each type within the UK, making eight core cases in all. My sample of eight is larger than required to

reach theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), yet this larger sample enables me to detect the consistent patterns across the chosen events and increases my confidence in understanding the role that they play in functioning, maintaining and developing the organizational field.

The particular events were selected purposively, not at random (Siggelkow, 2007). I used three criteria to select cases. First, staged events have to involve the strategic mobilization of actual and potential resources and the elicitation of philanthropic commitment within the local or national field of power. Secondly, they have to provide high-quality access and be representative exemplars of their types within the philanthropic field, heightening process comparability. Thirdly, I have to be allowed to investigate both the relational structures and the ongoing flow of activities in staged events. The final sample includes two assemblies which satisfied accountability requirements and approved policies, two fundraisers designed to raise money for charitable causes that promised social betterment, two award ceremonies celebrating achievements in philanthropy, and two conferences at which philanthropy professionals exchanged ideas about best practice. Figure 3.2 provides further details of the core cases.

Figure 3.2: Core cases of elite staged philanthropic events studied

National	Local
National Assembly	**Local Assembly**
- Number of attendees: 45 - Sponsored by a financial services company, a law firm and a consultancy firm - The National Assembly approved the minutes of the last AGM and delivered a summary review of the work undertaken by a charitable association over the past financial year.	- Number of attendees: 150 - Sponsored by a marketing agency - The Local Assembly included a celebration of a community foundation's recent work and the launch of its newly refreshed brand identity and website.

(Row label: **Assembly**)

	National	Local
Fundraiser	**National Fundraiser** • Number of attendees: 820 • Sponsored by three real estate firms, a private equity firm, a law firm and a jewellery firm • Celebrating its 11th year, the National Fundraiser provided an opportunity for the property industry elite to come together for a day's racing while raising funds for five children's charities in the UK.	**Local Fundraiser** • Number of attendees: 250 • Sponsored by an accountancy firm • Established as the premier women-only networking lunch in the North East, the Local Fundraiser celebrated women in philanthropy while raising money for a women's fund and a local numeracy and literacy project.
Award Ceremony	**National Award Ceremony** • Number of attendees: 145 • Sponsored by a multinational investment banking company • The National Award Ceremony, held bi-annually, recognised and celebrated achievements of individuals, couples and families in the UK said to have brought about lasting social change through their generosity.	**Local Award Ceremony** • Number of attendees: 450 • Sponsored by an investment management company and an accountancy firm • The Local Award Ceremony was organized to recognise the work undertaken by charities and individual fundraisers in the North East while celebrating businesses that had supported good causes in the region.
Conference	**National Conference** • Number of attendees: 310 • Sponsored by four financial services companies. • The National Conference was themed as "Leading for Local Good". It attracted delegates from the UK, the US, Europe, Canada and further afield to the UK's largest gathering of professionals involved in philanthropy and the third sector	**Local Conference** • Number of attendees: 2,603 • Sponsored by a law firm, two financial services companies, an accountancy firm and a university. • The Local Conference was billed as a Festival of Philanthropy for the North East. Lasting three weeks with 44 events, it surveyed the history of philanthropy while celebrating and raising awareness of what philanthropy had achieved in the region.

In spite of not constituting in all aspects "polar types" (Pettigrew, 1990), such type and geographic variety strengthen "the representativeness of the sample and the

generalizability of the results" (Graebner and Eisenhardt, 2004, p. 368). The multi-case design is embedded, which allows for approaches to collecting diverse contextual data regarding the wider field, while according particular attention to the primary unit of analysis (Yin, 2009). In-depth case studies of high-profile gatherings are inherently risky as they need high quality access to resource-rich actors and highly confidential data in face-to-face interactions, which may account for lack of research on staged events in the philanthropic field. In this study, however, rich data and privileged access to multiple types of elite staged philanthropic events were, perhaps unusually, obtained over a 24-month period (February 2017 to January 2019 inclusive).

3.5 Methods

In what follows, I examine the nature, purpose and process of elite staged philanthropic events through documents, interviews and observations. These multiple sources enable me to triangulate insights from both real-time and retrospective data to create an in-depth understanding of how events unfold over time (Leonard-Barton, 1990). I take up each of these methods in turn in the course of this section.

Observation

I observed how staged philanthropic events were organized and conducted in their natural settings through "detailed observation of interactions", which not only "serve[d] to provide a descriptions of the group structure" (Whyte, 1941, p. 656), but also helped me to follow how networked collective action was shaped by different parties and what the philanthropic elite actually did in temporal-relational settings. I first studied the organizing dimension of the staged events through planning meetings that comprised the processes of 'event design'. These brainstorms were an essential part of data sources because the negotiated processes of interaction which needed event organizers to accommodate the interests of various stakeholders as well as to make and formalize decisions were highly explicit.

I systematically observed the staged events sampled, which lasted between 50 minutes and three weeks. During the course of observing each staged event, I focused on the ongoing interactions that took place on the stage. The interplay between attendees and events within an organizational context that both produced and was a product of certain actions was observed and recorded. More specifically, along with participants' verbal communication, group-level indicators (attendance, programme and event duration), physical devices (venue, decorations and room layout) and routines (timing, locations and seating plan) were collected.

Occasionally, I was able to observe debriefing sessions in which organizing committees evaluated the effectiveness of the events and planned legacies that were organizationally oriented. Ethnographic data became available by means of informal conversation and discussion that occurred in activities like lunches and coffee breaks. These records, though not systematic, added depth to the observational data and enabled greater understanding of how participants made sense of staged events through their "meaning-making in vivo and in situ" (Zilber, 2007, p. 1051).

In all, I observed 14 staged events and 15 related meetings from the structured and less structured empirical stages and entered them into a database indexed by case and date. I wrote up detailed field notes within 24 hours, as suggested by Yin (2009), to back up tape recordings. All of these observational materials provide the study with real-time data, which "suggests a framework of significant behaviour patterns and indicates subjects that are relevant for discussion with informants" (Whyte, 1941, p. 662).

Interviews

I conducted 41 semi-structured interviews with seven event owners, eight event sponsors, eight event managers, eleven event guests and seven venue providers to address aspects of the staged events that I did not directly observe, such as the event's history, participants' motivations, expectations and perceptions, and outcomes and evaluations of the events. Event

owners are the individuals or organizations who chair the events, and event managers are those who organize and ensure the events are run smoothly and in a timely fashion. Subject biases were mitigated by multiple types of informants (Golden, 1992; Miller *et al.*, 1997) who played different roles in staged events and who were likely to hold different views of and interests in emerging situations and interactions. Apart from using uniform prompts to ensure consistency, I employed a series of open-ended questions to encourage interviewees to "engage in a stream of consciousness" (Gioia and Thomas, 1996, p. 374) and reflect on the issues and actions that they considered as important (Langley, 1989).

I used findings from the observations to develop an interview guide for event managers. The pro forma began with an invitation to tell us about the main types of high-profile philanthropic events that the event manager has organized in the present role or in previous roles, then prompted the interviewee to give concrete examples of events with questions such as "What events are you most proud of and why?" "Could you 'walk me through' an event you think was especially successful – saying what went particularly well and why?" "If it's not too painful, could you 'walk me through' an event you think was less successful – saying what you think might have been improved?" and "Do you have any favourite 'war stories' – of things that may have begun badly but turned out well in the end?"

Subsequently, I directed discussion toward six major aspects of the event planning process: (1) the purpose of the event and what the event manager considered to be a successful outcome, (2) the main protocols that the event manager followed to help ensure that all attendees were satisfied with proceedings, (3) the main stages, activities and timelines of the planning, (4) the critical factors that made the event successful, (5) individuals and groups who were involved in commissioning, planning and running the event, and (6) event guests. The interview was ended with questions about the role that the philanthropic event

played in regenerating local communities and society-at-large. The final question was requesting the names of other participants who might generate fresh insights into the event.

Drawing on findings deriving from event manager interviews, in what follows, I carried out a second set of semi-structured interviews with event owners, event sponsors, event guests, and venue providers about their experience of organizing or attending the event. These interviews followed a much more open-ended style. Interviewees were given freedom to reconstruct interactions as they were involved in them, although probing questions were adopted to flesh-out details (e.g. "What attracted you to the event?" "What did you get out of the event?" "Did the event live up to your expectations?" etc.).

Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes on average, each recorded and subsequently transcribed. Immediately after an interview, I cross-checked facts and recorded my impressions. Several rules were followed for case analysis (Yin, 2009). First, I followed the "24-hour rule", which means that I wrote up detailed interview notes within a day of the interview. Secondly, I included all data, no matter how important it was upon interview. A third rule followed was to complete the interview notes with my own impressions of each staged event. I tried to sharpen the impressions by asking myself questions like "What did I learn from this interview?" "How was this interview different from other interviews?" On six occasions, follow-up questions were asked via email or phone when clarification was needed.

Documents

I collected two types of document – internal and external – which constituted a valuable primary data source and provided a way to verify the observations and interviews and control for the bias resulting from relying on a single source of data (Denzin, 1989; Eisenhardt, 1989), especially where analysis of retrospective data was involved (Golden, 1992). On the internal side, I gathered useful data from records such as invites, attendance lists, seating plans, event brochures and marketing materials. Such data were employed to guide and inform the process

of data collection, developing extensive structural and processual analyses of staged events, both for reconstructed actions and to complement retrospective and real-time data with collateral materials.

On the external side, I collected data documenting high-profile philanthropic events at both the national and local levels within the UK. Such access was considered as essential for understanding the nature of the field context during the study period and, more specifically, how this context was shaped by a wide range of staged events in which dominant agents actively engaged in strategic action of promoting philanthropic goals. The documentary sources I drew on to present my analysis of cases were gleaned from various provenances, including the Charities Aid Foundation, Charity Times, City Philanthropy, Civil Society, UK Community Foundations, GOV.UK, Inside Philanthropy, Institute of Fundraising, Third Force News, Third Sector, social media (Twitter), and press releases (The Chronicle of Philanthropy, Philanthropy News Digest, Philanthropy Journal, The Guardian).

The data collection process involves three phases. The study began with external documents, searching for traces of elites who were heavily involved in philanthropy and traces of staged events which held a prestigious and influential position within the UK philanthropic field, sorted into various types and levels. I then used the observation of two pilot events and interviews with four event stakeholders, to validate the identifications, constructing eight core cases of elite staged philanthropic events.

In phase two, different types of data were gathered for each of the cases. The retrospective components of interviews with event actors, combined with real-time observation of staged events, planning meetings, debriefing sessions, and other on-site ethnographic data, enabled me to investigate the social microprocesses as they unfolded. My understanding of real-time data was contextualized and deepened by retrospective data. In this phase, I also collected documents from the staged events and related meetings I attended.

At the end of the data collection process, I used the documentary evidence to check any missing information and ensure that the story of each staged event was as complete and thorough as possible. Documentation case descriptions, interview transcriptions and observational field notes constitute a full data set for case analysis. Using multiple data sources, together with continuously engaging in the field, boosts the validity and trustworthiness of the dataset (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Table 3.1 summarizes the data sources across the eight core cases of elite staged philanthropic events.

Table 3.1: Summary of data sources across core cases

Case	Observation	Interview	Document
National Assembly	• Staged event, 8 November 2017	• Event manager – 1 • Event owner – 1 • Event sponsor – 1 • Event guest – 1	• Invite • Agenda; draft minutes of the AGM 2016 • Yearbook 2017; standing orders • Trustees annual report and financial statements; balance sheet • Evaluation summary • Combined supplement • Tweets and press releases
Local Assembly	• Planning meeting, 1 November 2017 • Staged event, 1 November 2017	• Event manager – 1 • Event owner – 1 • Event sponsor – 1 • Event guest – 2 • Venue provider – 1	• Invite • Order of business; delegate list • Yearbook 2017 • Running orders • Minutes of the meeting attended • Combined supplement • Tweets and press releases
National Fundraiser	• Staged event, 14 July 2017	• Event manager – 1 • Event owner – 1 • Event sponsor – 1 • Event guest – 1	• Invite; application forms • Official programme; souvenir brochure; event information

		• Venue provider – 1	• Information for guests and table hosts • Delegate list; seating plan • Live auction lots; silent auction lots • Menu • Combined supplement • Tweets and press releases
Local Fundraiser	• Planning meeting, 2 March 2017 • Staged event, 3 March 2017 • Debriefing sessions, 9 March 2017 and 14 March 2017	• Event manager – 1 • Event owner – 1 • Event sponsor – 1 • Event guest – 1 • Venue provider – 1	• Invite • Event brochure • Speaker biography • Delegate list; seating plan • Evaluation summary • Minutes of all meetings attended • Combined supplement • Tweets and press releases
National Award Ceremony	• Staged event, 9 May 2017	• Event manager – 1 • Event sponsor – 1 • Event guest – 3 • Venue provider – 1	• Invite • Programme; event information • Previous winners brochure • Delegate list; seating plan • Evaluation summary • Previous events documents • Winner directory; sponsor directory • Information pack nominations • Combined supplement • Tweets and press releases
Local Award Ceremony	• Planning meeting: 19 July 2017 • Staged event, 28 September 2017	• Event manager – 1 • Event owner – 1 • Event sponsor – 2 • Event guest – 1	• Invite • Event brochure; event summary • Delegate list; seating plan

			Running order
		• Venue provider – 1	• Running order
• Previous events documents
• Combined supplement
• Tweets and press releases
National Conference	• Staged event, 12 – 14 September 2017	• Event manager – 1
• Event owner – 1
• Event guest – 1
• Venue provider – 1	• Invite
• Programme; conference information
• Delegate list; seating plan
• Exhibitor directory
• Evaluation summary
• Combined supplement
• Tweets and press releases
Local Conference	• Planning meetings, 8 February 2017; 19 July 2017, 6 September 2017, 25 October 2017, 12 December 2017, 10 January 2018, 24 January 2018, 28 February 2018, and 21 March 2018, 13 November 2018
• Staged events, 7 November 2018, 14 November 2018, 20 November 2018, 23 November 2018, 26 November 2018	• Event manager – 1
• Event owner – 1
• Event sponsor – 1
• Event guest – 1
• Venue provider – 1	• Invite
• Delegate list, seating plan
• Event summary
• Minutes of all meetings attended
• Evaluation report
• Combined supplement
• Tweets and press releases

3.6 Analysing the data

My analysis was directed by Van Maanen's (1988, p. 29) suggestion that this type of study "should be empirical enough to be credible and analytical enough to be interesting" and by Eisenhardt's (1989, p. 532) idea that "it is the connection with empirical reality that permits the development of a testable, relevant, and valid theory". Thus, I sought to tell stories based

on the in-depth analysis of interactions, a story about how different types of staged philanthropic events invoked the social microprocesses that facilitate the functioning and development of organizational fields.

I conducted two types of case analysis: within-case and cross-case. Within-case analysis concentrates on developing relationships and constructs to depict the process involved in a single staged philanthropic event, while cross-case analysis generates the framework of the role of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. Using the technique of constant comparison (Conrad, 1982; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), I triangulated the case data from different times and informants to identify the shared processes and concepts employed in organizing and conducting the staged philanthropic events. The framework of staged philanthropic events emerged during an iterative process of travelling back and forth between the growing body of data and the extant literature. It was largely the abduction reasoning (Locke *et al.*, 2008; Peirce, 1958) that enabled my empirical observations to be connected to extant conceptual ideas and develop fresh insights (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007). These methods "provide the basis for rigorous collection and analysis of qualitative data and assist in determining the sampling and content foci of later data collection" (Corley and Gioia, 2004, p. 183). Furthermore, they offer the basis for identifying issues and themes through the analysis of key thinking and acting processes involved in the staged events, along with ideas discussed by relevant stakeholders.

Data analysis involves two phases. First, I created transcripts of staged events, meetings and interviews and conducted a detailed discourse analysis of these transcripts along with documents and field notes. A single 'narrative', which can take various forms like 'stories' or 'factual description' (Antaki, 1994; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996), was the primary unit of analysis. Narratives typically involve the usage of "particular descriptions, narrative sequences of events, phrases, terms, figures of speech and metaphors" (Potter and

Wetherell, 1987; Whittle *et al.*, 2016, p. 1331). Two of these elements – metaphors and stories – emerged as particularly prominent in the analysis and therefore constituted a key focus of this thesis.

The data extracts analysed in this thesis were the relatively rare moments in which the relationship between staged events and elite philanthropy was explicitly "topicalized" (Edward and Potter, 1992), namely, became a "topic" of interaction. As my analysis will demonstrate, most of the time the role played by staged events in conducting elite philanthropy was not explicitly discussed. The excerpts I analyse are thus not presented as 'representative' or 'typical' extracts designed to indicate a wider range of such instances. Instead, the aim was to concentrate on particularly 'pivotal' and interesting moments in which a working "definition of the situation" (Goffman, 1959, p. 246; Thomas, 2002) of elite philanthropy was explicitly discussed in staged events.

Having discerned the 'pivotal moments', the second phase of analysis involved a thematic analysis of staged philanthropic events. The analysis was begun by identifying important statements through a systematic coding of the transcripts, documents and field notes before grouping them into themes, which described similar relationships, issues or ideas that were relevant to the case. As the study progressed, I began seeking similarities and differences between the themes, "a process that eventually reduces the germane categories to a more manageable manner" (Gioia *et al.*, 2012, p. 20). I then labelled those themes and considered patterns of action involved in staged philanthropic events. Some themes seemed more like process (e.g. making sense of the session), while others were more like structures or states (e.g. exercising power). Although my initial basic unit of analysis was individual staged philanthropic events, it soon became apparent that I was capturing both the structural and processual dynamics that spanned multiple themes. These methods, not linear, created a "recursive, process-oriented, analytic procedure" (Locke, 1996, p. 240), which did not cease

until the emerging conceptual relationships were clearly grasped and additional data failed to show new insights (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the methodological considerations of studying different types of staged events within the UK philanthropic field. The methodological challenge facing this research is the requirement for methods which enable me to study the micro-level situated interactions, while allowing opportunities to capture the more macro-level processes invoked over time on a larger scale (Pettigrew *et al.*, 2001, p. 697). The chosen methods are designed not to verify or disprove propositions, but to offer a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of elite staged philanthropic events, and also to enable a meaningful way of conceptualizing the role of staged events and their performance in shaping the organizational field. They provide phenomenological richness by revealing direct evidence of emerging patterns. The findings represent four perspectives: (1) staged events in the philanthropic field, (2) types of elite staged philanthropic events, (3) the staging of elite philanthropic events, and (4) the unfolding of elite staged philanthropic events. I find that staged events have an important role in maintaining and developing the philanthropic field. In short, they are consequential, reaching beyond the ceremonial to generate substantive outcomes.

Chapter 4
Staged Events in the Philanthropic Field

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the macro-space in which elite staged philanthropic events operate, guided by the question *what is the context in which elite staged philanthropic events take place in the UK?* It begins with a broad overview of the philanthropic field, introducing the logic and landscape of philanthropy, and offers insight into key trends in philanthropy over past decades and the characteristics of what is a highly stratified field. Following this, I compare and contrast philanthropy in the US and UK from the perspectives of fundraising, community foundations, independent foundations and elite philanthropy. Finally, the chapter concludes with an evaluation of the population of staged events in the philanthropic field, by exploring the number and representative examples of assemblies, fundraisers, award ceremonies and conferences in different parts of the UK.

4.2 The philanthropic landscape

Neo-liberalism, which has largely influenced the socio-economic policies and practices of many developed countries for the past three to four decades, has contributed to the rise of super-wealthy individuals, many of whom have profited from the transfer of resources from collective to personal ownership, contributing to the widening gap in incomes and wealth between the richest and poorest in the world (Harvey, 2010; Krugman, 2009). The state's incapacity to satisfy rising welfare needs has enabled the emergence of community minded philanthropists who move their concern from business success to social success, taking "voluntary action for the public good" (Payton and Moody, 2008, p. 28). Investing in local communities to which wealthy donors feel allegiance recalls Voltaire's (1759/1997) philosophy that "we must cultivate our garden", which is seen as a practical response to intractable issues. In recent years, philanthropists have aspired to global reach, thereby

confirming Giddens' (1991, p. 32) understanding of "the level of time-space distanciation introduced by high modernity" as "so extensive that, for the first time in human history, 'self' and 'society' are interrelated in a global milieu". Despite enduring distrust of such developments of private voluntary efforts, some governments have legitimated and incentivized philanthropy by giving tax breaks for donations by individuals and businesses and by granting nonprofit status to philanthropic foundations (Duquette, 2019; Guthrie and McQuarrie, 2008; Hall, 1992).

The growing importance of philanthropy has been recognized in a well-established body of literature in the subject areas of anthropology, economics, evolutionary biology, history, law and psychology (Andreoni and Payne, 2013; Brody, 2006; Hall, 1992; Lehmann and Keller, 2006; Piliavin and Charng, 1990). This scholarship has been informed by an enduring theoretical discussion and debate surrounding the true nature of gifts in wider society as a unique type of social exchange, in which the donation of money, time or skills has been understood variously as self-interest, altruism or reciprocity (Mauss, 2000). Whatever the case, philanthropists are sensitive to social failings that lead to deep-seated problems, including malnutrition, enduring poverty, high rates of infant mortality and illiteracy, and long-term employment, and pursue effective solutions that transcend both state and market mechanisms (Acs and Desai, 2007). They establish a moral community wherein a set of collective ethical standards and obligations brings together social actors from different fields (Harvey *et al.*, 2020; Villadsen, 2007).

Figure 4.1 surveys the philanthropic landscape, which provides the "non-contractual basis of the contract" (Durkheim, 1984) that potentially nurtures and revitalizes economic activities. The point for starting philanthropy is possessing economic resources above what a potential philanthropist considers necessary to satisfy their immediate needs. The primary source of philanthropic donations is wealthy individuals, couples and families whose incomes

derive not only from salaries but also from rents, profits from businesses owned, dividends on shareholdings, interest on savings, as well as capital gains on assets like houses and other real estate (Piketty and Saez, 2003). In contrast to regular employees, business owners and others accumulating vast personal fortunes have significant capabilities and potential for charitable giving (Breeze and Lloyd, 2013). This is particularly the case when they sell their businesses, fully or partially, what philanthropy professionals typically call "a liquidity event" through which an asset whose value is previously uncertain is turned into cash (Maclean and Harvey, 2020; Mathias *et al*., 2017). Individuals, couples and families invest funds in philanthropic causes and projects, most likely through the vehicle of "a philanthropic trust or foundation, which 'banks' the money, distributing grants in the future either from capital or the interest earned on 'endowed' funds" (Harvey *et al.,* 2018).

Figure 4.1: The philanthropic landscape
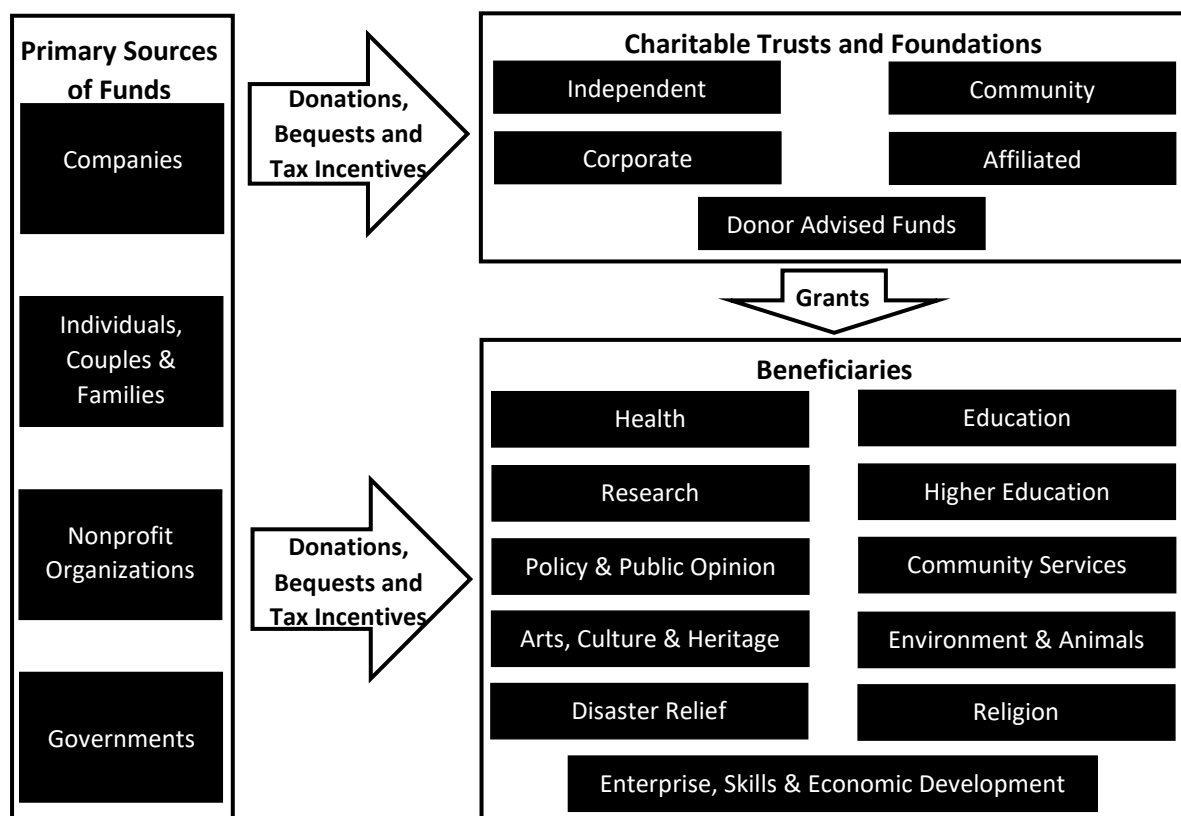
Source: Harvey *et al.* (2019)

In addition to yielding income for their owners, companies also make gifts, including in-kind and money donations, either as a stand-alone donor or alongside an affiliated foundation (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Himmelstein, 1997). This is known as 'corporate philanthropy' (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Smith, 1994) and is often criticized by shareholders as an improper way of employing surplus funds. Despite this, many companies choose to remain philanthropic, reflecting the great values of influential partners or shareholders and supporting the view that acting philanthropically might improve the long-term profitability of businesses (Dunfee, 2016; Moran and Branigan, 2016). Corporate philanthropy recently has been "typically incorporated into firms' engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), with its broader concern for companies' treatment of multiple stakeholders" (Barman, 2017, p. 275).

Nonprofit organizations can also distribute financial surpluses to philanthropic causes that promise collective betterment. In a key role between donors and recipients, nonprofit organizations offer the mechanism whereby individuals make contributions and therefore are important to our understanding of philanthropic patterns (Barman, 2016). Government proves to be another crucial actor within the philanthropic field, acting as a regulator controlling the philanthropic game and incentivizing philanthropy through its tax reliefs and gift aid scheme (Duquette, 2019; Maclean and Harvey, 2016).

As shown in Figure 4.1, companies, individuals, couples and families, nonprofit organizations and government distribute donations, bequests and tax incentives to charitable trusts and foundations, such as independent foundations, community foundations, affiliated foundations, corporate foundations and donor-advised funds, which channel grants into a wide range of beneficiaries, including health, education, research, higher education, policy and public opinion, community services, arts, culture and heritage, environment and animals, disaster relief, religion, and enterprise, skills and economic development. Alternatively,

philanthropists may make donations directly to beneficiaries or causes that promise social betterment. In contrast to charity, which is viewed as "an act of value in itself, regardless of its practical results", philanthropy focuses attention on "pragmatic means of achieving ends" (Villadsen, 2007, p. 312). It is nowadays considered of particular importance to produce long-term impacts and differences to the lives of members of society (Duncan, 2004).

Many philanthropic goals have remained the same for decades, for instance, most charitable donations have been directed to nonprofits involved in health, research and higher education. When someone invests in a programme to develop and deliver vaccines to protect people from common ailments in developed and developing countries, they seek to prevent mass suffering from severe illnesses (Gates, 2016). When someone endows a scholarship fund for university students from disadvantaged backgrounds, opportunities are created for educational improvement, which otherwise would not exist. However, there are some changes, especially around strategic issues, including the timing of philanthropic giving, the geography of recipients, expectations of the impact, and increasingly active involvement after grant making (Fulton and Blau, 2005). The effect of this development process is to privatize and professionalize philanthropy while simultaneously institutionalizing the assumptions that inform stratification (summarized in Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Stratification in the philanthropic field
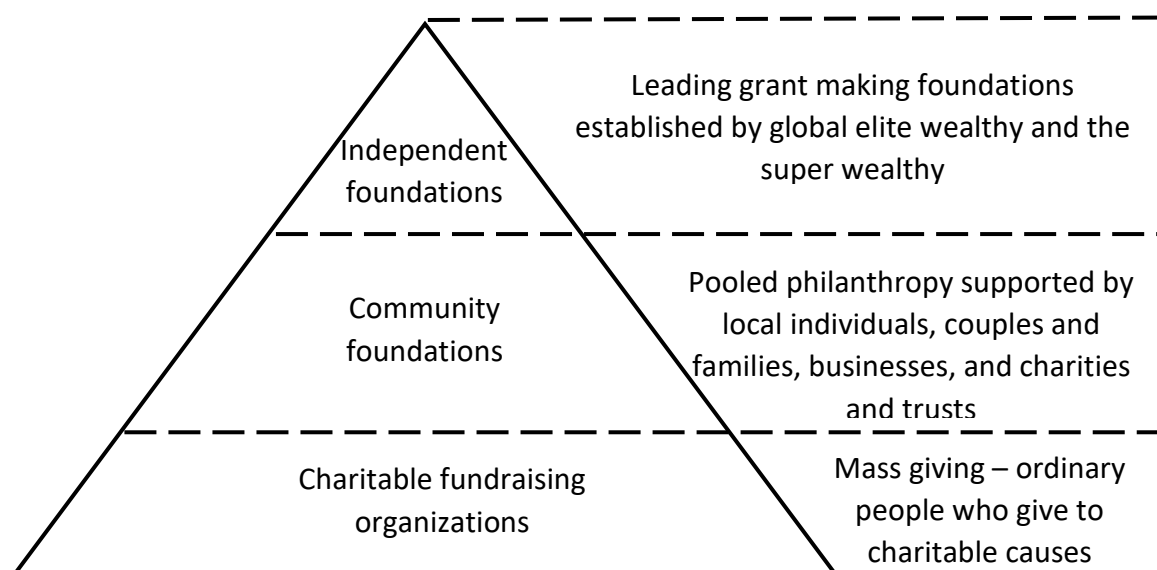
Indeed, not all actors in the philanthropic field are the same in role, function and value. Central to this nexus of relations is the "unequivocal asymmetries of power between different types of actor" (Maclean *et al.*, 2013, p. 757), especially between independent foundations, community foundations and charitable fundraising organizations. Each of them contributes to the third sector not just by distributing grants to charities and trusts, but also by actively facilitating social change, collaborating with other actors within the field to boost impact, and fostering a catalytic influence by championing worthy causes (Anheier and Daly, 2007; Fleishman, 2016). Transformational social goals are more likely to be accomplished by leading grant making foundations established by global elite wealthy and the super wealthy "who have largely unmitigated power to give or withhold it" (Ostrower, 1995; Ostrander, 2004, p. 29).

Community foundations, which pool the resources of local philanthropists, sometimes serve as agents for independent foundations and tend to build close relationships with front-line charities (Feurt and Sacks, 2000; Jung *et al.*, 2013). They pool their professional knowledge and expertise across funds and effectively make grants at the grass-root level (Graddy and Morgan, 2006; Ostrower, 2007). By and large, with one notable exception – Silicon Valley Community Foundation – locally focused community foundations often achieve second-tier positions, lacking potential to become 'hyper-agents' within the philanthropic field.

Situated at the bottom of the philanthropic field, charitable fundraising organizations convene activities of frequent givers who become involved in "mass philanthropy" (Zunz, 2012), either by responding to campaigns launched by philanthropic organizations or alternatively by going around fundraising for favoured charities. The proceeds raised by these organizations are typically distributed up to community foundations, maintaining the flow of

grants to front-line charities (Maclean and Harvey, 2016). Such stratification fits well with the idea that a society needs "citizen power" at the apex of the field as well as a wide range of participation further down (Rowson *et al.*, 2012, p. 40).

4.3 Philanthropy in the US and UK

The engagement in philanthropy through enterprising resource-rich actors has been a characteristic of historical epochs in many developed countries, perhaps most notably related to the Gilded Age in the US and the Victorian era in the UK. In these two societies, philanthropy is both actions and institutions. More specifically, philanthropy is considered "both as a form of individual giving and as a complex economic and policy structure – as the institutionalized practice of privately funding the production of public benefits" (Bernholz *et al.*, 2016, p. 4). In 2016, the total value of donations in the US stood at $390.05 billion, compared with £9.70 billion in the UK (Charities Aid Foundation, 2017; Giving USA, 2017). To offer some historical perspective, the American philanthropic giving was equivalent to 1.67% of its GDP a decade ago, more than double the UK figure of 0.73%, which ranked second internationally (Charities Aid Foundation, 2006).

Table 4.1 presents an overview of giving patterns in the US and UK. Methods of soliciting funds are crucial since they influence expectations of when people give and, more importantly, how much they give and how they eventually understand the nature and purpose of charitable giving. In the US, donations to churches per week, typically payments on an annual pledge, according to Nonprofits Source (2019), are $17 on average, while the British most effective method – collections – raises an average donation of £1 only. UK philanthropy, according to Wright (2002, p. 406), has been "dominated by methods that assume through traditional expectations and physical design that donations will most likely be made in coins, sharply limiting the likelihood that they will receive larger amounts". A major difference

between philanthropy in the two countries is the American idea that "charity begins at home" and the British idea that "charity is for all" (Wright, 2002).

Table 4.1: Giving patterns in the US and UK

	US	UK
Levels	1.5+ % of GDP 1.7% of average household income Average annual household gift, $754	<1% of GDP 0.63% of average household income Average annual household gift, £108
Participation	68% of households contribute	65% of households contribute
Methods	Church collection Payroll deduction Direct mail solicitation Telephone solicitation	Door-to-door collection Collecting tins Raffle/lottery Buying goods
Donors	High: men, retirees, high perceived generosity	High: women, disabled, high perceived generosity Low: retirees

Source: Author based on Charities Aid Foundation (2019), Giving USA (2019), Nonprofits Source (2019) and Wright (2002)

American philanthropy, according to Curti (1961), acquired much of its law, ideology and organization from the Judeo-Christian custom and from English statutory and common law and experience. However, people would expect that the distinctive respects of American life have modified this heritage. These include the federal system, the separation of state and church, frontier conditions and the idea of abundance, succeeding waves of immigration, the democratic rejection of the idea of creating a stable and structured nation with an inherent class of needy poor, and slavery and the issues caused by it. In contrast to some countries that feel content that government pays for most of their educational institutions, hospitals, cultural organizations and even religious sects, the US tends to keep most of these institutions in private hands and puts pressure on wealthy individuals and families to support them (Zunz, 2012). Arguably, American philanthropy emerged as a response by wealthy individuals to ease the unmet social needs and support charitable causes they personally favour and consider worthy (Sandfort, 2008). Pioneering philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York have pointed to

important lessons of how the history of American philanthropy can be enacted in the social interest (Gross, 2003; Lagemann, 1989; Sealander, 1997).

The post Second World War period witnessed phenomenal economic growth in the US and its consolidation of position as the richest country in the world. With economic growth and rising incomes came greater philanthropy. The total value of private domestic donations increased from $2.273 million in 1946 to $2.910 million a decade later (Dickinson, 1970), which, according to the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, was the world's highest figure followed by European countries, including Spain, Britain and Hungary. American philanthropy's flourish is largely facilitated by powerful information technology companies that have succeeded since the Second World War and profited massively from globalization and liberalization. It is not easy to envisage in a country apart from the US an extremely successful technology company such as Microsoft. Its founders, Bill Gates and the late Paul Allen, first became involved in philanthropy on a large scale in the 1990s. By constantly controlling their businesses as they develop, entrepreneurs can "extract economic rents from broad swathes of the population" (Harvey *et al.*, 2011, p. 428). American wealthy entrepreneurs use the power conferred by their economic capital to spread their reach beyond enterprises and make a difference to wider society.

The financial services industry centred in New York has significantly transformed the American economy and generated substantial wealth. In 2018, the financial services and insurance sectors constituted 7.4% (equivalent to $1.5 trillion) of the US GDP and employed over six million people (Select USA, 2018). Some entrepreneurs have amassed vase personal fortunes and believe they should 'give something back' (Duncan, 2004). The vast majority of philanthropic gifts therefore now come from the Mid-Atlantic and the West Coast, particularly the states of New York, California and Washington, which are home to many world-leading independent foundations, including the Ford Foundation, the Eli and Edythe

Broad Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Private philanthropy, whatever its limitations, has played an important role in opening a way for the US to highlight the public element of the national life (Curti, 1961). Importantly, many philanthropic ideas, including the tax exemption for charitable giving, were invented by the US and have diffused to many countries around the world. In this aspect, in the role played by wealthy donors and philanthropic foundations, as well as in the unique relationships with government, "American philanthropy has a record that is genuinely creative" (Curti, 1961, p. 156).

Many of the generic features of the philanthropic landscape in the UK derive from American models created and propagated through global social, cultural and associational processes. For example, the community foundation model of philanthropy was transferred from the US to UK in the 1980s when the Thatcher government actively reduced public funding and personal taxation, which had created an increasing level of inequality (Daly, 2008; Jung *et al.*, 2013; Leat, 2006). Given the different social and cultural contexts in the US and UK, the community foundation model was adapted by local strategists as it moved across space, rather than simply being imported and copied in a linear process (Harvey *et al.*, 2020).

Wealthy individuals have also used American models as templates to design charitable organizations in the UK. For example, Bill Holroyd CBE, a British investor and philanthropist, brought the Boys and Girls Clubs of America youth development model to the UK, setting up the On Side Youth Zones, a charity that provides safe and inspiring, state-of-the-art facilities for young people across the country. Another example is that Durham-based philanthropist Sir Peter Vardy who established Safe Families for Children in 2012 based on a philanthropic model originating in Chicago. The charity works with local authorities, religious organizations and community groups to stabilise families at the time of crisis and protect children from abuse and neglect.

There are also some differences in philanthropy between the US and UK. British foundations engage in philanthropic activities and causes in a way different from the role played by the US foundations in facilitating social and economic development (Daly, 2008). Charitable foundations in the UK, with the notable exception of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, are institutionally oriented organizations, "being involved in 'doing what the state doesn't do' and 'filling gaps' in areas that have been overlooked" (Anheier and Daly, 2007, p. 28). This is caused by the rise of the welfare state, which confers "social security 'from cradle to grave'" (Dorey, 2015, p. 2), and by a heavier tax burden on highest earners' wages. Individuals place great faith in the government than in private solutions to address deep-seated social and economic problems. Instead of actively shaping policy and social change, a large number of UK philanthropic foundations are continuously influenced by the policy context (Leat, 2001). Since the 1980s, re-conceptualizing the government's role and responsibilities has resulted in concerns among representatives of some charitable foundations that they might be "funders of last resort", expected to replace, instead of to supplement the government in some areas (Harker and Burkemann, 2005, p. 17).

Furthermore, unlike the US, philanthropic giving in the UK has been "a private activity" (Daly, 2008, p. 227), namely, wealthy people are reluctant to publicize their giving and, on the whole, are not primarily motivated to invest in causes with which they have personal connections or direct involvement (Wright, 2002). Individual giving tends to be spontaneous. Unplanned giving using cash continues to be the most popular way of donating, while regular giving through direct debit generates the greatest amount (Charities Aid Foundation, 2019). A large number of committed, regular donors support the idea of sharing responsibility for solving social issues by donating through the National Lottery and Children in Need, as well as long-standing medical research foundations such as the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research UK. They believe that discovering effective treatments to

debilitate diseases might be challenging, but are confident that their 'giving back' will "make a difference" (Duncan, 2004, p. 2159) towards the situation of people less fortunate "as an expression of [their] sense of community with others" (Boulding, 1962, p. 62).

Fundraising in the US and UK

Recognizably modern types of fundraising emerged in the US in the 1830s when institutions and organizations proactively solicited donations and bequests from national and local constituencies and prominent figures like the evangelist Lyman Beecher for educational institutions in the freshly settled states (Hall, 2006). Americans were increasingly well-informed about the events and rapidly responded to liberation movements and disasters with generous 'subscriptions'. Another form of fundraising is shaped through "self-help and rehabilitation of the indigent poor under the auspices of voluntary associations" (Bekkers, 2005; Curtis, 1961, p. 147; Knoke, 1981; Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001). Within this range of voluntary activity, Freemasonry was one of the very earliest and also most valued associations: "seventeen lodges, three chapters, and one encampment had taken root in the twenty-one townships" (Kutolowski, 1982, p. 550). Promoting voluntary associations as instruments for social betterment instead of mutual benefit helped to draw attention to nonprofit organizations and to socialize with a generation of citizens – Putnam's (2000) "long civic generation" – those who volunteered, participated and donated at an unprecedented level.

Present-day charitable fundraising organizations possess and employ certain strategies of solicitation that increase the value and impact of giving (Barman, 2007). The variety of fundraising tactics can explain the differences in patterns and roles played by mass philanthropy. In Table 4.2, I present the ten fundraising organizations which spend most on charitable activities in the US and UK. The Heritage Lottery Fund spent almost £1 billion in 2016, more than any other charitable fundraising organizations in the two countries. It is

conspicuous that in terms of mass fundraising from the general population, the UK is highly successful, compensating to some degree for its lesser performance in elite philanthropy.

Table 4.2: Top ten charitable fundraising organizations in the US and UK (ranked by charitable spending 2016)

US ($)		UK (£)	
National Collegiate Athletic Association	927,857,810	Heritage Lottery Fund	996,038,000
Claims Conference	819,883,435	Big Lottery Fund	607,792,000
American Heart Association	704,970,000	Cancer Research UK	470,000,000
American Cancer Society	664,188,000	Save the Children Fund	374,000,000
American Kidney Fund	289,639,304	Oxfam	322,000,000
Rotary Foundation of Rotary International	221,147,000	Macmillan Cancer Support	173,240,000
Scholarship America	171,725,189	Action for Children	148,831,000
United Negro College Fund	157,456,424	British Heart Foundation	133,500,000
UJA-Federation of New York	157,444,000	Charity Projects	109,808,000
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International	148,566,000	BBC Children in Need	60,730,000

Source: Author based on US Council on Foundations and UK Charity Commission

Community foundations in the US and UK

Community foundations are defined as "geographically embedded philanthropic yet multi-purpose organisations held capable of combining grant making with resource generation, donor services and community leadership" (Jung *et al.*, 2013, p. 409). Inherently focusing on specific geographic areas, community foundations are preordained to play a crucial role in accomplishing the inspiration of localism and have been seen as key to rebalancing the relationship between government and civil society (Walkenhorst, 2008). Supported by national membership organizations – the Community Foundations National Standards Board and the Community Foundation Network respectively – community foundations in the US and UK position themselves not only as local drivers of social innovation but also as leaders and mobilisers of community philanthropy. Table 4.3 reports the charitable expenditures of

the top ten community foundations in the US and UK. The Silicon Valley Community

Foundation and the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland represent the

exemplary role models of 763 foundations in the US and 46 foundations in the UK.

Table 4.3: Top ten community foundations in the US and UK (ranked by charitable spending 2016)

US ($)		UK (£)	
Silicon Valley Community Foundation	1,285,339,000	Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland	7,294,307
Greater Kansas City Community Foundation	339,637,290	London Community Foundation	5,929,000
Foundation For The Carolinas	312,242,275	Foundation Scotland	4,721,000
Tulsa Community Foundation	250,990,000	Cumbria Community Foundation	4,694,815
Chicago Community Trust	236,570,240	Leeds Community Foundation	4,111,000
Columbus Foundation	205,805,280	Norfolk Community Foundation	2,982,396
New York Community Trust	195,554,486	Community Foundation in Wales	2,813,512
California Community Foundation	173,791,000	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	2,701,681
San Francisco Foundation	141,575,000	Essex Community Foundation	2,559,383
Community Foundation for Great Atlanta	110,899,151	Quartet Community Foundation	2,537,535

Source: Author based on US Council on Foundations and UK Charity Commission

Since the Silicon Valley Community Foundation was established in 2007 through a

merger between the Peninsula Community Foundation and the Community Foundation

Silicon Valley, it has "awarded more than $6 billion in grants locally, nationally and

globally", developing as the largest community foundation in the world (Silicon Valley

Community Foundation, 2020). A record-breaking giving of almost $990 million by Mark

Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan in 2013 plays a significant part in its fundraising (Silicon

Valley Community Foundation, 2013). In 2016, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation

awarded a total of $1.3 billion grants, including $812 million to charities in the nine Bay Area

counties, $410 million to American charities outside California, and $15 million to charities around the world (Silicon Valley Community Foundation, 2016).

The discourses surrounding the Big Society idea in the UK highlight the importance of local initiatives in unlocking citizens' power to make differences to their local communities, whose unsatisfied social needs are growing when public spending is dramatically reduced (Cameron, 2010; Localism Act, 2011; Rowson *et al*., 2012; Wells, 2011). This provides great opportunities for the movement of community foundations in the UK. As one of the first movers, the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland was established in North East England in 1988 to "inspire and support giving that strengthens communities and enriches local life" (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, 2011, p. 7). Its stated purpose is to become "the hub for community philanthropy in [the] area" that "can help local people, communities and causes" (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, 2011). The community foundation's founders believe that "funds should mainly come from those who had a great deal of it – the wealthy, businesses, and other charitable trusts – not from those who have relatively little" (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, 2010, p. 23), adopting a fundraising model which relies on actors with substantial means. In 2016, the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland awarded £7.3 million through 1,417 grants to 1,309 groups and 133 individuals (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, 2016). Its endowment funds were initiated in 1989 and have increased significantly to £81.2 million 30 years later (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, 2019).

Independent foundations in the US and UK

Recently, assumptions about the role played by donors have been reconsidered radically. In an increasing number of areas within the third sector, revenue tends to be controlled by

donors rather than nonprofit organizations (Hall, 1992; Lenkowsky, 2002). For example, elite or 'mega' givers might not entrust community foundations to dispense grants but instead establish their own independent foundations on a sustainable basis (Salamon, 1999). Following a long-established debate surrounding the role and nature of independent foundations in society (Barman, 2013; Hall, 1992), researchers from a wide range of subject areas have conducted historical examinations of leading independent foundations, including the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which emerged in the early twentieth century.

To a great extent, with some exceptions (Anheier and Toepler, 1999), independent foundations have been described as significantly dispensing their grants with intentions of social reproduction. An example could be the investment of foundations in particular types of knowledge claims and professional groups, like the early support of the social sciences by the Rockefeller Foundation, that seeks to maintain cultural hegemony instead of solving social issues (Fisher, 1983; Hall, 1992; Stanfield 1985). In contrast, other scholars seek to identify the elements that enable some independent foundations to make grants directed toward social change. In their examination of the micro-level features of philanthropic foundations, scholars highlight that independent foundations that have historically supported charitable causes are more likely to focus on and invest in social innovation (Mosley and Galaskiewicz, 2015) or social justice (Suárez and Lee, 2011).

Table 4.4: Top ten independent foundations in the US and UK (ranked by charitable spending 2016)

US ($)		UK (£)	
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	4,561,000,000	Wellcome Trust	992,300,000
Ford Foundation	583,724,000	Children's Investment Fund Foundation	185,077,231
Walton Family Foundation	454,362,748	Leverhulme Trust	80,124,000
Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation	401,244,641	Garfield Weston Foundation	58,744,510

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	367,134,000	Gatsby Charitable Foundation	57,904,000
Lilly Endowment Inc.	359,678,504	Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	44,782,000
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	333,792,007	Henry Smith Charity	29,527,000
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	323,054,933	Monument Trust	28,665,471
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	298,380,758	Wolfson Foundation	28,447,000
Sandler Foundation	274,549,959	Robertson Trust	18,318,000

Source: Author based on US Council on Foundations and UK Charity Commission

Table 4.4 presents the top ten independent foundations in the US and UK. Bill Gates, who had pledged $100 million to eradicate diseases, including polio and malaria, and $200 million in public libraries, has established the largest independent foundation in the US – the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with an endowment fund worth $46.8 billion (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018). "To put this into perspective, the contribution is about four times as large as that created by Carnegie or Rockefeller in constant dollars." (Acs and Phillips, 2002, p. 199) Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's slogan is "all lives have equal value" (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018), which highlights the "commonalities shared with other human beings, rather than the elephant in the room, their inordinate wealth that sets them apart and reinforces inequality" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 640). In 2016, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation spent half of all grants to global development ($2.211 million) and a quarter to global health ($1.197 million), while the rest, approximately $1.153 million, was mainly used to develop US programs, communications, global policies and advocacies, and other charitable programs (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2016). In the UK, the Wellcome Trust leads over half of the medical research projects, serving up £992.3 million in research funding in 2016, compared with £484.1 million just over ten years ago (Wellcome Trust, 2007; Wellcome Trust, 2016). Founded by Sir Henry Wellcome in 1936, the Wellcome Trust has developed as the best-endowed and the most significant private

foundation in the UK and, indeed, "the world's largest charity exclusively devoted to biomedicine" (Wadman, 2007, p. 248).

Elite philanthropy in the US and UK

Few countries other than the US and UK have a more dynamic and conducive environment for large-scale philanthropy (Davies, 2015). "With an enterprising, open economy, the opportunity exists for individuals, couples, families, companies and non-profits to thrive and prosper" (Harvey *et al.*, 2018, p. 3). In Figure 4.3, I present the value and number of donations worth more than one million in the US and UK from 2007 to 2016.

Figure 4.3: Million-dollar/pound donations in the US and UK, 2007-2016
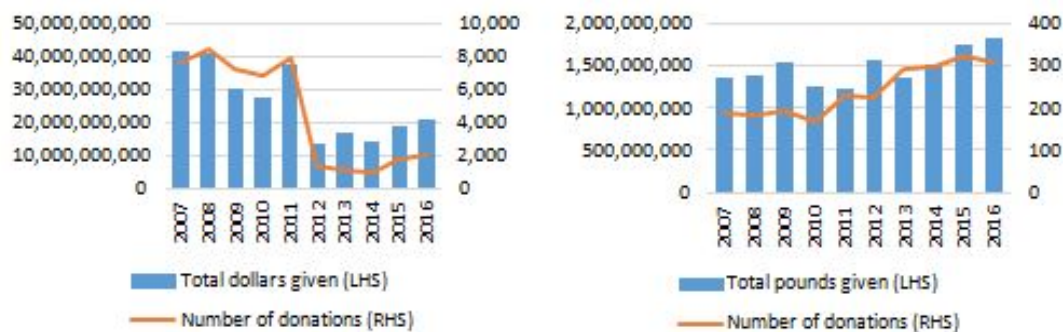
Source: Author based on Lilly Million Dollar List and Coutts Million Pound Donors Report

The annual amount of dollars donated has fluctuated over the period. Following a rise in 2010/11, it decreased dramatically to $13.78 billion in 2012. This was brought about by Warren Buffett's donation of $30 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which was accounted for as a single gift (Shaw *et al.*, 2011). The stock of the cash invested in philanthropy was suddenly earning a fraction of what it was before the global financial crisis. Interest rates were plummeting, and therefore the amount of money that could be channelled into the system was declining dramatically. On the UK side, the value of million-pound donations in total rose relatively steadily from £1.37 billion in 2007 to £1.83 billion in 2016, interrupted by a fall in 2010/11 to £1.23 billion following the financial crisis. Geographically, London has remained the hub of philanthropy in the UK, contributing a combined value of

£9.8 billion over the period, while in the US, the West Coast has accounted for the highest percentage of million-dollar gifts, with 6,807 donations worth $54.1 billion in total.

There is an important role that big philanthropy plays in "world-making" (Bourdieu, 1987a), defined as "the embedded ways in which agents relate to and shape systems of meaning and mobilize collective action to change social arrangements" (Creed *et al.*, 2002, p. 475). The best *prima-facie* indication of this might be the growing importance of entrepreneurial philanthropy, which "involves the application of multiple forms of capital in the pursuit of resolving pressing social and economic problems" (Shaw *et al.*, 2011, p. 585). It is not new that successful entrepreneurs involve in large-scale philanthropy. In the UK, this tradition can date back to the early 1600s, when Henry Smith, a real estate entrepreneur, set up his independent grant making foundation to help combat poverty and other indications of injustice prevailing in developing and developed countries (Henry Smith Charity, 2020). Business history scholars show that following the creation of the Henry Smith Charity, successful entrepreneurs have displayed heightened interest in philanthropy, notably John D. Rockefeller (Chernow, 1998) and Andrew Carnegie (Harvey *et al.*, 2011; Nasaw, 2006), who had been seen as pioneering entrepreneurial philanthropists.

Following their steps, modern entrepreneurs, such as Warren Buffett and Bill Gates, among others (see Table 4.5), have been involved in redistributing their wealth on a grander scale. Accordingly, media and political interest in the super-wealthy entrepreneurs' involvement in big philanthropic ventures, including those supported by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Giving Pledge, the Omidyar Network, and the Clinton-Hunter Development Initiative, has significantly risen (Shaw *et al.*, 2011). Much of this attention indicates that entrepreneurs with vast personal wealth, and possessing powerful elite networks at their disposal, have played an increasingly influential role in social and economic development worldwide (Bishop and Green, 2008; Schervish, 2003, 2005,

2008). The admiration that successful entrepreneurs inspire in society has enabled them to act as what Bill and Melinda Gates (2016) call "supermen" who are capable of alleviating social ills instead of harvesters of economic rents, diverting public scrutiny and criticism (Swalwell and Apple, 2011). Wealthy individuals, couples and families along with their philanthropic actions "make good copy, underscoring the message that much good can come from enlightened generosity" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 647).

Table 4.5: Top ten entrepreneurial philanthropists in the US and UK (ranked by the value of donations 2016)

US	$ Million	UK	£ Million
Warren Buffett	2,860	Sainsbury family	221
Bill and Melinda Gates	2,140	Trond Mohn and Marit Mohn Westlake	130
Michael Bloomberg	600	Sir Christopher Hohn	119
George Soros	531	Weston family	115
Chuck Feeney	482	Alisher Usmanov	107
Walton family	454	Sir Michael Moritz and Harriet Heyman	93
Paul Allen	341	Ernesto and Kirsty Bertarelli	87
James and Marilyn Simons	293	Lord Edmiston	55
Gordon and Betty Moore	289	Dame Janet de Botton	52
John and Laura Arnold	277	Sir Clive Cowdery	52

Source: Author based on Forbes Top 50 Givers and Sunday Times Giving List

4.4 Elite staged philanthropic events

Elite staged philanthropic events constitute an important part of the social calendar in the UK, ranking alongside sporting events like Royal Ascot, Wimbledon and test matches at Lords. Top tier national philanthropic events like the Beacon Fellowship Awards are mirrored at the regional levels, attended by members of the regional power elite. Assemblies, fundraisers, award ceremonies and conferences have been identified as four main types of staged events in the philanthropic field, constituting a total of 4,668 gatherings with approximately 533,150 attendees from different business and professional fields, including banking and finance, the corporate sector, law, academia, politics, the public sector, and the nonprofit sector. More specifically, 3,499 charitable organizations held an AGM, which has been the most popular

type of staged philanthropic event, followed by fundraisers (1,011), award ceremonies (109),

and conferences (49). Figure 4.4 shows the combined numbers for the four types of staged

events and attendees in England and Wales. In general, the south performed better than the

north in organizing and conducting elite staged philanthropic events. London, the South East

and the East of England hosted almost half of all gatherings in England and Wales, attracting

a total of 241,200 high-profile attendees at both the national and local level within the UK.

This finding resonates with the figures provided by the Charities Aid Foundation (2017),

which highlight the disproportionate contribution that those in those three regions typically

give the highest amount to charities.

Figure 4.4: Number of elite staged philanthropic events and attendees by region in 2016
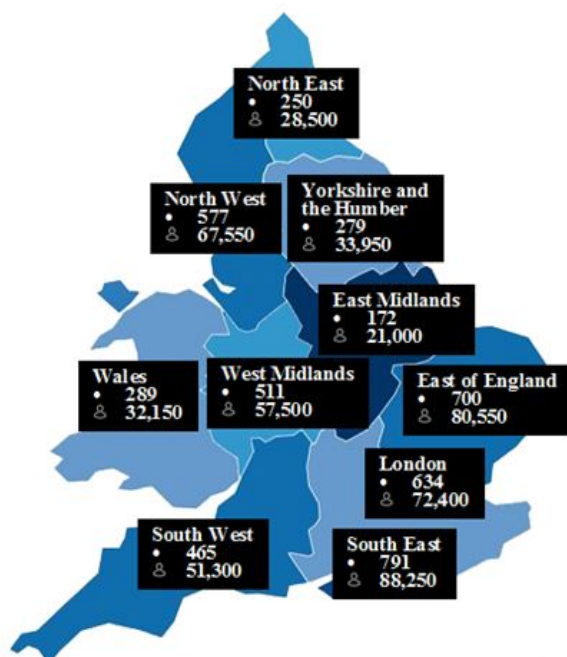
Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

In 2016, two-thirds of nonprofit organizations reported hosting an elite staged

philanthropic event, while a quarter of for-profit organizations took part, gave sponsorship, or

helped in some way. Table 4.6 demonstrates the number of assemblies, fundraisers, award

ceremonies and conferences orchestrated by four main types of philanthropic organizations in

England and Wales. Nonprofit organizations and operating charities held the vast majority of

all elite staged philanthropic events, constituting more than 90% of all gatherings. A third of charitable organizations organized at least two types of staged events, assemblies and fundraisers in particular. Community foundations hosted a total of 46 out of 109 award ceremonies, and independent foundations were involved in the least number of elite staged philanthropic events in England and Wales.

Table 4.6: Number of elite staged philanthropic events organized by large UK charitable organizations

Charitable organization	Assemblies	Fundraisers	Award ceremonies	Conferences	Total
Nonprofit organizations	1,899	533	28	14	2,474
Operating charities	1,466	341	25	12	1,844
Community foundations	33	88	46	19	186
Independent foundations	101	49	10	4	164

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Assemblies

Although it has become optional for charitable trusts and foundations to hold an AGM, assemblies are mainstream elite staged philanthropic events in England and Wales, especially in the South East of England (see Table 4.7). Founded in 1989, the Association of Charitable Foundations is the only philanthropic organization that brings together foundations from across the UK, "playing an essential role by providing a safe space, in person, online and in print, for trustees and foundation professionals to gather together as colleagues and peers" (Association of Charitable Foundations, 2020). In 2016, it held an annual assembly of more than 350 members, creating a meeting place that provided multiple constituencies and stakeholders with loaded opportunities for elite philanthropic networking.

Table 4.7: Number and percentage of assemblies in England and Wales

Region	Number	% within assemblies
South East	617	17.6%
East of England	514	14.7%

London	504	14.4%
West Midlands	392	11.2%
North West	392	11.2%
South West	378	10.8%
Wales	238	6.8%
North East	189	5.4%
Yorkshire and the Humber	175	5.0%
East Midlands	100	2.9%
Total	3,499	100.0%

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Fundraisers

In 2016, England and Wales held a total of 1,011 fundraisers, the majority of which took place in the North West, the South East and the East of England (see Table 4.8) and aim to grow the community fund and support charitable causes. As shown in Figure 4.5, the most popular forms of fundraisers to which donations were facilitated and direct were balls (31.1%), golf days (29.3%), gala dinners (16.9%) and concerts (11.3%). Table 4.9 demonstrates the top ten fundraisers in England and Wales, confirming that the majority of charitable donations were made from London. Held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Langdon Foundation Annual Dinner raised £650,000 from more than 550 philanthropic elites, while celebrating its 25 years of enabling independence for Jewish adults and young people with learning difficulties.

Table 4.8: Number and percentage of fundraisers in England and Wales

Region	Number	% within fundraisers
North West	173	17.1%
South East	165	16.3%
East of England	161	15.9%
West Midlands	110	10.9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	87	8.6%
London	80	7.9%
South West	78	7.7%
East Midlands	68	6.7%
North East	52	5.1%
Wales	37	3.8%
Total	1,011	100.0%

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Figure 4.5: The most popular forms of fundraising
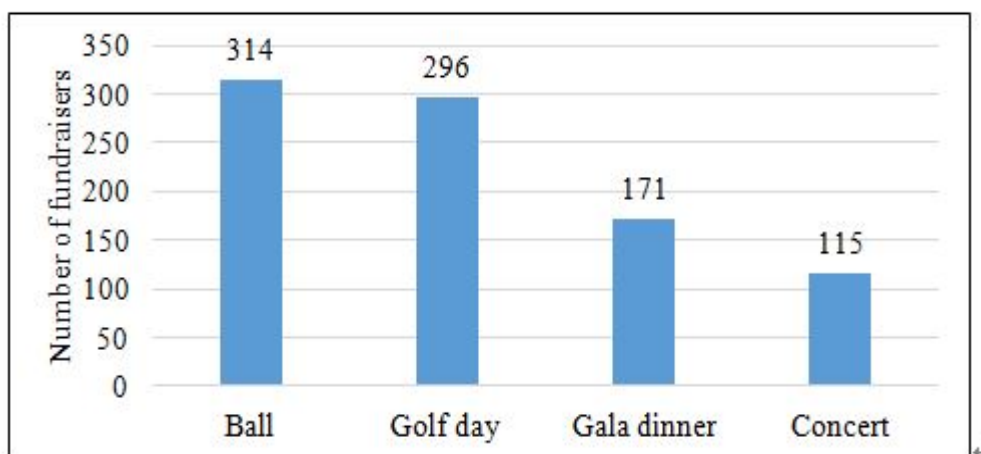
Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Table 4.9: Top ten fundraisers in England and Wales (ranked by the sum raised 2016)

Fundraiser	Region	Sum raised (£)
Langdon Annual Dinner	London	650,000
Clink Charity Ball	London	400,000
The Macmillan Ball	London	340,000
Ascot Property Race Day	South East	200,000
The Entertainment Quiz of the Year	London	120,000
Woking Asian Community Dinner	South East	100,000
The Candlelighters Awards	Yorkshire and the Humber	100,000
Grosvenor Gala Dinner	London	90,000
Hope House and Ty Gobaith Winter Ball	West Midlands	70,000
London Fundraising and Awards Dinner	London	69,000
Julia's Butterfly Ball	South West	60,000

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Award ceremonies

UK charity awards were centred in London, which held 36 ceremonies in 2016, constituting 33% of its type (see Table 4.10). Figure 4.6 shows the keywords in categories of the five most prominent award ceremonies – Beacon Awards, National Fundraising Awards, Charity Awards, Charity Times Awards and Third Sector Awards (see Table 4.11). The most frequent award categories in 2016 were fundraising campaigns, impact investment, and cross-sector partnerships. Local award ceremonies such as the Kent Charity Awards, the North East Charity Awards and the North West Charity Awards were designed to celebrate and

recognize the innovative thinking and hard work by local fundraisers and charities, while highlighting the local employees and businesses that supported the work of charities across the region.

Table 4.10: Number and percentage of award ceremonies in England and Wales

Region	Number	% within award ceremonies
London	36	33.0%
East of England	15	13.8%
Wales	11	10.1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	10	9.2%
North East	8	7.3%
North West	8	7.3%
South West	7	6.4%
West Midlands	7	6.4%
South East	5	4.6%
East Midlands	2	1.9%
Total	109	100.0%

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Table 4.11: Top five award ceremonies in England and Wales (ranked chronologically)

Award ceremony	Organizer	Region	Year launched
Beacon Awards	UK Community Foundations	London	1999
National Fundraising Awards	Institute of Fundraising	London	1999
Charity Awards	Civil Society Media	London	2000
Charity Times Awards	Charity Times	London	2000
Third Sector Awards	Third Sector	London	2006

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Figure 4.6: Keywords in award categories

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Conferences

Conferences were less prevalent than the other three types described above, constituting only 1% of all elite staged philanthropic events in 2016. London and the East of England, as shown in Table 4.12, have been identified as the hubs of high-profile philanthropic

conferences, holding almost half of the gatherings in England and Wales. As with fundraisers, many of the conferences were local and sought to inspire philanthropy professionals by discussing and debating topics like community and local funding (summarized in Figure 4.7). At the national level, leading charitable organizations such as the UK Community Foundations and the Age UK brought together opinion leaders from the third sector to discuss challenges posed by Brexit, globalization, and the persistent inequalities in income, wealth and health.

Figure 4.7: Popular topics of conferences

Local

- Communities
  (Kairos Community Conference)
- Local funding landscape
  (Oxfordshire Funders' Forum)
- Healthy minds
  (Leeds Leads)
- Tailoring care for elderly people
  (Age Bradford & District Conference)

National

- The state and future of health and social care
  (For Later Life Conference)
- Leading for local good
  (UK Community Foundations Conference)
- The future of charity
  (Charity Times Annual Conference)
- Transforming palliative care
  (Hospice UK National Conference)

Source: Author based on the websites of UK registered charities whose income over £1 million

Table 4.12: Number and percentage of conferences in England and Wales

Region	Number	% within conferences
London	14	28.6%
East of England	10	20.4%
Yorkshire and the Humber	7	14.2%
North West	4	8.2%
South East	4	8.2%
Wales	3	6.1%
East Midlands	2	4.1%
South West	2	4.1%
West Midlands	2	4.1%
North East	1	2.0%

| Total | 49 | 100.0% |

By all accounts, staged events have increasingly become a central type of gathering in the philanthropic field, contributing to the unique trajectory of the British society, whose development has been influenced by a series of institutional changes, including globalization, capitalism and deindustrialization (e.g. McKinlay and Zeitlin, 1989) that have legitimated an expansion of wealthy individuals and businesses. Their interest and involvement in staged philanthropic events are driven by the belief that both personal and wider social benefits can accrue from endeavours to distribute their resources more collectively.

4.5 Conclusion

A review of literature on philanthropy in multiple disciplines, as well as a detailed analysis of US and UK charitable giving data, employing both manual coding and computer-aided approaches, has provided insight into the contribution that philanthropic agents make in attracting public attention to deep-seated social and economic problems created by persistent inequalities. The history of philanthropic giving, the dynamics of the philanthropic landscape, and the power of elite philanthropy have significant implications for how high-profile staged philanthropic events are structured and performed, which in turn influences how the issues are understood and acted on by organizers and attendees. The above themes will be further explored in the following three chapters on the types, staging and dynamics of elite philanthropic events.

The purpose of this chapter has been to securely establish *the context in which elite staged philanthropic events take place in the UK*. It can be seen that overall philanthropy in the UK is not on the grand scale of the US, yet neither is the UK a laggard. The country has a long philanthropic tradition that has persisted notwithstanding the rise of the welfare state. Moreover, it has innovated considerably since the 1980s in creating new institutions like

community foundations, the National Lottery and Children in Need, and in adopting and adapting US fundraising practices. Staged events, I will argue in the chapters that follow, have an important role to play in the continuing growth and development of philanthropy in the UK and the third sector more generally. I have had the good fortune to not only attend events and interview people involved in them, but also to participate in planning meetings and so observe scenes that are unscripted as well as official accounts. My approach in the next three chapters, each based on empirical data, is deliberately challenging and critical, but it is also sympathetic to the actors involved in conceiving and managing the each of the staged events I have researched.

Chapter 5
Types of Elite Staged Philanthropic Events

5.1 Introduction

Although the extant organizational research on elites has built extensively on the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, examining the activities of dominant agents operating within the field of power, little attention has been paid to how their work is facilitated by highly orchestrated staged events. Perhaps surprisingly, there has been no systematic analysis of Bourdieu's work in its significance for staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. In this chapter, I set forth a detailed narrative of what a Bourdieusian analysis of elite staged philanthropic events might look like, guided by the question *how is power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events?* I have analysed the event space "as a site where the values of disinterestedness are officially recognized, and where, to a certain extent, agents have an interest in disinterestedness" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 3). This chapter explains how philanthropic elites engage in staged events in the service not only of "the public good", but also of "the economically dominant and the symbolically dominant, and at the same time in their own service" – namely that they "serve themselves by serving" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 6). This comes down to understanding what different types of elite staged philanthropic events are and what they do, on the basis of their purposes and functions.

5.2 Assemblies

Organized by charitable foundations' event teams, chaired by leading board members and attended by high-profile constituencies and stakeholders, the two AGMs included in this research served the purposes of governance, accountability, celebration and promotion of what the foundations had achieved in philanthropy over the past financial year. As the owner of the Local Assembly explained:

> *Excerpt 5.1*

Event Owner: We feel that having the AGM is an opportunity to be accountable to our membership and to bring the membership together and make them feel involved in what we are doing. Because we have that diverse membership which draws together these different constituencies and stakeholders, it's a rare opportunity to put those people together in a room and for people to feel part of our family. But probably you would notice that around half the people attended are not members. They are, we can give these people as guests, those people we have invited, because we want them to know a bit more about us or because they themselves are people that are supporting us in other ways and involved in us in other ways that we want to include. So it is also a promotional opportunity and an opportunity for people to see what we do, understand it better, and feel like potentially there is something they might want to be involved with. So it's a kind of combination of governance, accountability, celebration but also promotion of what we do.

The Local Assembly, described by its owner as "the one big event in the year that was very open and very public", was held at an arts venue located on the south bank of the River Tyne in South Shields, North East England. A BBC presenter hosted the event, using her public visibility and credibility to promote the foundation, which has been institutionalized and increasingly business-like in form (Jeffreys and Allatson, 2015). The AGM brought together more than 150 local philanthropic elites, including third sector professionals, wealthy individuals, couples and families that held funds at the foundation, and the CEOs of voluntary organizations (Interview Event Manager Local Assembly, 2017). Central to the purpose of this staged event was not only 'bonding' with existing supporters (Kadushin, 1995; Maclean, 2008) but also 'bridging' relationships (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Burt, 1992) with potential donors and the wider community. This is confirmed by its owner:

Excerpt 5.2

Event Owner: It is an opportunity for us to engage some new people in what we do. Some of the long-term objectives are things that are not changing like the need to continue to be accountable to our membership. I guess the other objectives are that we continue to be relevant, that we continue to be able to speak upon important issues and share that with our audiences, but also that we are able to continue to use the AGM, amongst the whole range of other things, as an opportunity to bring in new people and inspire them to become involved in what we are doing. So it is one of the events that we would want to continue positioning in that way.

The event owner understood that domination within the local philanthropic field would be strengthened crucially by the growing volume of social capital. The behaviours of the whole

of the organizing team were thus not oriented to particular fund holders but to the social network web of the entire AGM.

The space of the Local Assembly took the form of a distinctive relationship "between the dominated and dominant fractions of the dominant class" (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 101). Fund holders typically held dominant positions in the event, while recipient charities remain subordinate. The fact that the various attendees were "*not interchangeable*" created "the subjective illusion of the mystery of the undefinable 'person' and the subjective illusion of the group", that, founded based on the miracle of selection by the event organizing committee, was "nothing more than the sum of 'exceptional' individuals" or, as Bourdieu (1996, p. 316) says, "irreplaceable 'personalities'".

The National Assembly, in stark contrast to the standalone local event, was an integral part of its flagship annual conference, bringing together members with national policymakers and philanthropic thought leaders at the British Medical Association headquarters in central London. Its owner and organizer described the event as a field which was highly differentiated, characterized by responsibility and the deliberate splitting of the field into multiple sub-fields (Calhoun and Wacquant, 2002; Swartz, 2008), including the corporate sub-field that sponsored the event, the political sub-field that gave its endorsement, and the philanthropic sub-field that shared the current state-of-play in the third sector. It is worth noting that in the Local Assembly, networking was identified as an institutional characteristic, systematically embedded, whereas in the National Assembly, the onus was on individuals rather than institutions. As one of the guests recalled, "It is a chance for me to meet other people. So it's a networking thing … I met a very good person from [charity] who just gave us a funding application" (Interview Event Guest National Assembly, 2017). Indeed, the National Assembly was more haphazard, relying crucially on the networking skills and the social ambition of aspiring attendees.

It can immediately be observed that the homology existing between the organizing space and the participating space is described by the fact that the structure of staged philanthropic assemblies is produced by the same principles. "Projection onto a single axis" with the intention of creating "the continuous, linear, homogeneous, one-dimensional series" where the organizational hierarchy can be identified, enables an elaborate orchestration and conduct "whereby the different types of capital are reduced to a single standard" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 119). This abstract operation provided a starting point for converting capital, although the exchange rates varied (Harvey and Maclean, 2008) according to the power relation between different types of actors involved in the assemblies. The sponsor of the Local Assembly explained how they converted some economic capital to social and symbolic capital through the event: "Clearly, there is a business benefit. They are our clients. We are not doing this as a philanthropic piece of work. We get paid for what we do, which is where the conversation starts. Obviously, it is about getting us to know more people. You become more invested in them, and that's where the relationships become stronger" (Interview Event Sponsor Local Assembly, 2017) Viewed in this light, the manner in which the Local Assembly was presented belied a more important but obscured role as improving on the *status quo* and consolidating positions within the field.

Both assemblies, I observed, consisted theatrically of acts of certification and affirmation (see Table 5.1), which intended to satisfy accountability requirements and approve policies. Active exercise of cultural power as a strategic resource served as a self-legitimating practice at the assemblies observed and documented for this study. I know this from various research notes on the course of orchestrated action, and from spontaneous brainstorming that occurred at the staged events and related meetings.

Table 5.1: Phases of assemblies

Phase	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Assemblies
Certification	• It remains a testament to the generosity of people and businesses in

	[region]. We have the most successful … foundation in the UK. (Event Host Local Assembly, 2017) • It's a great pleasure to be able to report our work of the foundation that has done in the last financial year by the end of March 2017. We awarded £6.8 million through 1,509 grants to 806 groups and 188 individuals. Donors gave £2.6 million into our endowment and annual gifts with £0.7 million (Annual Report of Local Foundation, 2017; Event Owner Local Assembly, 2017) • In support of this collective endeavour, [foundation] has strived to promote good practice, provide peer-learning and network opportunities, and advocate on behalf of foundations; communicating their distinct, powerful and irreplaceable contribution to civil society. (Event Owner National Assembly, 2017) • You will see that, in support of foundations, [foundation] has continued to build its strategy around the key priorities for members, ensuring that foundations are adequately equipped to respond to changing need and concerns and use their resources ambitiously and effectively. (Event Owner National Assembly, 2017)
Affirmation	• It's great to be here in South Tyneside this evening to highlight the need for even more vital local causes to be seen and heard across our area, something I know the foundation really wants to champion. (Event Host Local Assembly, 2017) • It came about because the foundation is very cautious and wanting to address the so-called cold spots in grant making. (Event Host Local Assembly, 2017) • In 2017, our efforts have focused on building towards our ambition of awarding grants of £10m a year and holding an endowment of £100m by 2025. (Annual Report of Local Foundation, 2017) • It has been a positive year for [foundation] as we continue to evolve and deliver on our mission to support foundations to be ambitious and effective in the way that they use their resources for social good. (Annual Report of National Foundation, 2017) • We want to continue to lay the groundwork really for a stronger organization and voice representing the foundations and the broader movement of independent philanthropy. (Event Owner National Assembly, 2017)

The two charitable foundations have flourished under contemporary capitalism,

emerging as important cultural and social agents within the field of philanthropy. While "all

positions of arrival are not equally probable for all starting points" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 104),

the expertise of the foundation in playing the hand it is dealt is crucial, helping to achieve its

long-term objectives. A panellist during a discussion at the Local Assembly about "how can

philanthropy better serve all our communities" corroborates this:

> *Excerpt 5.3*
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> <u>Panellist B</u>: It is about having people, either staff or ambassadors for the community foundation that have real expert knowledge in local places and can use things like visits, Vital Signs and impact reports to make sure that donors understand and appreciate life beyond what they immediately know about.

The National Assembly's owner identified herself as friend, supporter and associate with

many top politicians and philanthropy professionals, "emphasizing the increasingly important

role that foundations play in civil society and ensuring that the government is aware of the

expertise you collectively can bring to the table" (Event Owner National Assembly, 2018).

No report or account is of greater theatrical importance to the assemblies than cultural

narratives in the form of "inspirational philanthropic stories" that present the good achieved

by foundations (Interview Event Organizer Local Assembly, 2017). The following

interactional episode from the Local Assembly confirms the idea that "storytelling is bound

up with *identity*" (Maclean *et al.*, 2015a, p. 1626), the way foundations choose to exhibit

themselves, serving as an important source of inspiration and key to expanding the donor

base:

> *Excerpt 5.4*
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> <u>Foundation Member</u>: It was really impressive to see the numbers earlier about how much money the foundation has raised, how much has been donated, how many organizations have received grants, and how the grants were made, but I wondered in this sort of ventures trying to tackle one cold spot both geographically and in terms of community interests, what has the community foundation thought about in terms of really measuring the impact of those grants made either upon the organization that has received them, or upon the beneficiaries that they support, or indeed in terms of impact upon themes or issues that are specifically facing areas?
>
> <u>Panellist B</u>*:* As you know, we have spent time looking at how we present ourselves in a more open conversational style that reflects professionalism and friendliness of the staff here. It is really important that we tell our story well so that even more organizations join with us to make great things happen. If we can tell our story right, if we can convey our impact to donors, then to put it bluntly, they are likely to give more.

The broadcasted history was characterized by a high level of context sensitivity, highlighting the formative effect of situated environments where adaptations played out (Maclean *et al.*, 2016). In insinuating itself as a dominant agent within the local philanthropic field, the local community foundation engaged in image building by launching a new website and a refreshed brand at the AGM, revealing to its constituencies and the field a desirable quality and capability (Interview Event Owner Local Assembly, 2017), whereas the national body announced a five-year strategy, which serves as "an evolution, not a revolution, in the way we serve our members" (Annual Report of National Foundation, 2017, p. 15; Event Owner National Assembly, 2017). The two staged events, as archetypical quasi-formal, ritualistic gatherings, reveal assemblies to have a deeper purpose beyond the formalities of accountability (Hodges *et al.*, 2004) and good governance (Catasús and Johed, 2007). They are understood by the actors performing front stage as opportunities to rally the 'faithful', re-position within the field, declare and gain sanction for new courses of action, and affirm their identity and worthiness as agents of social cohesion.

5.3 Fundraisers

Whereas assemblies in the philanthropic field pay little attention to the actual processes of financial resource flows, fundraisers, concerned with giving back to society, "provide a means for charities to broaden their donor bases" (Webber, 2004, p. 122). Consider, as illustrative of nature and purpose, the Local Fundraiser. It was staged at a swanky hotel in Newcastle to celebrate the role that women play in regenerating communities in North East England (Interview Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017). With the lowest employment rate in England, higher than average rates of financial exclusion, especially in former mining areas, and relatively few large-sized local companies (Hudson, 2005; Pike *et al.*, 2010), North East England, despite covering "a large rural hinterland in Northumberland where many of the donors live" (Maclean *et al.*, 2013, p. 752), is not a wealthy area that presents a fertile

ground for fundraising events. Lacking super-wealthy supporters, both individual and corporate, which can be easily identified in London and Scotland, the North East seemed an imperfect location for holding the Local Fundraiser.

As an annual exclusive networking lunch, it brought together what its owner called "high calibre people" (Interview Event Owner Local Fundraiser, 2017), chiefly prominent female financiers, accountants, lawyers, and other "structural equivalents" (Maclean *et al.*, 2017, p. 144) who had the power to convene their clients possessing substantial wealth and wanting to give something back. At the event, networks were not hard-wired but constantly reconfigured in pursuit of a local cause intended to empower numeracy and literacy projects (Interview Event Guest Local Fundraiser, 2017). In this way, coalitions of local philanthropists emanating from different professional fields were assembled temporarily, united by a common purpose of raising at least £15,000 for a family learning scheme. Not only had the organizers, including sponsors and venue providers, a particular interest in extending their network reach and raising their profile through the event, so too the guests (Interview Event Guest Local Fundraiser, 2017; Interview Event Sponsor Local Fundraiser, 2017).

A North East accounting firm sponsored the event, students from a local college made flowers to decorate the venue, and a corporate foundation sent several staff members to help handle the props (Interview Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2018). Described by the American Banker Magazine as the most powerful woman in banking, the former CEO of the HSBC, born in the North East, was invited and delivered a keynote speech at the fundraiser, which marked the high water mark of the event. Her story, revolving from a previous life as a successful banker to a more fulfilling one as a prominent philanthropist establishing a donor-advised fund which aims to improve the numeracy skill of children in local communities, won occasional outbreak of applause from audiences. It was the local nature, the primary

source of success in meeting the raising target of the event that attracted support from wealthy attendees. This is confirmed by the event manager:

> *Excerpt 5.5*
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> <u>Event Manager</u>: It's very regional in its focus, and I learned a lot about the importance that people feel of giving locally … It was a much easier ask to get money out of people when they believed that they're giving locally than to give nationally.

The emergence of the National Fundraiser was facilitated by the rising incapacity of the government to meet growing welfare needs of children in the UK and worldwide (Bywaters *et al.*, 2020). The event organizing committee believes that the property industry is more effective and powerful than the public sector in serving children's interests. Having established itself firmly as a key annual event in the property industry, the National Fundraiser was organized and attended by real estate elites to raise money for charities that support children in the UK and around the world (Interview Event Manager National Fundraiser, 2017). Through a series of distinct but related activities that took place at one of the world's best racecourses, Ascot, including a champagne reception, seven races, live and silent auctions, and a post racing live band, the fundraiser made attendees aware of the challenge posed by rising inequality and the need to focus on and invest in causes relating to children's well-being (Event Brochure for National Fundraiser, 2017). By bringing together donors and recipients, the fundraiser facilitated "the interdependence of the dominant and the dominated" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 361) and was seen as an effective gathering, which can mitigate the harmful effects of increasing inequalities (Interview Event Owner National Fundraiser, 2017). The event, as implied by its owner at the interview, was considered to be more important now than ever since it provided the potential to alleviate the worst excesses of 'real estate elites take all' capitalism.

The participants are "multi-positional" agents (Bourdieu, 1996), whose networks span real estate, voluntary and public-sector boards. The personal commitment of real estate elites

who were dispositionally attuned, primarily for "enlightened self-interest" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 260), to give their fortunes back to society marked the event out as a pioneering fundraising event which had been followed by the property industry in other countries including Ireland (Interview Event Owner National Fundraiser, 2017). Donating fortunes to the socially innovative philanthropic projects promoted by the chosen children's charities created opportunities for the real estate elite to convert their economic capital into social and symbolic capital. Their involvement in the fundraiser set them apart and gave them access to leading field elites denied to others. As one of sponsors reflected:

Excerpt 5.6

Event Sponsor: [Sponsor] didn't make that corporate decision. It was part of me joining [sponsor] as part of a budget that I have to market the name of [sponsor]. [sponsor] speaks for itself. I have a budget where I entertain and target particular clients.

Fundraisers were organized as solving the pressing social problems by enabling the acts of welcome, interrogation and reassembly (as summarized in Table 5.2). Event organizers shifted the attention from the general to something much more tailored to which they could show appreciation of support, articulate social problems, and sound the call to arms, "making it clear from the outset that it is a fundraising event and that people need to bring money along" (Interview Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017).

Table 5.2: Phases of fundraisers

Phase	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Fundraisers
Welcome	• I would like to say some special words of thanks to our sponsors [name] once again this year, and of course, to our donors, and thanks many of you here in the room today. (Event Host Local Fundraiser, 2017) • I made sure that I was on site to welcome her and to show her and to go above and beyond and make sure she was comfortable. (Interview Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017) • Because we kind of feel like we're hosting individual tables, we do give them a bottle of water. That's paid for and little things like that to make them feel a bit more welcome. (Interview Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017) • [Event organizer] gets an opportunity to tell groups about what we do, encourage applications, and to make them feel welcome and to

	give them some worth as well. (Interview Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017)
Interrogation	• Inequality of pay, bad representation of women at all senior levels of companies, bad representation of boards … if you really want to hear the nasties, we are sitting here and hoping for equal pay. (Keynote Speaker Local Fundraiser, 2017) • I like to take a little time to think about a scenario. I like you to think about if you're a small child living in a house where there are no books, no magazines, and no newspapers … and you don't really know which way to hold the book and which way to turn the page (Recipient Charity Local Fundraiser, 2017) • With the start of a new decade [National Fundraiser] continues its charitable mission to help children through the alleviation of poverty and suffering, the improvement of healthcare, the promotion of education, or other welfare needs. (Event Brochure for National Fundraiser, 2017)
Reassembly	• In my long 29 years with a little bit experience behind me, there is a big thing that I have learned. It is called paying it forward. It is called reinvesting your success. (Keynote Speaker Local Fundraiser, 2017) • I believe that it is incumbent for all of us who have a privilege to be where we are today in this room to be role models for that kind of behaviour, which kindly bring beyond to [foundation]. (Keynote Speaker Local Fundraiser, 2017) • They look to build long-term relationships with key charities whilst introducing fresh charities each year. The Committee likes projects that involve a two or three year commitment – which gave our sponsors, donors and other supporters at [National Fundraiser] a really exciting result, which it is hoped will, in turn, encourage continued enthusiasm and generosity. (Event Brochure for National Fundraiser, 2017)

The representations delivered by Local and National Fundraisers became "a unified economic space" in their own right, populated by allied, wealthy philanthropists who held enormous "central economic power" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 200-201). The adopted cases highlight the conjoined nature of staged events and elite philanthropy within an inequitable world, with "the rhetorical strategy" in play (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 146), deploying economic capital to enrich the lives of people. The fundraisers impressed on the researcher that many of those wealthy philanthropists had attended the annual events for more than a decade

(Interview Event Owner National Fundraiser, 2017), which resonates with Bourdieu's (1977) idea that charitable giving has been a fundamental aspect of the elite equation.

Orchestrating and conducting Local and National Fundraisers involved the 'integration' of the dominant, making it possible to construct elite unity through a variety of philanthropic actions (Harvey *et al.*, 2020). This is a highly sophisticated and predetermined work of integrating philanthropic elites into the running order, a work of moralizing attendees – "philanthropists are very much moralists", becoming "prophets of the unification of all markets" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 361). By virtue of their social and symbolic capital, top guests had the capacity to convene assemblies of economic-rich individuals from different business and professional fields, including accounting, banking and finance, law and real estate, and persuade them of the worthiness of the event and causes.

To reconstruct the social space, I noted carefully who attended the two staged events. The social space delineated by the fundraisers was organized surrounding two poles represented by rich donors, on the one hand, and by passive recipients, on the other. Taking the National Fundraiser as an example, the two poles were wholly opposed to each other: on one end, "850 property industry figures with money and businesses", on the other, "five chosen charities that have massively worthwhile causes specifically helping children in the UK and worldwide" (Official Website of National Fundraiser, 2017; Event Owner National Fundraiser, 2017). In Bourdieu's (1984, p. 175) words, the "taste of luxury" and the "taste of necessity". At the intersection of the two groups of audiences, there was one type of performer, the television presenter, invited as a host bringing people from the two worlds together. Viewed in this light, the fundraiser is "an in-between, intermediate world" (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 148). The opportunity existed for event organizers to reveal both the injustices that stem from inequalities and the desire of the wealthy attendee to actively invest their economic resources in carefully selected causes for social improvement.

With the polarized space event organizers set up; with the description of targeted

causes, the winning trump cards were dealt, and the fundraising game began. Fundraising

strategies were possible based on rhetorically super-charged narratives created by

philanthropic elites (Harvey *et al.*, 2020). According to the owner of the Local Fundraiser,

"it's all about storytelling and role models" (Interview Event Owner Local Fundraiser, 2017).

The unfortunate or fortunate coincidences which had shaped the life of the high-profile

professional businesswomen who attended the fundraiser were so many opportunities to

present their desires to contribute to the society. For example, the invited keynote speaker

emphasized the humble nature of her origin, describing herself as "an accidental baby" and as

"a late boomer" at the event, and expressed her desire to give back to the community that

once nurtured her:

> *Excerpt 5.7*
>
> <u>Keynote Speaker</u>: I was born in Middlesbrough in a not very rich family at all.
> In fact, I was an accidental baby … I was the first child of my family to go to a
> university. Actually, I can say that the two things that got me off to a great
> start in life and I must be blessed by this. It is a good family, but more to the
> point, a good education. I have to say that I am also a late boomer. I got
> everything free. This made me feel very privileged as well, being state school
> educated, free universities, and so on. It seems to me that it is about time that I
> certainly give something back.

This speech was highly *performative*, laying the 'fortunate' and 'unfortunate' together before

attendees in a conspicuous manner simultaneously to evoke sympathy and commend the

cause.

Like assemblies, fundraisers seek to leverage the influence of celebrities to encourage

charitable giving. The spectacle of vast fortunes they hold, coupled with their observable

modes of giving, had enabled the greater awareness of and substantive contribution to

fundraisers. The significance of celebrity in broadcasting inequality became compelling at the

event: "Inequality of pay, the bad representation of women at the senior levels of all

companies, and the bad representation of boards. If you really want to hear the nasties, we're

sitting here hoping for equal pay" (Keynote Speaker Local Fundraiser, 2017). The stories told by celebrities were typically crafted to take wealthy attendees through different emotional stages, playing a crucial role in the fundraising solicitation (Merchant *et al.*, 2010). In the dominant performance of fundraisers, wealthy attendees show commitment and solidarity with recipients by voluntarily donating to the targeted causes that can enrich their lives. In doing so, the gap between rich and needy people becomes more acceptable, and society more cohesive. The identities of wealthy donors convey selflessness, equality and love of humanity (Maclean and Harvey, 2020).

5.4 Award ceremonies

More than 400 philanthropic elites gathered in central Newcastle to "recognise and celebrate the hard work and creative thinking by our local charities and individual fundraisers, while also highlighting the local businesses and employees who help to support the work of our charities" (Media Coverage of Local Award Ceremony, 2017). BBC presenters hosted the award ceremony with 41 round tables, which featured entertainment performed by a group of local singers. This celebration of philanthropic achievements was a medium through which we worshiped at the altar of a culture of local giving. It also reflected the culture, each award ceremony capturing the spirit of that particular setting at a specific instant, "the mores, the humour, the politics – in short the zeitgeist" (Levy, 2003, p. 18).

Staged at the Mansion House in central London and graced by the attendance of the Lord Mayor of the City of London, together with a glittering bunch of A-list philanthropists, the National Award Ceremony convened the power of celebrity in the field, earning its credentials as "a fellowship network of the best philanthropists in the UK" (Interview Event Manager National Award Ceremony, 2017). The biennial staged event "celebrates the extraordinary and transformational achievements of individuals and families who have, each in their own various ways, brought about lasting social change through their conviction, their

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determination and their generosity" (Official Website of National Award Ceremony, 2017).

Its main organizer is a national charitable network supporting and promoting philanthropy in

the UK. According to Event Manager (2017), it deliberately structured this staged event that

appeared to participants as a highly ritualized philanthropic institution. The distinctive

characteristic of professional relations between award ceremonies and celebrities is the way

organizers "seek to build lasting relationships with celebrity patrons" (Brockington, 2014, p.

97).

Guests at the Local and National Award Ceremonies, according to event managers,

were purposefully selected and had to be approved by the organizing committee because

attending such high-profile gatherings was considered as a precondition for admission into

elite circles. It can be observed that the invited guests did not move within the event space in

an informal and casual way as they were subject to the forces that structured the space

through the mechanisms of nomination and presentation. In Table 5.3, I present illustrative

quotations for the three phases – celebration, recognition and inspiration – involved in the

two ceremonies.

Table 5.3: Phases of award ceremonies

Phase	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Award Ceremonies
Celebration	• We founded and co-sponsored this category at [Local Award Ceremony] to celebrate those whose philanthropy does so much to benefit people and places here on our doorstep. (Event Sponsor Local Award Ceremony, 2017) • [National Award Ceremony] celebrates exceptional philanthropists, changing the world we live in through inspirational and strategic philanthropic investments of time, knowledge and resource. (Official Website of National Award Ceremony, 2017)
Recognition	• A total of 11 awards will be presented, including the Philanthropy Award, which aims to recognize the generosity and impact of people, families, businesses and trusts who provide vital funding for the region's charities (Media Coverage of Local Award Ceremony, 2017) • Being recognised by [National Award Ceremony] means a great deal to me; it validates the work we are doing at [foundation] while recognizing the value of giving in a thoughtful and intelligent manner, both of which we strive to do. (Category Winner National Award

	Ceremony, 2017)
Inspiration	• We hope by their example, others will be inspired to make a real impact through giving to help our communities thrive. (Event Sponsor Local Award Ceremony, 2017) • We hope that this year's fellows will promote the fulfilment that philanthropy can bring, and inspire others to start their own philanthropic journey to create legacy for generations to come. (Event Sponsor National Award Ceremony, 2017)

The award ceremonies provide opportunities for accumulating symbolic capital because of their power to name and to confer on leading philanthropists their "social titles of recognition" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 337). The nomination and presentation processes were found to be part of "the same series as official declarations, official acts of naming" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 66; Watson and Anand, 2006), one of the important acts that the third sector typically associated with the public and business sectors. Nominated by event organizers and sponsors, high profile judges from different business and professional backgrounds play their role as a "divine creator" (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 150), selecting the shortlisted finalists across a variety of award categories, including the awards for cultural philanthropy, impact investment, philanthropy advocate and pioneering philanthropy, which were designed to capture the best stories from the philanthropic landscape (Event Brochure for Local Award Ceremony, 2017). Viewed in this light, the convening of the award ceremonies was "accompanied by a process of concentration of instruments of legitimation, as well as the development of a symbolic apparatus and symbolic rituals" around the elite power (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 66), fundamental to consolidate the reputation and peer approval bestowed on the winners – using Goode's words (1978), the award ceremony is concerning the "celebration of heroes" of the field.

In staged philanthropic events such as these, wealth did not act simply as wealth. Instead, there was "a variable form of recognition extended to wealth" (Bourdieu, 2014, pp. 191-192), which means that the raw economic power also wielded symbolic impacts granted

to wealth through "recognizing exceptional philanthropists" (Event Manager National Award Ceremony, 2017). What is involved in both cases is revealing that economic resources can be transformed into public recognitions through the award ceremonies that celebrate the achievements of philanthropy. Therefore, the manner in which the award ceremonies were presented, as converting economic capital into symbolic capital, belied a crucial but obscured role as maintaining the *status quo* and strengthening current advantages, according to which award winners were the "bearers of a new accumulation strategy" (Ball, 2008, p. 753). As the most valuable form of capital, symbolic capital mattered to philanthropists (Morvaridi, 2012); they were self-aware about the importance of being recognized as all-round social actors who shared the benefits of their success with other people, rather than selfishly pursuing limited business interests for financial and material gain (Shaw *et al*., 2011). It is telling that:

> *Excerpt 5.8*
>
> <u>Award Winner</u>: If I and others can be good examples of giving, then I think that is a good thing. Many people could give more time, skills and money but I don't think it is just a numbers game. Recognition for those givers who make gifts relevant to their wealth or who give time and skills is just as important.

Being nominated created an essential condition for the potential classification of a philanthropic agent as dominant. It was by receiving a charitable award that philanthropists added to their capital stock on a grand scale and positioned themselves for admission into the power elite. The award ceremonies examined here were therefore "oriented towards the preservation or elevation of the position in social space" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 237), leaving the philanthropic elite surrounded by the process of social reproduction. The doxa of the power elite remains a doxa since the processes of organizing and conducting philanthropic award ceremonies are disguised by the conversion of winners' economic capital into symbolic capital.

The Local and National Award Ceremonies were prized not only for the instant rewards they granted – symbolic in the philanthropic field – but also for the valuable

connections they brought. Organizers constructed the staged events as meeting places and

awards created the affiliation bonds required to operate within the field of power. Through

award fellowships, "an inner circle" (Useem, 1984) was formed, and wealthy individuals

could access a nexus of social relations where they met as friends and colleagues at the event

and panel discussions. Shared fellowships among award winners have established "an

organizational foundation for an elite stratum within the capitalist class" (Useem and

McCormack, 1981, p. 383). Event participants have recognized the role that award

ceremonies may play in "convening power" (Lindsay, 2008), whether on a local or national

scale, "demonstrating that *we are all in the same boat*" (Maclean and Harvey, 2020, p. 641).

This is confirmed by the event manager of the National Award Ceremony at interview:

> *Excerpt 5.9*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: We've had lots of discussions with other philanthropic
> organizations involved. They've all said that [National Award Ceremony] has
> an imperative role, which is different from every role that they have within the
> sector. I think what's really special about it is it's a convening force, so it
> brings everyone together. For thought leadership events, it's actually sort of
> harnessing and thinking that is going on. I think that's where [National Award
> Ceremony] has its own unique sphere of influence.

The award ceremonies studied here served as a structuring structure for power elites of

philanthrocapitalism, being essentially small, elite cliques that functioned according to well-

established norms and cultural practices. They represented the loci of elite power in

organizational settings, and their participants were united by "a genuine organic solidarity"

(Bourdieu, 1996, p. 142).

5.5 Conferences

As the first staged event of its kind in the UK, and indeed, in the world, the Local Conference

"surveys the history of philanthropy in North East England over a period of more than 900

years, from the time the North East was brought under Norman control (thirty years or so

after the Conquest of 1066) down to the present" (Official Website of Local Conference,

2018). Lasting three weeks with 44 staged events and activities held from Berwick down to Teesside, the conference brought together wealthy donors, recipients and philanthropy professionals "to celebrate and raise awareness of what philanthropy has achieved in the North East, to question, debate and inform the future role of philanthropy in the North East, and to encourage more philanthropy and philanthropists, in all its forms, by demonstrating the joy of giving and the good it can do" (Official Website of Local Conference, 2018). Five headline events, including a project launch event, a symposium on transformational philanthropy in action, a lecture on how Newcastle University had been raised through philanthropy, a fundraising music event, and an Oxford-Union-style debate on philanthropy, attracted more than 600 attendees across the region, creating the space "within which human connections supersede a space's designated purpose and become multipurposed, durable, and long-lived, spanning space, time, and distance" (Purnell and Cunningham Breede, 2018, p. 512). The conference involved media hype around leading philanthropists, including Bill Holroyd CBE, Sir Paul Marshall and Sir Peter Vardy, the local musician, Kathryn Tickell, and philanthropic experts like Rhodri Davies, Diana Leat and Beth Breeze. This is what Nickel and Eikenberry (2009) call "celebrity philanthropy", "individualistic and elitist", "affirmative and exclusionary", and the conference was "an uncritical celebration of celebrities and their production of an elite society" (p. 981).

The National Conference was held in Cardiff, a philanthropic city, from the castle, together with its garden and parks, and was sponsored by leading financial services companies, including M&G Investments, Barclays, Brewin Dolphin, and Ruffer (Event Manager National Conference, 2017). Themed as "Leading for Local Good", the event focused on community foundations and provided "an opportunity to learn, reflect and share best practice on what we can all do better to serve our communities" (Event Owner National Conference, 2017). Event organizers put on three days to include a mix of workshops,

plenary sessions, research briefings, leadership development, and networking opportunities, attracting more than 300 representatives from the UK, the US, Europe, Canada and further afield. As the event manager confirmed, the conference had been "the UK's largest gathering of professionals involved in effective giving, philanthropy or associated areas of expertise".

The conferences generated and disseminated knowledge about philanthropic models and practices through the phase of interpretation, while blurring the boundaries between philanthropic organizations through the phase of engagement. In Table 5.4, I present relevant quotations from Local and National Conferences relating to the two phases. The most indeterminate interactions offered the favourable ground for the conferences, which, by strengthening existing networks or creating new connections, produced areas of specialist knowledge and expertise in the field of philanthropy.

Table 5.4: Phases of conferences

Phase	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Conferences
Interpretation	• Without the work that these people have done before us, we really couldn't have actually began to tell the story of philanthropy in the region … With the engagement of the process of sensemaking, it asked us what does all this mean? (Keynote Speaker Local Conference, 2018) • It gave practical examples of philanthropy in action and how the term could be interpreted in different ways. (Evaluation Report for Local Conference, 2018) • Everyone is talking about digital and data; organizations being 'digitally transformed'. But what does this actually mean? For the organizations and for you as a leader and manager? (Event Brochure for National Conference, 2017)
Engagement	• We engaged with as many people as possible for which using social media was a key component. Having Twitter as the focal point for the pledge card campaign, encouraged more people to get involved. [Event] – although it was a difficult competition to run – eventually created good engagement and a fantastic narrative for the Festival as a whole: anyone can give and be a hero within their own community (Evaluation Report for Local Conference, 2018) • May I encourage you please to be as open as possible and share your passion for the things you believe you do well and equally to alert fellow members to challenges that you have found more difficult so that the learning experience is maximised. (Event Owner National Conference, 2017)

	• It is also a place where key partners and leaders in the fields of philanthropy, grant making and community development come to engage with [event organizer]. (Event Owner National Conference, 2017)

The National Conference's performance spearheaded its emergence as a highly orchestrated cultural event, easing access to influential philanthropic figures in the UK. Organizers' mindset in courting leading elites in the philanthropic field was not narrowly instrumental. Instead, they knew that befriending successful entrepreneurial philanthropists and senior philanthropy professionals, or engaging with MPs, by "symbolic association" (Harvey *et al.*, 2011, p. 441) raised their own profile and capital stock. Those operating within the national field of power might express goodwill by endorsing them and their conference, while others lower down the field hierarchy might assume they "warranted support because of the authority conferred by high-level connections" (Maclean *et al.*, 2018, p. 782). These they cultivated assiduously by inviting them to host top tables, to chair panel discussions, or to deliver keynote speeches, which were the "strategies aiming to maintain relationships already established" (Bourdieu, 2014, pp. 238-239).

Inclusion of political and business figures offered an important mechanism for event participants to "connect with new people" (Event Manager National Conference, 2018), a crucial conduit for social and informational influences on decision making in the philanthropic field. According to its owner, the conference provided socially loaded opportunities for national philanthropic leaders to "develop real perspectives, share experiences and ideas and learn new and better ways of doing philanthropy in a safe, supportive environment" (Event Brochure for National Conference, 2017). Philanthropic elites actively converted their cultural capital into social capital at the conference.

The Local Conference, on the other hand, presented the philanthropic field as a relatively close-knit, small world, surrounded by an impermeable social boundary, and

characterized by high-density closure or strong ties which boosted local cohesion while promoting concerted action by attendees. In such the enclosed and finite space, described by Bourdieu (1993b, p. 151) as "very similar to that of detective novels in which characters are trapped on an island or in some isolated country manor", the delegates had "every chance of meeting each other, and therefore of fulfilling, in the course of some necessary and eminently foreseeable adventure, all the implications of the generative formula by which they are governed". What this "social closure" (Ramirez, 2001) gave organizers was a high chance of generating economic capital through attendees' compliance with the purpose and expectations of the conference. The owner of the Local Conference provided an example of this:

> *Excerpt 5.10*
>
> <u>Event Owner</u>: In terms of profile for the festival and for philanthropy … the biggest thing they are offering us is a room for 300 solicitors to talk about philanthropy. What might be able to happen by then is I could be built as the Chair of [Local Conference] who is going to talk about it, but the call to action for that room of solicitors, because there will be some young solicitors in there, is what you can do is you personally can pledge to speak to every client about philanthropy and you will make more difference in your lifetime to the amount of money that goes out to philanthropy.

Implicit in this quote is the idea that accessing field elites renders the potential of gaining membership in the field of power, a gaming space that not all capital-rich actors enter but just a small minority (Bourdieu, 1996; Maclean and Harvey, 2019). The philanthropic act of large companies, as generously sponsoring the conferences, with the intention, conscious but always concealed, at least from the view of attendees, of serving their own interests, was one of the many investments made to strengthen "the company's image and profile" (Event Sponsor Local Conference, 2018), namely, "the symbolic capital attached to its name" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 456). It was therefore administered and managed in a way similar to investments, with the session, the topic, and the form of presentation carefully selected to increase the symbolic return. I found the appearance of motivated generosity to be the

precondition for symbolic efficacy, therefore, the interested motives might be as well hidden as possible, and the conference space, functioning relating to cultural capital, provided "a privileged terrain" for sponsors, making "patronage the form *par excellence* of symbolic investment" (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 456). The event owner explicitly explained the reciprocity exchanges involved in the conference:

> *Excerpt 5.11*
> <u>Event Owner</u>: The sponsors' support was hugely important both in helping to fund [Local Conference] but equally important, helping us to engage with a wide audience by using their networks. Part of their involvement meant that they could access nine of the headline events, with guaranteed places at each. This meant that we could target particular audiences for certain events, ensuring the message was heard by the most relevant people.

Conferences, operating based on logics different from assemblies and award ceremonies, which have relatively strict rules for inclusion and exclusion, create social spaces that are more permeable, bridging diverse fields to exchange ideas about philanthropic practices. Indeed, the boundaries of the conferences are not fixed but always changing depending on the conception of the session and the topic in discussion. Cultural capital proves to matter most as it can be mobilized and converted into social and economic capital crucial for admission to the power elite.

5.6 Discussion

This chapter has examined the structural dynamics of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy, guided by the question *how is power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events?* Through the detailed analysis of assemblies, fundraisers, conferences and award ceremonies, I find elite staged philanthropic events deploy power by assembling fields and creating opportunities for the conversion and accumulation of capital held by dominant agents. Elite staged philanthropic events created a space of power, analysed "not only in its evident physical forms but also in its unconscious symbolic forms" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 9). In staged events such as these, power is least visible. In Bourdieu's (1991, p. 163) words, "it is

most completely misrecognized – and thus, in fact, recognized". Event organizers tended to mixed resources together, chiefly networks, money, reputation, ritual and expertise, and attendees enacted philanthropic actions that were multifunctional or what Bourdieu (2014, p. 201) would call "overdetermined".

My findings suggest that elite staged philanthropic events are essentially reflective of ingrained class distinctions identified by Savage *et al.* (2015). Successful businesses and wealthy individuals, couples and families who acted as donors or sponsors at the staged events typically held dominant positions, while resource-poor participants remained subordinate, sometimes following the manner suggested by Emirbayer and Williams (2005) to neutralize the power held by the dominant. Staged philanthropic events had developed as institutions in their own right, whose practices were internalized by different types of elite actors, shaped by class dispositions and manifest of them (Flemmen, 2012). Those staged events, endowed with a political element, functioned as policy spheres and came to become 'proxies' for admission into the upper social classes. Hence, the social micro-processes that staged philanthropic events unfold contribute to the "contemporary dynamics of elite production" (Clegg *et al.*, 2006, p. 357) – the structures and processes that result in persistent inequalities in society (Callahan, 2017; Giridharadas, 2019).

Staged philanthropic events are inextricably bound up generatively with processes of capital formation within the field. They should be viewed as a mechanism of legitimation (assemblies), giving back (fundraisers), naming (award ceremonies) and engagement (conferences), practices that can fundamentally enhance the positioning of social actors by converting what is mobilized: capital within an organizational field – in this case the field of elite philanthropy. For example, wealthy agents attended fundraisers and donated to favoured causes with the intention of increasing their symbolic capital. Likewise, event sponsors might use their economic capital to purchase social capital. Symbolic capital is context dependent as

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it is based on recognition or misrecognition. If people do not recognize someone's symbolic

power, then it is not there. This also applies to social capital, whose existence depends

crucially on networks and relationships between actors. Events like AGMs are rich in social

capital, and philanthropic elites deployed power through strong and weak ties. Capital

represents power over the organizational field (Anheier *et al.*, 1995; Harvey and Maclean,

2008). The different forms of capital, described by Bourdieu (1985, p. 724) as the "aces in a

game of cards", are the power that determines the chances of benefit in a particular field. By

becoming involved in high-profile staged philanthropic events, agents enhanced their stock of

capital and accumulated power deemed necessary for membership of what Useem (1984)

calls "the inner circle". While a body of research has highlighted the importance of

governance networks for the power elite in achieving objectives (Davis and Greve, 1997;

Davis *et al.*, 2003), this study reveals how philanthropic elites function through staged events

to promote individual and organizational goals.

In comparing local versus national philanthropic events, I find that the local staged

philanthropic events created relatively close-knit social spaces that fostered solidarity among

community elites, whereas the national events provided opportunities for high-profile

attendees to engage in more heterogeneous, diverse interactions with social and positional

equals, as typifies the behaviour of extensively networked bridging actors. Fundamental to

the organization and conduct of local philanthropic events was the idea that participant

behaviour can be controlled largely through power wielded by those who manage and own

them. This assumption underpins the strand of literature on corporate governance (Harvey *et

al.*, 2020; Hendry *et al.*, 2006), and it is not surprising that the local philanthropic events,

orchestrated by community organizations and attended by regional elites, subscribed to the

traditional wisdom and were governed by the conventional managerial position. Indeed, it is

the institutionalized practices that are the actual "authors" of local philanthropic events. This

kind of practices, my data show, lack "a proper locus of agency; individuality is construed as a secondary effect of primary practice" (Chia and MacKay, 2007, pp. 226-227). The national philanthropic events, in contrast, used the logic of large-scale organization, more consciously and instrumentally, to assemble the field. The unfolding actions exemplified the symbolic manifestations and loose coupling identified by organizational scholars (Lutz, 1982; Weick, 1976). Attendees typically are "boundary spanners" (Geletkanycz and Hambrick, 1997). In Bourdieu's words (1996), they are "multipositional", taking part in private, public and third sectors in governmental, educational and cultural networks and domains, engaging with various business and professional fields. With their presence and endorsement, the national events put on "act[s] of symbolic violence" (Oakes *et al.*, 1998, p. 277), replacing dominant discourses to enable a more progressive and strategic transformation of the field.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter maps staged philanthropic events as organizational fields in themselves, whose actors include donors, beneficiaries, third sector professionals, and celebrities. The genesis of elite staged philanthropic events might be viewed as the cautious development of a form of orthodoxy comprising a set of rules that were broadly established, based on which interactions were facilitated to achieve charitable purposes. Although recent elite studies have examined the activities of elites, emphasizing the role that education and family play in helping them accede to the field of power (Maclean *et al.*, 2010; Maclean *et al.*, 2015b), I find that capital-rich actors tend to reproduce and regenerate themselves through staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. Following this structural analysis of elite philanthropic events, in the next chapter, I will focus on stage performance and compare the frontstage performances given by event organizers to their guest audiences with the backstage performances where guests are not present. Drawing on Goffman's constructs of frontstage

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and backstage, the chapter highlights the process, interaction and situation instead of outcomes.

Chapter 6
The Staging of Elite Philanthropic Events

6.1 Introduction

To date, Goffman's well known constructs of front and back stage have not been applied in the analysis for elite staged philanthropic events. While Goffman's dramaturgical perspective has impacted on organization and management theory, a large part of this has focused on how routine meetings create opportunities for strategies to be "proposed, debated, modified, contested, agreed upon, and argued over" (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Mueller, 2018, p. 24). However, their findings are unlikely to apply in more external, orchestrated settings, particularly in staged events. While research by Jeacle (2014) has examined the role of accounting in the British Academy of Film and Television Arts annual awards ceremony, less attention has been paid to staged philanthropic events, with one notable exception (Mair and Hehenberger, 2014). This chapter seeks to address this gap by discussing Goffman and the stage performances of assemblies, fundraisers, conferences and award ceremonies in the field of elite philanthropy, guided by the question *what are the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events?* The following section explores the frontstage performances performed by four groups of event organizers attempting to accomplish a polished version of philanthropy for their guest audience. This is subsequently compared and contrasted with data collected from the backstage activities and interactions that I observed before and after the event when guests were not present.

6.2 The frontstage performances of elite philanthropic events

Beginning with rap music played by a group of disabled people as the beneficiaries of the foundation and closing with a buffet dinner that enabled all constituencies to mingle freely, the Local Assembly created opportunities for the foundation to show that it "goes from strength to strength" and to grow on a broader front (Event Owner Local Assembly, 2017).

Its frontstage performances, crafted by employing a variety of "expressive equipment" (Goffman, 1959, p. 32), including loudspeakers, microphones, projectors, rostrum, PowerPoint slides, sofa, and other physical props, depended crucially on the active use of past achievements to unite constituencies and stakeholders and build commitment to future strategies (Apostolides, 2010). Plate 6.1 contains a photograph of the AGM.

Plate 6.1: The frontstage of the Local Assembly

The following excerpt is based on the observational data collected during the event. The excerpt has been chosen since it shows the kinds of claims about philanthropic accomplishments made during the performances on the frontstage.

Excerpt 6.1

Host: Good evening, I'm [name]. I am very honoured to say that I'm one of the [foundation]'s Vice Presidents. I am delighted to be here at the AGM. I'm just sort of hosting proceedings here tonight to take you through our panel discussion later. I just want to give you a short introduction before we give a couple of speakers to talk more about the work of the foundation. It is, of

course, our 30th AGM, that is quite something, isn't it? There remains a testament to the generosity of people and businesses in [region] that we have the most successful … foundation in the UK, yeah? [claps] It is great to be here in [venue] this evening to highlight the need for even more vital local causes to be seen and heard across our area, something I know the foundation really, really wants to champion. The event at this scale wouldn't be possible of course for the foundation without the generous support of partners and our thanks are going to [sponsor] who are supporting the evening and who've worked with the foundation on the new look and website which will be talked about later. [Introducing the event programme.] But for now, please welcome [Chair] to the stage.

[Claps]

<u>Chair</u>: Good evening everyone, ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues. It is a great pleasure to be able to report on the work that the foundation has done in this last financial year ended in March 2017. [Announcing achievement.] To give you a flavour of impact being made, I want to share some stories from our grants that are making a difference here on our doorstep. [Telling headline stories.] As you've known, we've all spent time looking at how we present ourselves working with our new agency [company]. It's really important that we tell our story well so that even more organizations join us to make great things happen. We are very excited to launch our refreshed brand this evening. I hope you've all had a chance potentially to look at the website and see what's on the screen behind us. The new look is just a very small part of what we've been doing behind the scenes. Our team was working very hard to deal with the conversations that we have and the ways we present ourselves in a more open conversational style that reflects the professionalism and friendliness of the staff here. Our new website is live today, and it's designed for everyone to connect us more easily … On the website, we've also completely updated our Vital Signs section, and that now gives community knowledge by issues covering the whole North East of England. Please have a look at that and share it with people who might be interested in it. There are a lot more on our 2017 yearbook as well, including all the people involved, trustees and staff of the foundation. I very much like to thank [CEO] and the team and staff who have worked hard this year. It's been a very busy year. A lot of challenges. We've got on with so much work. They did a great job. Big thanks to them…

For this chapter's purposes, four aspects of the frontstage performance are particularly relevant. First, to perform the AGM as "a big open showpiece event" (Panellist A Local Assembly, 2017) in front of a mixed audience of donors, beneficiaries and third sector professionals, as the excerpt shows, involved boastfully announcing and praising the charitable foundation as a very successful organization, which held a dominant controlling position within the local philanthropic field ("There remains a testament to the generosity of

people and businesses in [region] that we have the most successful … foundation in the UK.").

Secondly, the frontstage performances of the Local Assembly were deliberately crafted to provide signs that the foundation had community knowledge ("On the website, we've also completely updated our Vital Signs section, and that now gives community knowledge by issues covering the whole North East of England."). Following the Chair's statement, a performance illuminated with the dramatic embodiment of competence was offered by the Treasurer to the audiences:

Excerpt 6.2

Treasurer: It is pleasing to report that during the year the main fund out-performed the benchmark, with a total return of 21.2% compared to the benchmark of 21.0%. The performance of our other smaller funds was also satisfactory.

Thirdly, the Chair's positive praising talk highlighted the trump cards held by the foundation – official stories from grants that are making different on the doorstep – devoting her efforts to the "creation of desired impressions" (Goffman, 1959, p. 243). She reported on three headline stories created by the foundation, which, throughout the past financial year, strived to "inspire and support giving that strengthens communities and enriches local life" (Fund Impact Evaluation Report of Local Foundation, 2011, p. 7). A refreshed brand and website were launched at the assembly, designed to "tell our story well" and convey impacts of its grant making activities to local communities and, more importantly, to its constituencies and stakeholders. Following the Chair's reflections, the speech of one of the panellists became 'a perlocutionary act' (Mueller and Whittle, 2011), highlighting the importance of decently presenting philanthropic stories with some degree of spontaneity. She confirmed that the foundation would benefit from "a more open conversational style", which could help it raise more money from wealthy people and businesses.

Excerpt 6.3

Panellist B: It's something that we have been working with [sponsor] on around telling our story really well, just communicating our impact well. What [CEO] said repeatedly is if we can't tell our story right, if we can't convey our impacts to donors, then we're in difficulties. If we can, if we can make sure donors understand the impact and good work that has been done, then put it bluntly, they're likely to give more. It's hugely important.

Fourthly and finally, the frontstage had been a place where the Chair could announce official policy priorities ("highlight the need for even more vital local causes to be seen and heard across our area"). A story of the lives of the disadvantaged was told by a panellist:

Excerpt 6.4

Panellist B: Probably the most experience I have in my working life is with people that have been rough sleeping. Their lives had been characterized by a lot of the things that we have perhaps not experienced. Not having a couple of parents that really believe in them, not having a great experience of education, not having friends in lawyers, marketing experts or accountants, but being absolutely characterized by trauma and disadvantage.

Similar performances were performed by the National Assembly, where national philanthropy professionals praised the work done by trustees and members of staff, reviewed the successful year, and claimed an ideal (see Table 6.1). In the interactions where the CEO and the Chair presented the year-long philanthropic work to audiences, they "tend[ed] to show them only the end product" that had already "been finished, polished, and packaged" (Goffman, 1959, p. 52).

Table 6.1: The frontstage performances of the National Assembly

Theme	Illustrative quotes from the National Assembly
Praising the work by Chair, board and trustees	• I would like to start by saying what an honour and a privilege is to lead your membership association under the direction of such an inspirational chair and board. (CEO) • As members, you are fortunate that your association is governed by such a talented, committed and creative group of trustees. (CEO)
Claiming success	• We felt from the board that we had a very successful year. (Chair) • Last year, 2016, we commissioned IVA to survey you, our members, about our work. You told us that you valued [foundation], 100% of those who responded would recommend [foundation] membership to another foundation. (CEO) • In these fractured times, we are very proud of the value of

	being a UK-wide association. Since I was appointed, I met with members of policymakers in all four territories of the UK. As a team, we travel the length and breadth of England. (CEO)
Claiming an ideal	• We aimed to support foundations to be ambitious and effective in the way that they use their resources for social good. If we want our world to be supported, sustained and strengthened by foundations. (CEO) • We focus particularly on completing the strategic planning process … and continuing to help to make the organization fit for the future and fit for the purpose. (Chair) • We want to continue to lay the groundwork for a stronger organization and voice representing the foundations and the broader movement of independent philanthropy. (Chair) • This organization has a very important role to play and a very exciting future. (Chair)

On the frontstage, metaphors come into play (Grant and Oswick, 1996; Potter and Wetherell, 1987): the foundation "travel[s] the length and breadth of England" and lays "the groundwork for a stronger organization and voice". The Chair and the CEO displayed optimism, emphasizing that "the organization has a very important role to play and a very exciting future". The board of trustees was idealized by the Chair and the CEO as "talented, committed and creative", and the last financial year was idealized as "very successful".

The AGM also marked the charitable foundation entering a new phase of the strategic planning process, which could be seen as a ceremonial ideal (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). At the event, the Chair voiced her desire to "build its strategy around the key priorities for members" and to achieve the "strategic objective of advocating for an enabling environment for foundations". Developed with profound engagement with members and wider stakeholders together with input from both trustees and staff members, "the new strategy is an evolution, not a revolution, in the way we serve our members" (Annual Report of National Foundation, 2017).

In front regions such as these, event organizers offered a performance that required to be accomplished "with confidence, skill and panache" (Mueller, 2018, p. 18) so that the charitable foundations could "make a good impression" on a mixture of audiences (Goffman, 1959, p. 125). In situations where organizers meet critical or sceptical participants, they enacted "corrective practices" (Goffman, 1959, p. 24) to repair and save the show. The following excerpt shows how the host, a BBC presenter, restored the desired impression when an invited panellist tended to discredit the foundation. Her celebrity provided "a means of escape from the realities" (Nickel and Eikenberry, 2009, p. 983).

> *Excerpt 6.5*
>
> Panellist A: In some areas so much struggling by financially or less staff. They focused mainly on the least suffering areas. They also focused on the charities which rely primarily on public sector funding. Obviously, councils have been clobbered. There are also cold spots. What the foundation is trying to … Not just this foundation, there are many others being blocked as well.
>
> Host: No, no, there are a lot of foundations around … [laughter]

It is also worth noting that foundation trustees and members of staff appeared to be very busy over the past financial year, dealing with many challenges, while giving the impression that they are ready to work hard whenever called on. Therefore, staged events like assemblies could be viewed as a particular form of "make-work" (Goffman, 1959, pp. 112-114), which had to be accomplished successfully.

The fundraisers described in this chapter were observed as building "colleagueship" during which performers were often "held responsible for each other's good conduct" as a form of idealization (Goffman, 1959, p. 164). The organizer, owner, sponsor, donor and recipient were "formally organized into a single collectivity" (Goffman, 1959, p. 164), which allowed them to promote the events as providing a way of "changing the world on your doorstep" (Annual Report of Local Foundation, 2017) and "bringing as much benefit to as many children as possible and to those in the most acute need" (Event Brochure for National Fundraiser, 2017). The following quotes illustrate how event actors employed extreme

descriptions ("the most powerful woman", "immense experience") and positive attributes ("competitive") to tell idealized stories at the fundraisers ("heroes", "magnificent sponsors", "hardworking", "generous with their time", "a leading philanthropy advisor and grant making charity", "very deserving causes", "a formidable woman").

Table 6.2: Heroes

Performer	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Fundraisers
Sponsor	• My next heroes are simply magnificent sponsors. You are just the lifeblood of today, we couldn't do it without you, and I'm going to rattle through you pretty quickly but that does not underestimate the debt of gratitude that we owe. (National Fundraiser)
Organizing committee	• My great heroes are, of course, my committee, to whom I give a very hard time. They are longsuffering, hardworking, generous with their time, and very low on cost. Please stand up and give them a round of applause (National Fundraiser)
Owner	• In the last ten years, [foundation] has established itself as a leading philanthropy advisor and grant making charity. It continues to empower communities to do good from its new home in [location]. (Local Fundraiser) • We are going to focus on celebrating some heroes, most of whom are unsung. Who are they? Firstly, the industry itself, I think we have seen a fantastic response to the property industry since the Grenfell disaster. Well done for chaperoning a donation of almost £300,000 in a fortnight. That's added up to 10% of the whole Red Cross. Well done for responding in that way fantastic. (National Fundraiser)
Venue provider	• My next heroes are the people who actually booked the day off. Thank you to [venue] and all the team. (National Fundraiser)
Donor	• I am still really impressed by what was achieved there. £20,000, probably £20,000 plus, by now, was raised. I don't want you to feel under any pressure, grab your handbags and run for the door in terror, but I've looked at the guest list, and I think there are a fair few competitive women in the room. If you feel the need to push us past that target, then we are not going to stand in the way. (Local Fundraiser) • We are having our next speaker before we start our meal today. It's [speaker] described by American Banker Magazine 2012 as the most powerful woman in banking. [Reading the speaker's profile]. You will notice there is a

	lot to mention here. I couldn't find anything that I should sub out of this [speaker] because it's all quite noteworthy. I know it is embarrassing to sit through it, but anyhow … Shall I stop here [speaker]? She said: yes, yes, yes. You can gather she is a formidable woman and has an immense experience … She's just one of those people that you know you're glad to see in a room. So please welcome [speaker]. (Local Fundraiser)
Recipient	• Please be generous, we are going to hear about very deserving causes that we are specifically targeting today. (Local Fundraiser)

According to Goffman (1959, p. 207), "if a team is to sustain the line it has taken, the team-mates must act as if they have accepted certain moral obligations". Fundraiser sponsors, celebrities in the finance industry, made claims in front of audiences about corporate social responsibility during their speeches: "both [sponsor] and I believe that businesses have corporate social responsibilities to invest in communities as I'm sure you've already done" (Event Sponsor Local Fundraiser, 2017), striving to enhance their established reputation and standing (Lee *et al.*, 2020). Not only were organizers moralists, so too were guests who undertook "ethical duties that fundraisers may owe to their beneficiaries, the very stakeholders who are the *raison d'être* for fundraising activity" (MacQuillin and Sargeant, 2019, p. 240). The organizing committee put on a show which offered philanthropists a place where they were successful in maintaining their front before the audience by presenting themselves as "merchants of morality" (Goffman, 1959, p. 243). One major donor presented her moral accounts on stage as follows:

Excerpt 6.6

Major Donor: I believe that it is incumbent for all of us who have a privilege to be where we are today in this room to be role models for that kind of behaviour which kind of brings me on to the foundation … It is a sin not to help everybody realise their full potential. If you don't get that philosophy, you just don't think that's the right thing to do.

I noted the great difference between the front fostered by recipients and the front fostered by donors. Many performances performed by recipients were *infra dignitatem* for donors ("How

can I improve?" "Where can I go?" "Where can I get numeracy and literacy skills?"). In

attracting attendees' attention and therefore their donations, the recipient charity painted a

grey scenario at the beginning of her speech:

Excerpt 6.7

<u>Recipient</u>: Before I start, what I like to do is to take a little time to think about
a scenario. I like you to think about if you're a small child living in a house
where there are no books, no magazines, and no newspapers … and you don't
really know which way to hold the book and which way to turn the page.

The award ceremonies examined here had "a fairly sharp beginning and end, and fairly strict

limits on attendance and tolerated activities" (Goffman, 1963, pp. 18-19; Jeacle, 2014).

Beginning and end were "marked by some ceremony or ritual expression" (Gamson, 1985, p.

608). In the National Award Ceremony, the Lord Mayor of the City of London dressed in

historic robes and entered the Mansion House with the welcome of all invited guests

including nominees, winners and presenters. His keynote speech on the British philanthropic

culture was encrusted with "the ethically charged narratives of elite philanthropic motivations"

(Harvey *et al*., 2020, p. 1), marking the high-water mark of the ceremony:

Excerpt 6.8

<u>Keynote Speaker</u>: Our award winners this afternoon are each shining [National
Award Ceremony] on what can be done. One of our winners in 2015 recently
said charity has eclipsed everything that I have ever achieved in business.
Philanthropy gives me a sound of life and everything that I would miss.
[Winner] has argued in his stimulating book that philanthropy is not only for
the rich, not only for one group, but for all of us who have been part of social
enterprises and the common good.

The political celebrity appeared "suitably dressed and suitably spoken" to give the

performance "a front of respectability", playing a "purely ceremonial role" in the proceeding

of the award ceremony (Goffman, 1959, p. 106). What differentiates award ceremonies from

the other types of staged events is that they offered their guests "a completely scripted

performance", which was "very effective provided no untoward event breaks the planned

sequence of statement and acts" (Goffman, 1959, p. 221). The award ceremony organizers

recognize the need to "foreclose other frame possibilities and require sustaining a definition

of the situation in the face of diversions" (Goffman, 1974, p. 499).

The performance of the two award ceremonies presented through their fronts some

somewhat abstract claims about winners and nominees. This constitutes a way in which the

frontstage performances were orchestrated and fashioned to fit into the expectations and

understandings of the society wherein they were presented (Goffman, 1959. This is

confirmed by the ceremony host:

> *Excerpt 6.9*
> <u>Host</u>: So it is great that the awards are taking place here in the heart of the city
> as we see they are shaping our culture. It's more important now than ever
> before to celebrate and encourage philanthropy in the city for it to become
> entrenched in London's culture and the ongoing trend.

It appears that award ceremony organizers managed to perform another crucial aspect of the

"socialization process" (Ringel, 2019). Table 6.3 indicates how they offered their audiences

impressions that were idealized in different ways.

Table 6.3: The idealized performances of award ceremonies

Theme	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Award Ceremonies
Celebrating achievements of philanthropy	• The Awards are designed to recognise and celebrate the hard work and creative thinking by our local charities and individual fundraisers, while also highlighting the local businesses and employees who help to support the work of our charities. (Local Award Ceremony) • The awards are the UK's celebration of outstanding philanthropy. They recognize exceptional philanthropists and inspire us all to broaden a culture of giving. (National Award Ceremony) • This year, the awards celebrate the theme of pioneering and powering philanthropy. They brought inspirational philanthropists together to share, learning and shed light on what it is possible to create better societies and environments collectively. (National Award Ceremony)
Highlighting distinctive attributes of philanthropists	• Here this afternoon we have a world-class cadre of successful people using what they learned and earned to build a better world, using their money, entrepreneurial skills, natural talents and business acumen to invest in solutions that engage and benefit more people, particularly the poor, vulnerable and marginalized.

	(National Award Ceremony)
	• Whether it is poverty, suffering or violence, these people champion alternative thinking and fresh opportunities, creating solutions and cures, all nominees are people vision action and conviction and social ambition. (National Award Ceremony)
Inspiring others to give	• These young people are a lesson to all adults when it comes to drive, selflessness and simply just helping others. (Local Award Ceremony) • It teaches us that we do not have to be extremely wealthy to be a world-changing philanthropist. (National Award Ceremony) • Philanthropy is not only for the rich, not only for one age group but for all of us who have the power to invest social enterprise and the common good. (National Award Ceremony) • A new culture where everyone is encouraged to give, be it time, skills or money. Let's not forget a small, thoughtful action can make a world of difference. (National Award Ceremony)
Making a difference	• From humble beginnings, [foundation] has built up a service in the heart of [region] that is envied by other regions. The development and expansion of facilities and services has opened up opportunities that wouldn't have existed beforehand. (Local Award Ceremony) • Genuinely lovely and modest, [winner] has brought the community together to regenerate and improve the locality with renewed hope for the future. (Local Award Ceremony) • They believe that the world can be better and that they can bring people together to make it better and they keep going until it is better. (National Award Ceremony)

Winners on the frontstage fostered and sustained the impression that they possessed "ideal motives and qualifications" for being presented with an award and "that it was not necessary for them to suffer any indignities, insults, and humiliations, or make any tacitly understood 'deals'" (Goffman, 1959, p. 54), in order to become a winner. When winners presented themselves in front of audiences, their performances tended to incorporate the "common official values of the society" or the "moral values of the community" (Goffman, 1959, p. 45), dependent on the geographic scope of the award ceremony:

Excerpt 6.10

Award Winner: What is particularly rewarding is seeing communities solve their own problems. When they do, they care more about them. It's a whole different game.

In addition, winners engendered in their audiences the belief that they were "related to them in a more ideal way" (Goffman, 1959, p. 56). Two general illustrations are noted. First, winners fostered and sustained the impression that the philanthropic endeavours which were widely acclaimed was their only endeavour or their most important and essential one. As suggested in the quotation from one category winner:

Excerpt 6.11

Award Winner: I have been very fortunate in growing my company. I have enjoyed a period of success and now for the remainder of my life my aim is to have a period of significance, improving the lives and the life chances for as wide a range of society as possible.

Secondly, winners tended to foster and sustain the impression that the philanthropic endeavours to which they were committed had a unique and special relationship with them:

Excerpt 6.12

Award Winner: When I was young, I belonged to a church that practised tithing, so I grew up being used to giving a portion of my income for a purpose outside myself. When I ceased being a Christian, I stopped giving for a few years and didn't come back to it until my early 30s after I had become an art dealer.

Members of the team are different "in the ways and the degree to which they are allowed to direct the performance" (Findlay *et al.*, 2000; Goffman, 1959, p. 101). Incidentally, it was found that the organizational similarities of apparently different conferences were well reflected in the like-mindedness arising in organizers in England and Wales. One common technique employed by Local and National Conferences to counteract the hazard of affective ties between organizers and attendees, and therefore to defend themselves against the "dramaturgical disloyalty" (Goffman, 1959) was to change audiences frequently. Thus, event organizers were shifted frequently from one session to another, which, to some extent, reduced the chance of forming strong personal ties with particular guests.

The circumspect organizers revealed the programme before the conference took place, allowing guests for time to decide which sessions they might want to attend, who they might want to meet, and "time to assemble the expressive manner appropriate to such a greeting" (Goffman, 1959, p. 223). Once the audiences were admitted to the conference, "the necessity of being tactful" (Goffman, 1959, p. 224) did not cease. I found that there was "an elaborate etiquette" (Goffman, 1959, p. 224) by which organizers and invited celebrities highly praised philanthropy and philanthropic endeavours at the conferences. Table 6.4 present a series of illustrative quotes showing how they used positive attributes ("inclusive", "remarkable"), extreme descriptions ("everybody", "everything", "almost the same", "I never believe", "the second largest"), and a set of metaphors ("heroic", "great flowering", "choir", "a land of songs") to tell the idealized stories on the frontstage.

Table 6.4: The idealized performances of conferences

Case	Illustrative quotes from keynote speakers
Local Conference	• Philanthropy is not just about rich people. Philanthropy is inclusive. It's something that everybody can contribute, and most people in Britain do contribute to through their donations or time as volunteers. They give back. People who run community groups or whatever. They are very important in our society. They are heroic in their own way. (Keynote Speaker) • What is the role of philanthropy in this? What is the role of voluntary giving in this region that's becoming populated? Well, the role is no less than the making of a society. Philanthropy is a crucial form of voluntary giving on the part of those who had and acquired the wealth to actually create a social structure and social system. (Keynote Speaker) • The most studies of philanthropy are based upon London. What they show is the poor are supported a third by rich people giving, a third by congregations, and a third by poor rates. What is remarkable is that Newcastle which is the city we have details for is more or less the same as London, and the numbers are almost the same. (Keynote Speaker) • It creates wealth, and with this wealth, you see the great flowering of philanthropy in Britain echoed here in the North East. Absolutely everything you can touch is more or less voluntary. (Keynote Speaker)
National Conference	• You may recall at the end of the last conference in Belfast

	[event owner] spoke about the progress that the movement has made and how it is likely to enlarge the membership of a choir. Importantly, it will be all sound in unison with increasing confidence and harmony. It's therefore marvellous that we are hosting this year's event in Wales, a land of songs. (Event Owner)
	• We have our own ideas of how we can improve lives here under the Welsh government. I believe we are doing what we can do to help individuals and communities across Wales. (Venue Provider)
	• I think society has changed a lot. I have been in the government for about nine years. I am very pleased to see the capability of changing people's lives. Actually we collectively do something that I never believe I would do with a person from [company] in North Wales and get the second largest budget for the public sector in Wales. If I can do it, anybody can do it. I think anybody can do it with your help. So the opportunity there is visual, and I think all of these are helped with your gifts too. (Venue Provider)

Conference organizers found it impossible to employ a single venue and mode of performance for all proposed topics, feeling that participants of "dissimilar status ought not to be indiscriminately thrown together or classified together" (Goffman, 1959, p. 37). Accordingly, they prepared various settings involving different types of décor, furniture, physical layout and background items that supplied the stage and scenery props (Whitfield, 2009) for the unfolding of philanthropic actions with different topics played out within them. The whole of the conference system gave each session a unique place which worked for guests with the same interest. A wide range of diverse sessions was "cut at a few crucial points", and the participants "within a given bracket" were "obliged to maintain the same social front" (Goffman, 1959, p. 37).

Clog dancing by a group of school children was one of the crucial points, which was crafted as part of the Local Conference in a performative way, to "celebrate and raise awareness of what philanthropy has achieved in the North East" (Event Owner Local Conference, 2018). The lilting rhythm and gestures were used as part of efforts to

"demonstrate the joy of giving and the good it can do" in an idealized way: typically, folk music and dancing would suggest that the North East communities were full of youthful spirit, partly by employing philanthropic language (Event Owner Local Conference, 2018). When I studied another session which needed a team of several actors for its presentation, I found two members of the team to be "made the star, lead, or centre of attention" (Goffman, 1959, p. 103), performing a philanthropy tango (see Plate 6.2), which enabled attendees to make believe that we are living in a philanthropic world. The lyrics are of particular interest to the guest audience, offering a mock-up of the philanthropic life, "a put-together script of unscripted social doings" (Goffman, 1974, p. 53).

Plate 6.2: The philanthropy tango

To summarize, on the frontstage organizers presented guests a 'pure' version of the event, generating an idealized performance and painting the event owner in the best light. In Goffman's terms, this is not untypical of impression management through which performers present more sanitized and anodyne fronts that they believe their audiences want to see in face-to-face interactions. These frontstage sceneries, just like theatrical performances, are crafted, prepared and rehearsed on the backstage where issues can be discussed and negotiated openly.

6.3 The backstage performances of elite philanthropic events

During their frontstage performance presented earlier, the Local Assembly organizers highlighted the success of the foundation, which elevated its philanthropic performance to a higher plane. I immediately recognized this as references to a charitable activity called grant making (Harrow and Jung, 2016; McCarthy, 2004). According to the Chair, the North East generosity has enabled the foundation to award a cumulative total of more than £125 million in grants to beneficiaries in all parts of the region. At the time of this study, however, the foundation seemed to constantly struggle in addressing the so-called 'cold spots' in grant making. The practical problem of how to attract more funding applications from cold spots, impoverished areas that received fewer grants (Sargeant and Shang, 2010), was a continuous source of frustration. The foundation tended to take the AGM as an opportunity to champion causes and attract the support of wealthy individuals and businesses. According to the event manager:

> *Excerpt 6.13*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: As a charity, we want to grow. We have a big endowment and we want to grow it up … Typically if you think of our audience, it's predominantly our members. We do have a lot of fund holders. All our fund holders are members. There are also groups that people will give. You never know they might set up a fund with us and if they have spare cash in the bank … So there are some reasons behind why we tell them our stories well.

In this, the foundation is archetypal because, paradoxically, poorer areas in the UK have a lower density of charitable organizations than wealthier ones, constraining the redistributive potential of philanthropy (Mohan, 2012). This is confirmed by one of the panellists at the Local Assembly: "less prosperous places, lower than the local authority level, having less formal charitable activities in drawing fewer resources".

Here I focus on the discussion surrounding the selection of the venue for the AGM. The following excerpt was selected since it reveals a story, which talks about problems and is

very different from the story of success presented by the Chair to members and wider stakeholders on the frontstage.

Excerpt 6.14

Researcher: How did you choose the venue for the event?

Event Manager: What we do with the AGM, to be fair, is that we tour it around the region … We pick a different region each time in the area that we cover … Now [Region A] is what we call a 'cold spot' in terms of funding. We do a lot of research on our grant making. We know that we gave a lot of money to charities in [Region B] and [Region C]. We do OK in [Region D] and [Region E], but we do struggle sometimes to get money out to groups in [Region A]. So what we want to is to raise that as an issue and to hold the event in [Region A]. That was involved in the planning of the event.

The point of my analysis is not to suggest that the backstage is somehow "more real" than the frontstage (Goffman, 1959, p. 72). Instead, they can be seen as different means of "framing" the event (Goffman, 1974), that is "'what is going on here?' and 'what sort of behaviour is expected?'" (Whittle and Mueller, 2009, p. 133). It is worth noting that frontstage and backstage are relational concepts: the backstage is the place where the audience is absent (Goretzki and Messner, 2019; Ybema and Horvers, 2017) – but this is just one type of audience. There is obviously another audience on the backstage.

In fact, Region A remained 'an ice issue' following the AGM (Annual Report of Local Foundation, 2018). This is counter to the claims made by the Chair on the frontstage, who presented the foundation as a successful charitable organization that has made a significant difference to every locality of the region. Indeed, the ideal of matching the supply of philanthropic funds with the need for them is conspicuously more difficult in practice than in theory (Mohan and Breeze, 2016). Senior managers and trustees were very aware of the severe income and other inequalities within the region served by the foundation, and the limited success the organization had had in preferencing those most in need (Brockington, 2004).

On the backstage, assembly speakers 'crafted' their performances and thought about the expectation of event owners, the audience's interests, and how they could script their

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speeches to manage their perceptions. The following excerpt shows the "backstage crafting of

talk", which enabled Panellist A, a philanthropic celebrity, to "facilitate frontstage

performances" (Balogun *et al.*, 2014, p. 182).

> *Excerpt 6.15*
>
> <u>Panellist A</u>: Philanthropic events are structured to meet the interests of
> different audiences. You have to talk to them in very different ways. It
> depends on your audience. And also I want to please the foundation. I know
> the whole of the foundation staff who were there. They seem happy enough,
> but people are polite. If I made a mess of it, they didn't tell me. It was a quite
> tricky one to do because I used to normally have been allowed to talk for half
> an hour. This time I had six minutes, not very long. We talked about
> beforehand what I could say. I thought very carefully about what I could say
> within six minutes. I have to say something people would remember when
> they left the room. It is not easy like you think, quite hard to do. I think about
> who my audiences are. I think about what my clients want. I think about what
> I could say, which something doesn't make me look like a fool if possible.

What is implied in this quote is that the event owner avoided embarrassing the speaker, and

the speaker managed impressions in order not to embarrass himself in front of the guests. The

speaker anticipated guests reactions and designed a speech he believed they wanted to hear.

However, the interaction between panelists and the audience "turned into a little bit of

whinge" and "wasn't too relevant to the topic", tending to break the pre-crafted script of who

should say what at the event.

> *Excerpt 6.16*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: It did turn into a little bit of whinge by groups talking about
> funding, which you always expect because charities want more. They always
> want more; they are never going to say 'I've got enough now, I'm fine'. So we
> knew they would just start to talk about themselves, as they did, and it wasn't
> too relevant to the topic. There were very much off the topic questions.

The contrast between frontstage and backstage performances is relevant not only to

performers but also to audiences. At the National Assembly, I identified a marked contrast

between claims made about "the deep engagement with the membership" (Event Owner

National Assembly, 2017) and the alienation felt by some of the members. One member

complained that "it is often us who have other commitments as well as who are actively

involved in our foundations who find it harder to be able to access some of the services and

support that they offer". She found her involvement in the foundation work to be "very limited". This resonates with the backstage conversation with the Chair, who, when members were not present, painted a realistic, downcast, somewhat negative picture, a picture of estrangement, a lack of real engagement ("I'm not sure how much we do get. I think for those who come along, they are interested, they would ask questions, they do feel part of it, but the majority don't."):

Excerpt 6.17

Researcher: What did you expect to get out of the event?

Chair: What I always want to do at the AGM is to get more feedback from members as to what we've been doing, so more input into our thinking, more response to what we are saying to them, and more feeling of engagement and ownership of the organization. That's what I want to get. I'm not sure how much we do get. I think for those who come along, they are interested, they would ask questions, they do feel part of it, but the majority don't.

Researcher: Why was that?

Chair: The foundation movement is not a strong … It is hard to get them to think. There is a saying 'you meet one foundation, you meet one foundation' because they are all absolutely unique and they are very proud of that. There was a lot of resistance when [foundation] was first established to even it's establishing as an association to bring them together. There is still resistance from those who say we should not be trying to do things together because we are all different. So it is a difficult balance in an organization like [foundation].

This represents a scenario where the event owner discredited the AGM and, indeed, the charitable foundation on the backstage. It signified the 'gap' between the utopian vision of solidarity presented on the frontstage and the "absolutely unique" nature and reality of member foundations.

According to Goffman (1959, p. 130), "[b]y invoking a backstage style, individuals can transform any region into a backstage". I found that in the fundraising events, organizers carved out a section as a mini backstage (see Plate 6.3), and by acting there, it was symbolically disconnected from the performances on the frontstage (MacCannell, 1973). In the Local Fundraiser, for example, the event owner hosted an exclusive reception bringing together speakers, sponsors and table hosts, which most are big names in the field, before the

main event to engage in "anticipatory stage management" (Elsbach *et al.*,1998; Tata and Prasad, 2015). The exclusive reception might "become so identified as a hide-out where certain standards need not be maintained that it becomes fixed with an identity as a back region" (Goffman, 1959, p. 126). Similarly, during the national event, guests participated in stakes races, which took place in the horse racing course outside the main event venue, and there created vibrant circles of non-fundraising relaxation. In backstages like these, fundraiser organizers and attendees established the tone for the frontstage interaction, often enacting "preventive practices" in advance to avoid the discredit of impressions (Goffman, 1959, p. 24).

Plate 6.3: Mini backstage

An instance of the backstage difficulty was found in the exclusive receptions. Attendees who failed to "cooperate in tactfully concealing their exclusiveness" could allow the backstage activity of the fundraiser to be "sounded through" (Goffman, 1959, pp. 89-121) into the guests who were not invited to the receptions. The event manager problematized the existence of an exclusive backstage:

> *Excerpt 6.18*
>
> Event Manager: To me it's an interesting one because I don't necessarily agree with the events such as this because as soon as you say this event's exclusive then it takes away from the other guest's experience if they find out about it … And there are some comments from our guests as to, 'who's in that room and why are they allowed in there and why aren't I allowed in there?' That then

creates a divide of us and them and you don't ever want that to happen, you want everyone to feel special.

In spite of the organizer's willingness to present the fundraiser in the best light, there were some imperfect performances. Organizers tended to conceal from their audience all clues of "dirty work" (Goffman, 1959), which was discussed in private debriefs that constituted another backstage. Table 6.5 summarizes the 'disturbing facts' relating to services, fundraising, networking, presentation, setting and proceedings.

Table 6.5: Fundraisers imperfections

Theme	Illustrative quotes from evaluation summary
Service	• Delay in serving main course – partly as we were ahead of time and hotel late in service – and this resulted in poor quality food for some tables. • Soft drinks not very visible at main reception. • I thought [venue] let themselves down a little on the timing of the meal, having been so slick last year. • Service was very slow (we sat for an hour before getting lunch). • The chicken was like rubber and tasted of nothing. • Hotel needs to be 'encouraged' to produce better food, speedier service and sort out their cloakroom. • Cloakroom service appalling particularly at end of event; would be improved if rails had been brought out into main area. • The cloakroom was chaotic. • While the capacity of the room is 300, it felt better to have more space (250 this year).
Fundraising	• The analysis of giving amounts through [supporter] site showed that most guests were not influenced by the suggested giving amounts. • We need to continue to have support of regulars whilst also attracting new potential donors. • [Supporter] through smart phones was clunky and some guests gave up; consider alternative provider plus introduce contactless debit card technology.
Networking	• Potential for more staff to use as a networking opportunity. • It was a shame there weren't more people at the pre-event.
Presentation	• Presentations from groups with strong visual images better than when graphs are used.
Setting	• Floral displays obscured view for some guests; consider

	side screens or lower floral centre pieces.
Proceedings	• Appropriate point for Chair to speak – start or end of event – with call to action/indication how to follow up own philanthropy with the foundation.

Organizers knew and concealed the fact that the amount that wealthy attendees donated to the fundraiser was very small (Rose-Ackerman, 1985), which clashed with the image that they attempted to maintain on the frontstage. My findings suggest that the organizers were not always 'idealists' or 'encomiasts' of fundraisers. They were themselves cynical about, and critical of, the utopian visions they promoted to the guests, even participating in backstage discussion of frontstage secrets when the fundraising target was not achieved. The statement of the Local Fundraiser owner serves as an illustration of a backstage secret about an aspect of the frontstage performance:

Excerpt 6.19

Event Owner: In terms of events, what happens I think people who have already involved in philanthropy quite like coming along, finding out what's new, speaking to other donors, and hearing about what is happening in the sector, but when you are new to it, you probably do not want to attend unless you're invited by your friends. Small events where you are invited by friends who have already been philanthropists are all good, but I think for large ones you are not expecting to get a great big donation as a result … It's just to raise awareness and have an opportunity to talk about what you do. It's part of a really long journey. Someone gets a lot of touching points. At some point, if they have motivation and means, they will give. It's part of that journey, but you never gonna expect something directly. If you look at [Local Fundraiser], which has been six or seven years, what is quite interesting is that it's a very successful event. If you look at it, it has been a great place for a certain type of collabo woman to engage, have a good networking lunch, learn something, meet new people, and find out a little bit about a different space. What it has never done is to deliver a single big philanthropic donation from someone that we haven't been involved with before, so it actually delivers very little when you come into cash for either the fund or into the foundation.

Both donors and recipients outlined gloomy, pessimistic scenarios on the backstage, using expressions including "not pulling up the ladder behind you", "no-win situation", "really worried", and "can quickly become involved in anti-social behaviour":

Excerpt 6.20

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Donor: In my long 29 years with a bit of experience behind me, there is a big thing that I have learned, it's called paying it forward, and it's called reinvesting your success. I don't just mean financial. I mean your time, we all have time. It doesn't have to be a major commitment. It could be something about mentoring or teaching mathematics. It could be something about not pulling up the ladder behind you and particularly helping women and unprivileged. I always remember the Madeleine Albright quote, which is 'there is a special place in hell for women who don't help other women'.

Excerpt 6.21

Recipient: For us, it was a no-win situation, and that was why we were there. We were really worried … Young people who have got plenty of time in their hands and are not in school can quickly become involved in anti-social behaviour … I hope for many of them that that is not the start of a criminal lifestyle. For me, it's the need, and it's these young people who are not in employment and education.

The decorations and permanent furniture in the venue where the performances of the award ceremonies were given "tend[ed] to fix a kind of spell over it" (Goffman, 1959, p. 126). Even when the ceremonial performances were not being given therein, the venue "tend[ed] to retain some of its front region character" (Goffman, 1959, p. 126). For example, the Mansion House, which held the National Award Ceremony, retained something of its tone even when only hospitality staff were present. In the backstage of the award ceremonies, the organizer, judge, nominee, winner and presenter relaxed (Jeacle, 2014). They could drop their front, forgo speaking their job, and "step out of character" (Goffman, 1959, p. 115), exemplifying tensions and contradictions relating to societal and other external pressures and challenges, as demonstrated in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: The backstage performances of award ceremonies

Theme	Illustrative quotes from Local and National Award Ceremonies
Paradoxes	• It is the rest of us to say what are the interesting moment in the UK facing probably one of the most challenging decisions, which anybody has faced in generations in a situation in which half of the parties fighting in the election had very clear red water about how they would tackle those and the other half with very clear blue water about social mobility and fairness. We are perhaps now facing one of the biggest challenges that we have ever faced. What is the role of those who have something to give, whether that's time, talents or wealth? (National Award Ceremony) • We are living in a paradox. Mankind has never been so

		prosperous. Globalization is lifting millions out of poverty which is great. Yet the gap grows, inequality grows, and the need for all of us to take responsibility for investing in connected communities which we are passionate about in the community foundations, howsoever important, remains a paradox (National Award Ceremony)
		• Local authority budgets have been slashed. Yet the demand for charity services was increasing. Philanthropy issues have never been a subject substitute for the government. (National Award Ceremony)
		• The happiness or unhappiness of the society in which we live depends upon ourselves as citizens, not only the instrumental, visible power we call instead. (National Award Ceremony)
		• With inflation rising and interest rates so low, charities have to make their money work harder. Trustees seem to have ever increasing responsibilities. (Local Award Ceremony)
		• Some days you feel you are bashing your head against a brick wall but seeing those kids happy is worth it. (National Award Ceremony)
Interrogation		• How do we revive the energy and spirit of Victorian times when philanthropy was endeavoured? (National Award Ceremony)
		• What sort of society and what legacy do we want to leave to our children and grandchildren? (National Award Ceremony)
		• It's down to us. Government taxation is not the solution. Collaborations of governments? Yes. But how to encourage a new era of voluntary redistribution of wealth for philanthropy and love of human life? (National Award Ceremony)
		• There is an urgent need as you heard from [speaker] and from [speaker] for both more and better philanthropy to unlock more private wealth for the common good. (National Award Ceremony)

It is in the backstage that the capacity of the ceremonial performances to convey something beyond themselves was "painstakingly fabricated" and that impressions and illusions were "openly constructed" (Goffman, 1959, p. 114). The event manager provided a vivid picture of the backstage activity in describing how she planned the seating for the National Award Ceremony. On the backstage, she made assumptions about the motivations of participants on the frontstage.

Excerpt 6.22

Event Manager: We have lime top tables where all the winners in front rows in front of the stage. Every table will have a host. They may be [National Award Ceremony] trustees, the chair, might be fellows, judges, whoever our close network is. Their job is sort of mingling, welcoming, really conversing with people there sat around. We also like to also mix people with organizations or different guests that we think will have affinities with, or they have particular themes, passions, or ways of working together. I think essentially what winners really want to get out of [National Award Ceremony] is their chance to mix with other philanthropists. Lots of feedback from some of our fellows is that in the beginning philanthropy can be a quite isolating thing. Everyone was sort of being around on their own philanthropy. Actually a chance to mix with others and learn from others is what they are really interested in.

The organizing committee tended to limit the size of the award ceremony as much as possible, bringing field experts only (Tippins and Kunkel, 2006) to ensure that no audience member acted improperly. In Goffman's (1959, p. 214) words, "the fewer the members, the less possibility of mistakes, 'difficulties', and treacheries". This is confirmed by one of the patrons of the National Award Ceremony, the Lord Mayor of the City of London, who considered what is needed to support the event:

Excerpt 6.23

Patron: One of the challenges we all face is that there are many issues out there that need solving. One of the challenges we face is that there are more and more solutions or more and more attempts by organizations, charities, businesses and individuals. There is always a risk if we have a crowded landscape of people trying to help, so actually trying to focus on those sorts of collaborating and most bringing individuals and organizations together. If that works, we carry on supporting it. If over time an organization or an individual or whatever has run its cause, then it's no longer perhaps doing what we think it should be doing, then the patronage of the Lord Mayor and the City will be removed, so we are very cautious about who we support. As long as they do what they say, we're happy to carry on supporting people, but if they stop doing that or their capabilities wanes, then we'll probably focus on our attention elsewhere.

There are "inside" secrets in the award ceremonies "whose possession marks an individual as being a member of a group and helps the group feel separate and different from those individuals who are not 'in the know'" (Goffman, 1959, p. 142). The backstage performances of the award ceremonies had "something of this exclusion function" and could be viewed as "none of somebody's business" (Goffman, 1959, p. 142). As the event manager reflected:

Excerpt 6.24

> Event Manager: The most successful ones, the really interesting ones, sometimes are on a smaller scale, so getting people around the table in a more intimate, less formal setting. We've had things where we have taken winners and created a dinner in their home or in a private evening, which is something that not everyone gets to go.

Those who organized the conferences that took place in Newcastle and Cardiff became "members of a team when they cooperate[d] together" (Goffman, 1959, p. 106) to present the events in a particular light. Cooperation between several parties, each of which was involved in presenting its own performance, could be seen as "a type of collusion or 'understanding' without altering the basic frame of reference" (Goffman, 1959, p. 85). One illustration is cited from the event manager who adopted the "three-team model" (Goffman, 1959) to orchestrate the National Conference:

Excerpt 6.25

Event Manager: There are three teams as it was. You have [event owner] at the heart of it because it is their event. I paid the bills and managed the revenue, delegates and all the expenditure on their behalf, but they carry the financial risk automatically. They devise the programme in conjunction with the local host to make sure that they met the local host's their flavour. The flavour of the location is under the priority of the locale that they are included and taken into account, but ultimately the programme in decisions are [event owner]'s. I deal with logistics, operational matters and financial. I do all the speaker liaison. I leave the decisions on speakers to the expert in their field that is the two clients. In terms of delivering, making sure the speakers are there on the day, fully briefed, all the information, hotel accommodation, everything is in place, that's down to me. The expert input is from the two clients – the host client and [event owner], but the delivery, making sure all hands together, that it is possible to get from that part of the programme to this part of the programme are still run on time, that is all sort of things, that's all mine.

The Local Conference owners were often found at event planning meetings to "manipulate the audience by creating false impressions" (Whittle *et al.*, 2020, p. 3). The following excerpt shows that the conference Chair, a leading philanthropy professional, would offer a false 'front' when asked about the criticality of the event. In transforming the conference into philanthropic funding, she sought to store a positive impression of philanthropy, which was immediately played down by members of the organizing committee:

Excerpt 6.26

Organizer A: How critical and how challenging do you want to be?

Chair: It has to be the positivity of philanthropy because we are trying to encourage people to give more. We don't want to … [laughter]

Organizer A: It's not controversial to say inequality is a great problem in our age. I think that's non-controversial.

Organizer B: Yes.

Organizer A: It's global in this case, and in societies like Britain and the United States, you have a large number of people who are driven backward into residing there. Their wellbeing is being undermined … Is philanthropy stepping into that gap? The answer is, well, sort of. But is it impressive? No, it's not impressive, it's not impressive at all.

Organizer B: On a scale.

Organizer A: A few exceptional people who really have a good story to tell, who are doing really great things, they are noble, but in the totality of things, compared to what has been taken away and what people are subject to, it's not a good story. It's a question: do you want to take a challenging angle, or do you want to take a purely would-be? It's a good time and does great things. Look what has done in the past. Do you want to do that? I think we will be laughed at that.

When organizers discussed how to achieve the purpose of the event, they highlighted the importance of keeping a marked distinction between the frontstage and the backstage (Bartunek *et al*., 2007; Mair and Hehenberger, 2014): "It's quite a fine line, isn't it? You celebrate philanthropy on the one hand and denigrate it and expose some of the problems on the other" (Organizer C Local Conference, 2017). They tended to stay away from the political issues that might risk "a hopeful, inspiring philanthropic narrative" involved in the conference.

Excerpt 6.27

Organizer B: It's also relating to the welfare state and the Brexit.

Organizer A: I think it will be wrong to get dragged by these.

Organizer B: Yes, we never go there actually.

This section has presented the performances that took place on the backstage of elite philanthropic events. It shows that the backstage has several functions in elite philanthropic events, including offering a place where organizers and guests can "relax" (Ashforth *et al*., 2008; O'Brien and Linehan, 2014), an area where frontstage performances can be prepared

"safely" (Ross, 2007), and a location that acts as a "protective space" in which imperfect stories can be freely reflected (Mair and Hehenberger, 2014).

6.4 Discussion

This chapter has explored the processual dynamics of assemblies, fundraisers, conferences and award ceremonies in the conduct of elite philanthropy, guided by the question *what are the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events?* In answer, I suggest that the frontstage performances involved generating idealized impressions, and the backstage performances involved preparing, polishing, manipulating, and sometimes discrediting and undermining those impressions. Based on Goffman, I have argued that staged philanthropic events are not only socially accomplished but are accomplished *in and through performances*. By analysing both organizers and attendees, I am able to reveal the tensions, inconsistencies and contradictions between the performances on the frontstage and the backstage of highly orchestrated and professionally managed events in the philanthropic field. The chapter reveals the gap between the ideal impressions fostered by event organizers for the purpose of philanthropy and the tales of dissatisfaction, uncertainty and criticism I observed in "private places" (Goffman, 1963, p. 9).

The staged events examined here foreground Goffman's (1959) concept of idealization that embraces socially valued norms and principles. Like accountants and strategy consultants (Carter and Mueller, 2006; Pentland, 1993), event actors, when delivering their performances, performed officially accredited values, banishing such things as pessimistic scenarios, selfish motivations and tough realities to the backstage. These are the socially unacceptable forces, depicted by Douglas (2003) as "dirt" and as "impure", which must be kept hidden, even if, in practice, they are typically the driving forces of philanthropic giving. Any event actors to publicly voicing these would imply not complying with "the spirit or ethos of the situation" (Goffman, 1963, p. 11). Thus, the frontstage could

be seen as the location where a more sanitized and anodyne version of philanthropy and associated work was presented, a version disengaged from messy and, at times, "dirty" reality (Mair and Hehenberger, 2014).

The idealized performances, as I have shown, not just arose introspectively from a process of sensemaking, but importantly also were crafted and circulated discursively and socially in the form of stories, metaphors and narratives (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) that served to get the audience "believing in the show: if the audience stops believing, *the show cannot go on*" (Mueller, 2018, p. 27). Event actors use what Whittle and Mueller (2011) call "discursive devices", including the linguistic styles, phrases and figures of speech, to present the stories as credible and therefore were central to the generation of the desired impression. In so doing, the staged events have been presented as praiseworthy on the frontstage in order for them to provide a topic for moral discourses involving concerns surrounding the actor's social position, embracing issues of obligations, duties and responsibility (Harré and Van Langenhove, 1999).

The 'dark side' of philanthropy has also been captured by this chapter, which has demonstrated how the backstage was employed to keep misconduct invisible and the stories that contained secrets and critique from being exposed. It has also demonstrated how the backstage interactions were deliberately hidden in the fabrications displayed on the frontstage, in this case, in philanthropic events, as in other situations which have been examined by organizational scholars, including auditing (Parker *et al*., 2019; Pentland and Carlile, 1996; Roussy and Rodrigue, 2018), management accounting (Goretzki and Messner, 2019), and environmental and corporate social responsibility reporting (Bansal and Kistruck, 2006; Solomon *et al.*, 2013). On the backstage, organizers acted as "conspirators" (Goffman, 1959, p. 108), who used foresight to anticipate the guest audience's reactions and stage a show that could generate particular impressions crucial to the accomplishment of philanthropic actions.

This is consistent with the findings of research into strategy meetings, which involve the backstage work of orchestrating frontstage that enables organizations to stabilize or change the "ways of doing strategy" (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Whittington, 1996, p. 732).

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has compared and contrasted the frontstage and backstage performances of events that conduct elite philanthropy. My main contribution is to identify the inconsistencies, tensions and contradictions between the frontstage and backstage performances at the micro level of interactions. The idealized impressions fostered on the frontstage were manipulated and sometimes undermined by organizers on the backstage where they discredited the events and the achievements of philanthropy. Having understanding philanthropic events from the staging perspective, in the next chapter, I will explore in more detail how these events were organized over time to achieve performative purposes. This takes me into the realm of studying what is done by particular actors, how they do it, and why: namely, how do staged philanthropic events work in the doings?

Chapter 7
The Unfolding of Elite Staged Philanthropic Events

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 has shown a range of research undertaken on processes in organizations (e.g.

MacKay and Chia, 2013; Langley *et al.*, 2013) and how process analysis has added to our

understanding of important phenomena such as organizational stability and change (Balogun

et al., 2011; Klarner and Raisch, 2013; Kwon *et al.*, 2014; Samra-Fredericks, 2003). We

know much less about the processes involved in staged events, which is perhaps surprising

given the increasingly important role they play in organizational life and society at large. This

chapter addresses this gap by exploring how different types of elite staged philanthropic

events are constructed and enacted socially and discursively within the dynamics of the

temporal agency, guided by the question *how do elite staged philanthropic events work to*

achieve performative purposes? Following Cornelissen (2012) and Maitlis (2005), I see

events as products of an ongoing process of sensemaking and negotiated interactions. The

discussion draws primarily on observations of event planning meetings and interviews with

event organizers. I begin the chapter by reporting how different types of elite philanthropic

events are constituted over time, followed by detailed analyses of the unfolding of four of the

core staged philanthropic events featured in this study: (1) Local Assembly; (2) Local

Fundraiser; (3) National Award Ceremony; and (4) Local Conference.

7.2 The temporal constitution of elite philanthropic events

As emphasized throughout this thesis, staged philanthropic events, whether national or local,

are important because they are *performative*. That is, they perform a purpose that event

owners believe could not be achieved in any other way, either for legal or for other reasons

(Getz and Page, 2016). To accomplish this purpose or perform their designated function, they

must be well targeted, carefully planned and expertly executed. The temporal constitution of the four types of elite philanthropic events emerging from my research is summarized in Table 7.1 below. This shows events as passing through five main phases from conceiving to learning.

Table 7.1: Temporal constitution of elite philanthropic events

Event Phase	Assembly	Awards Ceremony	Fundraiser	Conference
Conceiving (style)	Routine production	Differentiated production	Customized production	Novel production
Preparing (template)	Standard template	Incrementally adaptive template	Environmentally adaptive template	Application of generic formats
Selling (story)	Getting behind a worthy organization	Celebrating heroic achievements	Supporting an inspirational cause	Discovering truth and meaning
Performing (script)	Highly scripted, managed interaction	Highly scripted, limited interaction	Partially scripted, focused interactions	Partially scripted, open interactions
Learning (metrics)	Audience approbation	Favourable media coverage	Number and size of donations	Emerging ideas & potentialities

Conceiving relates to how owners and organizers understand the *style* of an event. Assemblies, for example, are a *routine* part of organizational life occurring on a regular and predictable basis, typically annually (Apostolides, 2010). Their production is routine, heavily reliant on past experience, institutionalized. Award ceremonies differ from assemblies as field-wide collaborations (Tippins and Kunkel, 2006) rather than a legal requirement of individual organizations. Their production follows a format similar in style but *differentiated* from those found in other fields. Fundraisers likewise follow similar formats but vary considerable by constituency, some serving individual organizations, some entire fields, and some a slate of beneficiary organizations (Wood *et al.*, 2010). Their style is therefore *customized*. Conferences likewise come in many shapes and sizes (Davidson and Cope, 2003), some taking place annually on a field wide basis and some serving a one-off purpose. They are highly variable in content and *novel* in style.

Preparing is the second phase in the temporal constitution of elite philanthropic events. The word preparing is used here in preference to the more commonly used word planning. Planning is a far more restrictive construct, implying a high degree of certainty about goals, strategy and tactics, whereas preparing implies that the process itself is formative and open to possibility in response to real world flux. Assemblies operate essentially on a repetitive cycle following a *standard template* year-on-year (Catasüs and Johed, 2007). Venues and subject matter may vary but the format does not, making preparation a relatively routine task. Award ceremonies likewise follow a relatively predictable course (Kaplan, 2006), but because of competition within and between fields templates are open to *incremental adaptation*. In much the same way, innovations in fundraising practice spread rapidly in response to environmental pressures, rendering event templates *environmentally adaptive* (Eikenberry, 2007). In comparison, conferences tend to be far more varied in periodicity and content, but nonetheless conceived and operationalized in terms of some combination of generic formats such as plenaries, tracks, workshops and seminars (Valentine *et al.*, 2010).

All events have to be advertised, marketed and sold to potential audiences (Getz, 1991). The *story of the event*, cast in terms of desirable outcomes for participants (Bauman, 1986), is at the heart of the *selling* process. Audiences for assemblies are drawn by the call to get behind worth organizations with which they identify (Mudashiru *et al.*, 2014). Audiences for award ceremonies are drawn by the prospect of mingling with other elites and celebrities through whose heroic achievements they express class solidarity (Goodger, 1986; Stringfellow *et al.*, 2013). The competition for audiences for fundraisers is more competitive because buyers must beware of the costs and risks of involvement. The story of the cause must therefore be compelling for success to ensue (Merchant *et al*., 2010). Conferences

likewise compete for audiences. People are drawn by the prospect of discovering something new that might bring greater fulfilment to their lives (Purnell and Breede, 2018).

Performing is what most people consider to be the crux and purpose of an event (Armitage, 1995), ignoring what goes into making the event and what it purposefully delivers. Staged events are differentiated by the extent to which they are *pre-scripted* in advance relative to the extent to which they are scripted in real time in conjunction with audience members (Edwards, 1994). Assemblies are highly scripted, and every effort made by event owners and organizers to manage interactions with the audience in order to deliver the right result (Biehl-Missal, 2012). The same is true of award ceremonies but here the practice is to limit possibilities for interaction and exclude perturbations (Levy, 2003). This is very different from fundraisers, which, though partially scripted in advance, crucially depend on audiences getting involved in the action in order to deliver a good result. The same is true of conferences, although what is at stake here is the generation of cultural capital rather than economic capital (Lareau, 1987).

Finally, the temporal constitution of elite philanthropic events is completed by *learning from audience feedback* (Carlsen *et al*., 2000). This does not mean that owners and organizers request written feedback, which is rare, but that they learn from the outcomes they are primarily designed to achieve. This involves asking and answering simple questions like how did that go, what went well, when went wrong, and what could we have done better? An assembly at which all motions are passed without opposition and compliments are lavished on executives and trustees signals legitimization and the positive accumulation of social capital (Johed and Catasús, 2015). An award ceremony that is covered extensively by the media indicates positive field-wide accumulation of symbolic capital (Watson and Anand, 2006). A fundraiser that reaches or exceeds its target is the surest sign of success (Sargeant and Shang, 2010). Finally, the success or otherwise of a conference is measured by the

innovative ideas and future potentialities that might ultimately flow from it (Pasanen *et al.*, 2009). This is far harder to measure, especially in the short term, than the outcomes of other types of elite philanthropic events, and organizers often rely on proxy measures such as social media counts and media coverage as means of feedback and learning (Allen, 2009).

Having outlined the differing logics and temporal dynamics of differing types of elite staged philanthropic events, I now turn to examine in more detail four of my case studies, one for each type of event. Each of the case studies was selected because of the quality of data I collected, which in general was more extensive for local rather than national events. For example, I served as a participant observer for a year on the action group that organized the Festival of Philanthropy on the history and future of philanthropy in North East England. Overall, the Festival's 44 events attracted an audience of 2,603 people including live streams, 30,387 unique websites page views, 5,300,000 impressions for #poweredbyphilanthropy tweets, 3 BBC TV Look North news reports, 1 BBC Sunday Politics Show 5 minute segment, 4 radio interviews, 15 newspaper and magazine reports, and 48 e-newsletter listings and reports (Evaluation Report for Local Conference, 2019). I had the opportunity therefore to witness at first hand the *conceiving*, *preparing*, *selling*, *performing* and *learning* phases of this type of elite staged philanthropic event.

7.3 The unfolding of assemblies

The singular feature of assemblies within the philanthropic field and charitable sector more broadly is the high degree of formality with which they proceed. Invariably, they are rule bound, integral to the institutional fabric of the field and a fundamental to third sector governance. Members gather to conduct business in pursuit of shared goals. Just as public company executives are called to account by shareholders at AGMs (Apostolides, 2010), so too charity sector executives must account for their past performance and proposals for the future. The norm is for members to gather and mingle socially with executives over light

refreshments for half an hour or so before formal proceedings begin. Following a welcome, motivational speeches are given by the CEO and Chairman. There then ensues the formal business meeting consisting of a series of executive reports requiring formal approval followed by votes on motions for policy and governance changes. There may then be a big-name speaker or panel discussion on a topic of relevance to the membership with opportunity for questions and answers. A meal or some other form of social gathering typically brings the assembly to a close.

My purpose in this section is to explore dynamic interactions and outcomes between different types of actors at philanthropic assemblies. By their very nature, assemblies follow a predictable course, year on year, and there is considerable opportunity for executives to stage manage proceedings and prepare scripts stating the agreed positions that board members must take. The expectation is that things will be kept on track and member resistance to existing or future policies neutralized (Jeacle, 2008). However, the fact that assemblies provide opportunity for social interaction, before and after the formal business, means that there is a far higher degree of opportunity for unexpected twists and turns than might be expected. In other words, executives do not have free reign in practice to dictate how the event will unfold. Thus, far from being sterile events, assemblies create possibilities for consequential interactions between executives and the members whose interest they serve. I focus on these dynamic interactions in what follows.

The illustrative case I examine here is an AGM of a community foundation serving a large geographic area with many large towns and cities that divides into numerous historically rooted sub-regions. As the largest provider of third sector grants in the region, the foundation is a valued part of the region's charitable sector and its AGMs attract large audiences, typically in excess of 150 members. Four types of actors attended (Guest List Local Assembly, 2017). First, there are non-executive board members, trustees, who

determine the policies and strategies of the organization. Many are large donors, but others bring expertise or represent other charitable organizations. Secondly, there are paid executives of the foundation led by the CEO. These actors are responsible for executing the policies and strategy of the board. Trustees and executives have a far more intimate understanding of the work of the foundation than other attendees. Thirdly, within the membership category, are donors, often referred to as fund holders, who attend because they want to be certain that their money is well spent. Fund holders may be private individuals or companies who support the foundation as part of their corporate social responsibility activities. Finally, the largest group in attendance, the fourth class of actors, are representatives of charitable organizations funded by the foundation. These actors have a vested interest in the policies and practices of the foundation. In the following sections, I explain how the Local Assembly unfolded within the five main phases from conceiving to learning.

Conceiving

The assembly organizers conceived the AGM event space conscious that it formed one of a sequence of landmark events stretching back to the creation of the foundation and stretching forward into an unknown and unknowable future. For event organizers, orchestrating an AGM is "not unique" as it is an annual event that every charitable foundation has to hold in order to fulfil its transparency and accountability requirements: "As a charity, we have to have an AGM by law. As a membership organization, we have to be fully transparent and accountable to our stakeholders" (Event Owner Local Assembly, 2017). The construction of the Local Assembly is *routine and institutionalized*, "talking about ourselves, our success, how much money we have given, and how much we have brought in" (Event Manager Local Assembly, 2017).

Preparing

The event manager (2017) described his role as dealing with "the logistics side of things", while the administration team handled "all mailing for invitations, RSVPs" and monitored "dietary requirements". The whole of the organizing committee was acutely aware of time and engaged with time as the fundamental force that drove the preparation of the assembly. Event organizers were "thrown into time" (Hernes, 2014, p. 855), and it was within the flow of time they carved out the temporal existence of the Local Assembly. Focusing on time provided opportunity to select a sub-region where the event might most beneficially be held, and in this case "it was about time that we did it south of the river" (Event Manager Local Assembly, 2017). This train of thought is elaborated in the following interview excerpt:

> *Excerpt 7.1*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: What we do with the AGM, to be fair, is that we tour it around the region, so we don't want to just hold it in [sub-region A] every year because then our members who are living in [sub-region B] will see you're based in [sub-region A] … So, we tour the event, we pick a different [sub-]region each time in the region we cover. So, last year the event was in [sub-region C], the year before that it was in [sub-region D], the year before that it was in [sub-region A], and the year before that it was in [sub-region E]. So, it was about time that we did it south of the river.

The phrase "we tour it around the region" is a script formulation (Edwards, 1997), which conveys presupposed broadly held 'knowledge' surrounding some general pattern. The preparing work also involved creating representations from the raw issues of the community foundation so that constituencies and stakeholders could see themselves represented. This is the *standard template* that event organizers follow year-on-year to prepare the Local Assembly. AGM organizers put together a panel that represented the community foundation, the selected sub-region, and the *Third Sector Trends* report it published during the past financial year as complementary spheres of existence. As the event manager explained:

> *Excerpt 7.2*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: In building the panel, we made sure that [it was representative]. We made sure that there was someone there who has been heavily involved in the research, who knows what they are talking about. We made sure that there was someone who was representative of the community

foundation as well, so we had [Panellist C] who is the Vice Chair. It was a good strong panel.

Selling

The selling process involved *crafting the story of the Local Assembly*, which presented the community foundation as a charitable organization worthy of its members' support. The story of the local charities funded by the community foundation – seen as the crucial image driver – served as the selling point and was crafted carefully by organizers. The excerpt below shows how the event manager made sense of the inclusion of their stories as a way to "showcase" the foundation and "champion all different causes" in the North East:

> *Excerpt 7.3*
>
> Event Manager: What we always like to add to the event is to showcase some of the groups that we support, we [initially] wanted to showcase a group from [sub-region A], but we just struggled a little bit to find someone suitable, so we decided to go with a group based in [sub-region B]. They were very good I thought. We just had to do that … Disability is one of those causes that people shy away from sometimes … whereas we want to champion all different causes, all different types of groups, so it was good to give them the platform to perform on, and they really added something to the event.

Performing

The AGM was not performed in a linear fashion. Rather, the whole of the event space was stage-managed as "atomistic and pluralistic, consisting of multiple processes spread out in a field-like manner over regions of space" (Bakken and Hernes, 2006, p. 1608). In this atomistic order, the host, Chair, Treasurer and panellists were interrelated, constituting "a complex network of active connections" (Cooper, 2005, p. 1704). The AGM had been highly orchestrated and constrained; the performers *enacted scripts* tailored according to their identities in prescribed speeches. It is telling that:

> *Excerpt 7.4*
>
> Event Manager: Likewise, the requirements in preparing the panel. So [name], who is our Vice President, she was chairing the panel, and we had to make sure that she was well briefed in exactly what she is talking about. We had to make sure our panellists knew exactly what they were talking about. We actually wrote a script, so everything was scripted on the night. The Chair's

speech was scripted …and the Treasurer's report was scripted, but he tended to add on a few his personal jokes. So, yes, all scripted. That's a huge priority to make sure their script is correct, and the presentation. We had to make sure there were no mistakes and that all of the tech works. It's a huge priority to meet in advance myself and the organizer of the tech team, just to talk about our requirements. Everything had to be sorted out. When you looked at the stage, with the panel sat on the couch, we wanted that the panel discussion [should seem] informal. We didn't want them to be sat behind a table with microphones on top. We wanted it to look informal, so we made sure there was a couch available for the panel to sit on. [The Vice Chair] sat next to them, so it's more informal chat or style. So, every part of the event is thought of, it's all relevant.

In this assembly, just like in most AGMs held by public companies, script formulation had been carried out at the 'top' of the organization, as the following extract shows, at the level of the top management team. A noticeable shift in this quote is "towards a *personalization* of the narrative" (Mueller and Whittle, 2011, p. 201), as the event manager highlighted the authenticity of the Q&A session, which was "*totally unscripted*".

Excerpt 7.5

Event Manager: The panel and the content around the script is from the top, our Chief Executive and [Chief Philanthropy Officer] lead on that. The Chief Executive was the one who wrote the script and [Chief Philanthropy Officer] was the one who brought the panel together and briefed the panel …The Q&A session was *totally unscripted*, [in that] we had no idea what questions people were going to ask.

The following excerpt presents an example of a tricky question (unscripted), and how it was handled in real time by one of the panel members to bring it back 'on script', emphasizing the value of the community foundation:

Excerpt 7.6

Guest: It's about philanthropy. Donors give to a cause that they love, but should or could she give to a cause that they don't love but has needs?

Panellist A: It's a really tricky one, isn't it? When I did the research this year, I thought all the posh areas, the businesses, give their money to arts, culture and heritage. The disproportion they would go that direction, which is wrong actually. I realized that in a very mixed market place, some people are very passionate about specific issues. They give their money in their giving and go to that direction. That's absolutely fine. But what I would say is not everybody has to have a charity, not everybody needs to have a foundation in this country. One of the things about the community foundation is they act obviously in a very broad way, with a number of givers to help channel the funding. It can be effectively focused.

This is a skilful and highly effective response to a difficult question. The questioner expresses doubts about the effectiveness of philanthropy because donors do not always give to the most deserving causes. The respondent is the author of the *Third Sector Trends* report for the region, an undoubted expert on the subject. While validating the questioner, he effectively negates the charge as not applying to the community foundation because in counselling donors it can ensure that funding is 'effectively focused'. Because this argument is made by an 'independent' researcher, it is far more powerfully reassuring than if it had been made by a community foundation executive or board member. In this instance, careful preparation led to effective real time performance.

Learning

Organizers laid on a buffet supper following the main event to *collect feedback from constituencies and stakeholders*. The supper was the crucial episode where the panel discussion and, indeed, the whole assembly was explicitly "topicalized", namely, it became a "topic" of the conversation (Edwards and Potter, 1992). To the organizers, this was not just a session designed to "network and talk to people", but also a purposeful gathering designed to "make sure that our donors spend their money" and "reach our targets":

> *Excerpt 7.7*
>
> Event Manager: Afterwards, as we always do we provide supper for everyone. So we gave everyone something to eat and drinks. The whole purpose – [because] the event is quite dry – is to make it more of a celebration. But [this] also gives us a chance to network and talk to people, which is invaluable, because if we want to reach our targets, one of the main ways that we can do that is … to make sure that our donors spend their money, because a donor is not likely to give you more money [when] they still have a lot of money in their fund. So we hope that it might inspire [them] to expand the areas [in which they give] and maybe pop more money into [sub-region A]. If their fund is low and they're using their balance very quickly, then they are likely to give us more in donations. We can do that by having open and frank conversations after the event … We can talk [for example] about the panel discussion and reinforce the idea that it's important to support some of the more boring causes in society, [but which] are actually really impactful.

161

This quotation emphatically confirms that an event that is highly staged and scripted, formal and mandatory, nonetheless is *performative* in keeping the wheels of the philanthropy business turning.

Having presented the unfolding of the Local Assembly, I argue that AGMs, inextricably bound up with the mobilization of social capital within the field, are a routine occurrence held by organizations. They draw on a standard template, crafting a story that presents a worthy organization, which can attract continuous support from constituencies and stakeholders to address issues and perpetuate the success. Its performances are highly scripted, and its interactions under control so that the outcome, to a great extent, is predictable. Organizers typically gather feedback from attendees after the event in an informal way on how the assembly and, indeed, the work of the organization can be improved. This demonstrates the importance of assemblies as integral to the routines of philanthropic organization. The quality of these events and associated organizational routines matter because they are a key determinant of organizational effectiveness; seemingly innocuous, but in fact mission critical.

7.4 The unfolding of fundraisers

Fundraisers come in all sizes and shapes and are bounded mainly by the donor's generosity and the organizer's imagination (Webber, 2004). A simple method to distinguish them is by type. Fundraising events vary from sponsored run races to game nights to gala dinner parties, but all events share an attribute, the fundraising outcome cannot be taken for granted. A fundraiser might go off track if donors do not like the selected causes or the proceedings. Depending on how organizers work the room, appeals might be made personally, one to one, at a ball for example, or by a speech culminating in an invitation for guests to leave personal pledges or cheques at their table. In whatever way, fundraisers create opportunities for charities and trusts to expand their donor bases (Sargeant, 1999).

The fundraiser examined here is a premier networking lunch held on International Women's Day, which celebrates the role of women in North East philanthropy, while raising money for a local project themed on numeracy and literacy and for a women's fund at the local community foundation. This piece of theatrical performance, in Meisiek's words (2002, p. 3), was "the staging of problem-oriented plays in an organizational context", which was "used to promote problem-awareness and to stimulate a readiness to change". As an annual celebration, the event attracted an audience of around 250 wealthy women from different business and professional fields, including accountancy, law, banking and finance (Guest List Local Fundraiser, 2017). It began with the welcome from the community foundation's Chair, followed by keynote speeches and a three-course lunch. The crucial fundraising part brings the event to a close. Following this short introduction, I explain how the Local Fundraiser passed through each of the generic staged event phases of conceiving, preparing, selling, performing and learning.

Conceiving

The planning committee for the Local Fundraiser was tasked with soliciting women's philanthropic involvement in making a difference to North East communities. The process began by conceiving and styling the event in moral and humane terms rather than specific causes. As the event manager explained:

> *Excerpt 7.8*
>
> Event Manager: With [fundraiser], it's the first time we've actually done it in that way … Previously we used to call it Women's Fund Lunch. We focused a lot more on the beneficiaries. We had this idea that we want people to think more about philanthropy rather than giving, so this year we talked more about philanthropy. We're trying to make it more than a long-term commitment to make people think, 'Wow, it's great to be philanthropic. Maybe I could be in that position one day or maybe my business could be in that position and have a fund and have something. That would be great'. So there's that kind of aim. They're the key differences.

Reframing was not a disinterested, neutral process but instead was a process packed with power wielded by the event owner. Indeed, using a new title enables the fundraiser to

promote the community foundation as a whole, not just the fund, and bolster its power, as

shown in the following excerpt.

> *Excerpt 7.9*
>
> Researcher: Who do you see as the owner of the event?
>
> Event Manager: The Community Foundation. It is the Community Foundation's event. That was a key reason why we changed it this year. When we called it the Women's Fund Lunch, it was the Women's Fund's event. It was in aid of the Women's Fund and it felt more like a single cause. [For example] when [Foundation A] or [Foundation B] holds an event, it's in aid of [Foundation A] or [Foundation B], which is one cause, whereas when we talk about [Fundraiser], it's a Community Foundation's event. That was the main reason why we shifted it because what we were saying before and the challenges that the Community Foundation faces in that no-one knows who we are. We then make people think this event is ours and talk about what we do, not just what the Women's Fund does.

Preparing

The event manager explained how the fundraiser was prepared jointly by a team of staff

members at the community foundation. The metaphor of a "movie" was employed to frame

the fundraiser as a performance that needed to "run smoothly". The event manager acted as

the "producer" to address practical issues involved in the preparing phase, while another

organizer was designated as the "director" or "writer" responsible for performing the event:

> *Excerpt 7.10*
>
> Event Manager: If you think of it as a movie, I'm the producer. I'm there to make sure it runs smoothly, to do the logistics, to plan, and to sell tickets. [Another organizer] is very much the director or the writer. She's the one that'll come up with an idea, between the two of us, of how we want this event … what we want it to look like.

As a way of supplementing the traditional fundraising approach, mobile technology,

including contactless payment, app and notebooks, was used by the event, *adapting* to the

digital environment (Zhou and Ye, 2019). This is explained by the event manager:

> *Excerpt 7.11*
>
> Event Manager: We're still fine tuning how that works so the technology, to ask people to give on their phone it's doesn't work so well. We need to find better ways. So, with contactless payments, I don't know whether we could have more contactless terminals so that people could just physically get up and give … I know that [company] is looking at developing some kind of app that

you can give in a contactless way. So, I think the technology is not quite there. We've tried, last year we had some notebooks so we could go around with the page open and then people would donate that way. So, there's still ways we can change and look at things.

Selling

The organizing committee discussed how 'politically risky' the Local Fundraiser could be if the cause targeted was not inspirational. Organizers believed that the "aggressive" and "shock" philanthropic causes could set a dark tone for the event, which discouraged the wealthy business and professional women from giving back. Instead, "a nice fluffy project" that helped children to improve their learning skills was selected. The event manager made clear that even when they sold a cause which was "a little bit more harder-hitting", they tended to "put a positive spin on the things", manipulating it on the backstage in order to achieve the fundraising target:

> *Excerpt 7.12*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: In organizing the event on an issue that is quite political, that was a bit of a challenge … We're quite cautious in our communications and style. We're not an organisation that's in your face and we're not aggressive in our marketing. We don't use shock tactics … We always try and stay away from negatives and we always look at positives. So we use examples such as the group we were fundraising for [name], which is supporting parents to learn skills to help their children. It's quite a nice fluffy project. It wasn't a harder-hitting cause. Last year we had a cause that was a little bit more harder-hitting. It was a theatre group that was working with women in prison. It was all about telling their stories through theatre. That was slightly more hard-hitting because it's women that have... They've gone down a certain path in life and ended up in prison. They're trying to turn their lives around. We didn't focus on the negative aspect of what they've done and why they were in prison. The positive is they were trying to turn their lives around and [theatre] has done this great thing in telling their stories … So, we always put a positive spin on the things and that helps.

Accordingly, the organizers strategically manipulated the involvement of actors in supporting the fundraiser, excluding "controversial business" from consideration as a potential sponsor. As the event manager put it bluntly: "Anyone can sponsor the event, really, unless it was some kind of controversial business. So we probably wouldn't have a tobacco manufacturer or something like that sponsors it".

Performing

Critical to this year's fundraising performance was the incorporation of an inspirational speech by a well-known female philanthropist. This was pivotal in shifting the focus from the women's fund to the community foundation as a whole. The event manager suggested at interview that the script for the event changed to fit with the prevailing circumstances.

> *Excerpt 7.13*
>
> Researcher: Is the script different from previous events, like last year?
>
> Event Manager: I think it was. I think to have a philanthropist talk is different. The crowd funding aspect we've only done that for two years now. So, this is their tenth event but we've only ever raised money for specific project for two out of the ten years.

The event was in fact *partially scripted*. Organizers did not have a sight of the keynote speaker's script but had a sense about the content of the speech, as the extract below shows:

> *Excerpt 7.14*
>
> Researcher: Did you see the script before?
>
> Event Manager: No, we didn't. So, we had some conversation. So, [organizer] was the one as she was producing the content, as she was writing the content for it. We kind of knew what she was going to say but we didn't see a script or anything. We didn't really know. All we knew was that she was going to talk about something very personal about her dad and we knew about the poem and that was it really. So, we knew a little bit but we didn't know much but we had faith that she was going to be good and she was.

The risk involved in using an outside speaker was mitigated by recommendations from others within the community foundation network, leading the organizers to have "faith in how good she was going to be". Her central message that 'philanthropy is essential for the future well being of society' and that 'women should be leading the way' in creating better futures for disadvantaged young people fitted the bill. The thoughtful, measured, approach taken in delivering this message seemed to strike a chord with the women present, if judged by the rapturous applause and discussion engendered.

Learning

The Local Fundraiser was organized and had rules of conduct, but, as in any sporting event, the outcome cannot be taken for granted at the beginning (Baimbridge, 1998). According to the event manager: "We don't get to see how much that raises, that's the only problem, because people tend to just give slightly more in their raffle envelope" (Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017). The fundraiser was explicitly framed as a profitable gathering with combined "strategies to minimize risk".

Excerpt 7.15

Event Manager: As part of the risk we set a figure where we say the event will only happen if we can get over this tipping point and that's when we know we're in profit. It was 200 seats, the tipping point, and anything after that's profit … What you find is the closer you get to the event, the harder it is to sell your tickets. As part of that risk and strategy there's a very short window which you can sell tickets. So, we plan that in and because we've done this event for a number of years, we kind of know what works. You have a plan. You have your strategies to minimize risk. You also have that experience of knowing your clients and knowing who they are, how they work and knowing how we can make a success of something. So, it's a combination.

In terms of the outcome, the event manager acknowledged that although the raising amount is "not bad", they still "lost money". What the owner and manager expected is through the fundraiser, they could ultimately attract more donors to the community foundation, despite being hard to achieve. The following excerpt is telling:

Excerpt 7.16

Event Manager: I'd say this year we raised nearly £14,500, so it's good, it's not bad, but we do lose money on that, given the amount of work, time and effort that goes into that. It is about awareness and we can measure that short term on the amount of people that tweet about us, the feedback that we get from our guests, things like that, and it is generally very positive. Now, what we need to do is we're at a point now where we want to get more from the event and we're trying to be strategic and thinking, 'How can we get more from this event?' So, there's a whole project that my colleague, [name], is working on into how we can achieve that. We've been doing this event for ten years and I don't think it's resulted in many major gifts.

Indeed, the outcome of fundraisers, given their partially scripted nature, is most unpredictable among the four types of elite philanthropic events. What also differentiates fundraisers from the others is their capability to unfold the actual processes of philanthropy. The customised

programme was inseparably bound up with the emotion of attendees: "what we do is we do try and open people's eyes at the event … by showing them the beneficiary and showing them some of the issues that people face in our communities and how you can raise that relatively small amount of money to make a project happen that'll change the lives of a small number of people" (Event Manager Local Fundraiser, 2017).

7.5 The unfolding of award ceremonies

Anyone who seeks to trace the construction of principles and standards of a field would find it hard to neglect the influence of award ceremonies. Award ceremonies play an important role in building and maintaining prestige (Anand and Watson, 2004) and differentiating status (Hinings *et al*., 2017) within the field. There are many prominent award ceremonies in the UK. The Queen's Awards for Enterprise, for example, is an award scheme for British businesses, which excel at innovation, sustainable development, international trade, or boosting opportunity through social mobility, and has been a popular topic for examination for decades (Buckley, 1983; Crick and Bradshaw, 1999; Michell, 1979; Styles and Ambler, 1994). To achieve a Queen's Award earns unparalleled recognition, exposure and prestige, with many considering it as the highest official award in the UK for businesses (Cunningham and Spigel, 1971). Another example within this category is the British Academy of Film and Television Arts celebration, which was formed in 1947 and takes place every year in London. Endorsed by the British royal family, the event, like the American Oscars, it creates a platform to recognize and celebrate the best actors and their achievements in the film industry.

The award ceremony examined here celebrates outstanding philanthropic endeavours made by individuals, couples, families and groups of individuals who work jointly across seven categories: city philanthropy, targeted philanthropy, philanthropy advocate, place-based philanthropy, cultural philanthropy, impact investment and pioneering philanthropy (Event Brochure National Award Ceremony, 2017). They emphasize the latest

trends in charitable giving and pioneering development, such as the increasing focus on donating money to support local initiatives and future generations in the UK. Winners were selected following a rigorous judging process, through which a panel consisting of leading philanthropists and philanthropy professionals in the UK whittled down a list of nominations. The award ceremony was sponsored by a multinational investment bank and graced by the attendance of the Lord Mayor of the City of London (Event Brochure National Award Ceremony, 2017). The following sections present a detailed analysis of how the National Award Ceremony unfolded over five phases.

Conceiving

The event is the most notable award ceremony in the UK philanthropic field and begs the question: "how was it *made* into this?" (Mueller, 2018, p. 21). Its owner *differentiated* the event by inventing the '*awards persona*' as "more than an award ceremony", but "a fellowship network of inspirational and diverse philanthropists, with whom we can connect and from whom we can learn" (Event Brochure National Award Ceremony, 2017). Accordingly, event organizers worked on both the "awards process" and the "engagement with individual winners" (Event Manager National Award Ceremony, 2017) to generate "interaction ritual chains" (Collins, 2004), enabling a sense of collective national solidarity.

Preparing

The National Award Ceremony could be seen as a symbolic ritual, a public façade, enabling the organizing committee and the nomination advisory panel to act to "maintain and reproduce the legitimacy" (Brown, 2005, p. 1579). The actors involved in commissioning, planning and running the event and the responsibilities of each party have been *adapted incrementally* over the years. The event has had its own board as the owner, a national philanthropic network as the main organizer, and a multinational investment banking company as the sponsor for almost a decade:

Excerpt 7.17

Event Manager: Technically, [National Award Ceremony] has its own board of trustees. They had a huge input in how [National Award Ceremony] is run. It's their governance responsibility. [National Award Ceremony] also has a number of sponsors, which include the main sponsor at the moment is [bank]. We also have [trust]. They have a lot of involvement in the making and design of [National Award Ceremony] and what they would like to get out of it as well. Then we have panel advisors that we also bring together. So, we have a nomination advisory panel, and then the judging panel is always an independent panel of philanthropic experts. We bring together people leading the field from across the sector and also previous award winners. So the people who really know what we are doing. There is lots of voice that come into informing how [National Award Ceremony] is implemented. Then [event owner] manages the process. We also have a big input into that.

Preparing the National Award Ceremony involves use of methods to generate impressions of a prestigious occasion graced by philanthropic elites. According to the Event Manager (2017), procuring a choice venue is the most important task: "Venue is really important. [This year's] was really good because there was gravitas in the setting. It is a quite unique setting, the building. Everybody gets to experience it and being in the City of London was really exciting". Considerable promotional activities, including producing event booklets, brochures and short films, were undertaken by the organizing committee at a remarkably fast pace.

In the preparing phase, organizers had to decide "[w]ho will make the final presentation?" (Kiechel , 2010, p. 182). Event Manager (2017) described how she made the "exclusive guest list" for the award ceremony.

Excerpt 7.18

Event Manager: One of [National Award Ceremony]'s main focus is to create a fellowship network of leading UK philanthropists. It's like creating an alumnus. Every winner goes into the [National Award Ceremony] fellowship and then becomes a [National Award Ceremony] fellow. So, one of the aims of the audience in the ceremony is to bring previous winners and other alumni members together and to welcome and introduce the new members as well, and also organizations that have taken part in the judging process, the nomination process, the people that put those people forward, which we would not have the outcome without them. So, generally [National Award Ceremony] advises all the trustees, the Chair and sponsors. It is a celebration of everyone that was involved really … There is no money involved with the invite. It's purely we send out invitations, and if it is being accepted, then that's brilliant. But it's a quite exclusive guest list it's going to. It's also not usual events you

might publicize, and you don't know who will attend. There are lots of people in their best interest and fascinate being there.

What is being said here is that in award ceremonies *style is substance*. Impression management is fundamental to the production of belief in philanthropy as a viable solution to the ills facing the world. The goal is to generate solidarity among the ruling class in supporting a solution to problems which if left unattended could ultimately undermine its authority and right to rule. There must be leaders to follow, role models, exemplars of generosity from whom other might take inspiration.

Selling

Event organizers sold the National Award Ceremony as an elite product, which was about celebrating the most prominent philanthropists in the UK. Accordingly, it appeared especially crucial for event organizers to get the *story of their philanthropic achievements* absolutely right. The Event Manager (2017) emphasized the main protocols involved in the award ceremony, created "on a very personal level" to "promote these stories" and "encourage others to give more and to give better":

> *Excerpt 7.19*
>
> Event Manager: There is lots of engagement from [National Award Ceremony] side on a very personal level, making sure that everyone is comfortable with what that means and everyone that formally accept the award also engages with [National Award Ceremony] and expecting that they will take part in some form of events with us in the following year. We also make sure they are happy to have their story publicized… On the PR side, we have to be clear what they are or aren't comfortable with. But the main thing we do encourage them to do is that the whole of [National Award Ceremony] is to promote these stories, to encourage others to give more and to give better. So, it's really valuable when somebody is open to sharing their learning and also what has and has not gone well in their philanthropy certain things. Reporting on mistakes is also very valuable.

Performing

As part of efforts made by the organizers, crafted language, presentational conventions, specialized vocabulary and format conventions were used to perform the event as *highly*

scripted: typically, the stories did not provide strict causality but a plausible narrative

(Polkinghorne, 1988), mainly by employing mini films shot before the event:

> *Excerpt 7.20*
>
> <u>Event Manager</u>: The videos are the central part because we used to have a
> chanceful, it is a tussle whether you have each winner to give a speech … The
> filming is a really amazing way to do that because it tells their personal story
> in a setting where they are comfortable. It gets to show a bit of their
> personality and side of their giving, which is different from the other winners.
> It also keeps the timeline, keeps the ceremony moving on, and guests engaged.

Ceremony organizers realized that the professionally managed "*etiquette* is a body of ritual

which grows up informally to preserve", before the philanthropic elite, "the common front of

the profession" (Goffman, 1959, p. 95). As the event manager described, the organizing

committee *limited the interactions* between the "very high-profile people"; in Wetherell and

Potter's words (1992, p. 157), "sinister, Machiavellian figures with immense power", to

provide them with "a safe, comfortable space".

Learning

The National Award Ceremony invited a total of 145 philanthropic elites who made 92 tweets

and ten unique website page views. The comment below is from a national philanthropy think

tank:

> *Excerpt 7.21*
>
> <u>Philanthropy Think Tank</u>: Philanthropy still has a huge role to play in society
> today and judging by this year's [National Award Ceremony] it's alive and
> well. This year's winners include some of the top names from the worlds of
> fashion, sport, arts and finance. They are all truly inspirational and make a
> significant impact with their generosity.

The event organizer believed the legacy of the National Award Ceremony was profound,

generating a convening force which facilitated collaboration among philanthropic

organizations and influenced the development of the third sector as a whole:

> *Excerpt 7.22*
>
> <u>Event Manager:</u> There is lots of discussion going on at the moment as
> [National Award Ceremony] is going into the strategy phase, especially of
> how do we move that forward? Whatever is an agreed one, there is more need

for collaboration amongst philanthropic organizations, especially the support and funding from the government on certain things. The third sector really has to step together and plum the gaps on many levels. So, [National Award Ceremony] as a convening force for that is an exciting thing.

The award ceremony, as I have shown, was produced with its own characteristics, differing from others of its type in the field. Its production has been institutionalized, adopting an incrementally adaptive template to strengthen the solidarity within the elite class. The distinctive nature and purpose of celebrating and recognizing the best philanthropists in the UK is facilitated by being highly scripted and high paced, creating rare opportunities for attendees to interact with each other.

7.6 The unfolding of conferences

The conference examined here was a local philanthropic festival, which aimed at advancing our understanding of the "story of philanthropy" in North East England, and "what it all means" (Official Website Local Conference, 2018). The event could be seen "as a collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory" (Boje, 1991, p. 106). As with other staged events, the Local Conference infolded through five generic phases, as discussed below.

Conceiving

The conceiving process involved in the Local Conference was far more complex than for the other events observed and was entirely *novel*; it is "the first event of its kind in the world" (Event Owner Local Conference, 2017). In order to garner cultural capital in various forms (Getz, 1989), the event owner assembled an action group of ten external agents from different business and professional backgrounds, conceiving 44 events – in Valentine *et al.*'s word (2010, p. 927) – "social collectivities" – for the conference over 21 months. Their work mainly involved exploring the possibility of investing in the

conference, identifying audiences for this piece of work, and capturing philanthropic stories of the North East. The following extract from a planning meeting shows how the organizers defined the audience, helping them to conceive the purpose of the conference:

Excerpt 7.23

Organizer A: Just before we launch into how we are going to catch our stories, I thought it was just helpful to spend two minutes reflecting on who is the actual audience for this piece of work? Who are our audiences? Just to remind ourselves who we are we trying to engage and capture because that does influence how we tell the story and what story we tell. Who do we think our audiences are?

Organizer C: I suppose it's the question of what is the purpose of the event to then decide who we tell the story to.

Organizer A: Yes.

Organizer C: So is it to raise money? Is it just a historical thing to develop philanthropy, which I assume it is?

Organizer B: I think we seek to seize the possibility and remind people of different ages. I think we all raise the reputation of philanthropy as a force for social good. It does have a good reputation, so actually raising the reputation of philanthropy. I think you're also making philanthropy more interesting when people saw this and showing why it's interesting. It exerts such an important impact on the lives of ordinary people. It just they don't see this impact in their everyday lives. It's kind of opening the eyes type of thing, which any exhibition in any museum and art gallery is really trying to do.

The reasons and motives contained within the event shaped how the organizing committee conceived it. The extract below shows that organizers framed the Local Conference as "opening doors", which could help them "own the philanthropic space" and become "the leader in the region" by taking "a bigger disinterested view".

Excerpt 7.24

Organizer A: In terms of profile, for the festival, for the foundation, because it is me talking about it. The really powerful things for us are the opportunities to talk about philanthropy before it, not just in the festival. I would never … If I'd written to [supporter] and said the community foundation is brilliant and we are 30th, can I have 5 minutes to talk all things? No. If I say this is about talking about the region, this is about business people who have been philanthropists, this is fabulous, good new story, can I have 5 minutes? He might still say no, but I feel if I say I will be interesting, and it will be punchy.

Organizer B: Yes.

Organizer A: Those are the things that enable us to do this festival that we get.

Organizer B: I think that's really very well observed. It is opening doors.

Organizer A: It is opening doors. I said to [event owner] the conversations that I have had with people about this are at a different level to any conversation I have had last time I worked here. These are things that get across the board. I have gone to people, and I've almost had a different body language because I am going saying this is important. It's bigger than the community foundation. It's a regional good new story. The time is now. Everybody has got involved. We are taking the stance and putting our time and energy into this because we think it is so important. You know we said we want to own the philanthropic space. We want to be seen as the leader in the region. I feel when I was talking to the people that is priceless

Organizer B: You are in empowered to talk to them taking a bigger disinterested view.

The concept of "opening door" and of boosting the organization's regional presence in effect emerged as justifications for such an enormous organizational effort, requiring unprecedented levels of planning and relationship building for a small organization, albeit the largest community foundation outside North America. It was certainly a singularly ambitious strategic ploy requiring a high level of commitment and the development of new organizational capabilities.

Preparing

One crucial task in the preparing phase was "seeking Festival sponsorship from companies and individuals whose values align with local philanthropy and are committed to the communities where they live and work" (Sponsorship Proposal Local Conference, 2018). In order to achieve the target, the event owner drafted a sponsorship brochure circulated to businesses and individuals with influence in the region, which might "extend goodwill by endorsing" (Maclean *et al.*, 2017, p. 782). While the event owner sought to create "a nice random package of funding", she tended to attract more wealthy businesses on board, which could bring high-profile networks to the community foundation and expand its donor pool, potentially triggering a continuous process of capital conversion from economic to social and from social to economic:

Excerpt 7.25

> Event Owner: We are feeling reasonably confident, but all the money we've got so far more or less has come from charitable trusts or the main partners. Although I think we could get more of 25 grants from more charitable trusts, I am really keen to try to get the rest 25 from corporate sponsors because it's a nice random package of funding, and all the corporate sponsors bring all their links to their clients, to their high networks, you know, donors. We can pick up all their messaging, their branding, their own marketing and their doing. I think we get a lot more from it.

The preparing phase also involved discussing and addressing practical issues like resource designing, brand launching, creative commissions, venue selection, event evaluation and legacy planning (Planner Document Local Conference, 2017). Despite the novel production, the event *applied generic formats*, including formal structures (e.g. the launch event, debates, symposiums, workshops and lectures) and informal comings together (e.g. at music performances, over meals, and via tweets), which became enfolded into the Local Conference as a whole.

Selling

In the selling phase, the organizers engaged in a historically dynamic process of incremental crafting of the philanthropic stories in the region as well as constant interpretation and reinterpretation of culturally and symbolically sacred storylines as they *discovered meaning and truth*. It is telling that:

> *Excerpt 7.26*
>
> Organizer A: I suppose one of the main things was capturing the stories. What stories do we want to tell? And how might we want to tell it? I really came up with an incredible amount of possible things that we could do. The list of what we could do is absolutely endless really. The point for me in this action group is … Things only happen if people make them happen. All the fabulous ideas are great. But what could we do realistically to capture and celebrate this story?

How were the philanthropic stories in North East England captured? The stories were not found to be highly agreed-upon re-existing narratives. Rather, the stories had to be discovered, researched, pulled together from fragments of historical data and interpreted. The following excerpt is based on observational notes written during a story mapping session. It shows that organizers saw the story as "a very simple organization" with categories, including "people",

"time", "themes" and "places", to "make sense of equivocal inputs and enact this sense back into the world to make that world more orderly" (Weick *et al.*, 2005, p. 410).

Excerpt 7.27

Organizer B: If we do the mapping, basically presumably what we think is a very simple organization. There are people. There are philanthropists. There are themes, parks and gardens, whatever. We need some kind of metrics, and what we are trying to do is to assemble the masters of the story and to populate metrics.

Organizer A: Mainly sequencing and introducing …

Organizer B: How do things unfold over time, but within the theme? You can do it naturally all the time.

Organizer A: Over the next hour or so we are going to try to map out what we know in our heads of the stories of philanthropy in the North East in two different ways. The first session is we are going to work in pairs on three different tables. One group is going to look at what are the stories and think about geography. So, looking at maps and thinking about what comes to your mind from the geographical point of view. One group is going to be looking at the story timeline. What could we map out, and how far back can we go in terms of what has been going on in philanthropy? And the third group is going to be looking at the contemporary philanthropy. What is going on now or within the last 20 years or so, the story as it stands? We will do that in pairs, and then we will shift around … just in case your brains missed any bits into the five different sheets around the room. On these sheets, we are trying to capture as much as possible what are the causes. That's the first sheet. What are the causes that philanthropy has supported? Education and health whatever.

Organizer B: Themes.

Organizer A: Well, yes, themes, causes straight themes. What people jump out towards? Just list people you know. That's another sheet. Places might be buildings or whatever, things that have philanthropic influence. We may also quite a start on what might be the different headings of the matrix be in our story. What we put we have got. But we can add to them what matrix might be. And the final one is what else. We haven't thought about that might need to be in our story.

My data reveal that the stories were constantly revised and refined by different organizers as they unfolded in the "continuous process of sensemaking, enactment and negotiated interactions" (Kostova *et al*., 2008, p. 1002). Members of the organizing committee were welcome to "intervene spontaneously" at planning meetings "whenever they feel they would like to change the plot in favour of their own ideas" (Meisiek, 2002, p. 4). Through stories and accounts, "people descriptively construct events as following, or as departing from, some

normative or expected order" (Edwards, 1997, p. 144). Overall, the team constructed 230

plotlines, 111 of philanthropists, 84 of beneficiaries organizations, and 35 of philanthropic

foundations, publishing them of a specially constructed website together with a series of

interpretive essays telling the story of philanthropy in North East England from 1100 to the

present (see http://www.philanthropynortheast.com/).

Performing

The organizing committee turned into a storytelling team in the performing phase, with its

own 'sense' of the history of philanthropy in the North East, likely to 'make' their point of

view when interacting with guests. In order to present the philanthropic stories in a

performative way, the organizers used the techniques of "theatre", drew on the talents of

experienced theatre professionals such as "playwrights" and "producers", and constantly

transferred and adapted the stories into the venue:

> *Excerpt 7.28*
>
> <u>Organizer A</u>: I am also speaking to [name], one of our team members here,
> about how we might engage local playwrights and theatre producers to come
> up with this idea – a piece of theatre. She is going to have more conversation
> to see how it might be shaped up.

Stories helped attendees to make sense of the conference: making meaning from *open*

conversation and interaction, and incorporating new insights into the history in an ongoing

"process of becoming" (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Indeed, the interactions at the conference

appeared to be random. 44 sessions that embraced different practices and knowledge were

crucial to this campaign as they created "safe havens" (Maclean *et al.*, 2017, p. 779) for

locals to mingle freely with each other. Hence, they performed both practical value and

cultural significance in conveying hope for a better region.

To achieve the twin goals of 'opening doors' and 'boosting presence' required the

orchestration of multiple performances by multiple performers over a three-week period, with

different events targeted at different audiences. The most prestigious events were targeted at

philanthropists and would-be philanthropists, and included a launch event telling the story of philanthropy in the North East 'for the first time', a symposium featuring five national philanthropists, a fundraiser put together by a well known musician, and a debate featuring well known speakers. Other events were aimed at accountants, lawyers and wealth managers in a position to advise well off people with the financial resources to give at scale to the organizing community foundation. Still other events were targeted at the general public, most organized by beneficiary organizations and designed to show how philanthropy serves as a force for social good. The media, drawn in by a plethora of ready-made stories, were conscripted to amplify the message that philanthropy has created many good things in the past that continue to do good in the present.

Learning

Although the conference served a one-off purpose, it operated prospectively to generate new ideas and potentialities, namely, "encouraging more philanthropy and philanthropists, in all its forms" (Event Owner Local Conference, 2017). Members of the organizing committee "turn[ed] its audience into performers, by making them want to go back to their branches to spread the message" (Clark and Mangham, 2004, p. 52). According to one organizer, "I know that there are some would-be philanthropists that have had bad experiences. To bring out the real good experiences could then encourage them now to maybe give it another chance" (Organizer D Local Conference, 2017). Indeed, the organizers strove to bring together a wide range of elements that comprised the event so that the audiences would be active, not just listening and watching the story, but also engaging in future actions.

7.7 Discussion

This chapter has examined the unfolding of four types of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy, guided by the question *how do elite staged philanthropic events work to achieve performative purposes?* In answer, I suggest that assemblies, fundraisers,

conferences and award ceremonies transition through five generic phases – *conceiving*, *preparing*, *selling*, *performing* and *learning* – to fulfil performative functions. Members of organizing committees 'gave sense' to elite philanthropic events by framing them as 'loaded' with style, template, story, script and metrics. By making sense of the "definition of the situation" (Goffman, 1974) regarding venue, timing, content, programme, guest list, support and sponsorship and seating plan, event organizers established five 'social facts': first, elite philanthropic events are symbolic occurrences with different styles; secondly, organizers are attracted to organizational templates for the preparation of elite philanthropic events; thirdly, elite philanthropic events are story-bound occurrences associated with narratives; fourthly, scripts serve as a means to perform elite philanthropic events; and finally, elite philanthropic events influence future actions, going hand-in-hand with becoming (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). I explain each of these social facts in turn.

The importance of style was recognized by organizers when they conceived an elite philanthropic event. Assemblies and award ceremonies adopted the style of institutional production, being sensitive to the attendance of outsiders who might "ask the wrong questions, mock serious things, and interrupt the performance" (Alexander *et al*., 2006, p. 344). Therefore, assemblies and award ceremonies cannot have a bad ending, as opposed to fundraisers and conferences, which tend to be more like theatrical performances. Indeed, the means of institutional production are seldom employed by fundraisers and conferences, which typically revolve around customized and novel styles bringing together participants who might not share value and beliefs, sometimes do not accept others' intention, and disagree on the ideas conceived. The contrast between institutional production and theatrical production is consistent with the findings of research into social performance and cultural pragmatics, which understands performance as symbolic action characterized by "the style in which it is designed" (e.g. Alexander, 2004; Aston and Savona, 1991, p. 112; Turner, 1969).

Once organizational models are prevalent in the market, they can be adopted by agents "as templates for the design of institutional structures in different contexts" (Beckert, 2010, p. 155; Meyer *et al*., 1997). This applies to assemblies and conferences. Their organizers were attracted to existing event templates because of their need to find solutions to problems arising during the phase of preparing. In contrast, fundraisers and award ceremonies did not simply copy but adapt templates based on style following different logics of action. This strikes a chord with the translation literature that rejects the idea that organizational actors use "the same thing for the same reason", shedding light on how they modify templates to "fit their unique needs" (Abrahamson, 2006, pp. 512-513).

According to Rhodes and Brown (2005), crafting and telling a story, as a crucial feature of managerial behaviour, is central to the existence of organizations. The organizers of elite philanthropic events examined here offered various answers to the question posed by Weick *et al*. (2005, p. 413), "what's the story?". The performative purposes are achieved by the stories suggested by Weick (1995, p. 61) that bring "disparate elements together long enough to energize and guide action" (conferences and fundraisers), "plausible enough to allow people to make retrospective sense of whatever happens" (assemblies and award ceremonies), and "engagingly enough that others will contribute their own inputs in the interest of sensemaking" (conferences and fundraisers). Stories, as shown, are the selling point of elite philanthropic events, which can be instantly appealing and memorable (Brown, 1998; Maclean *et al*., 2011), like those in the fundraiser and conference that created powerful impressions in the minds of attendees.

This chapter has shown to what extent elite philanthropic events are scripted in order to achieve performative purposes. For assemblies and award ceremonies, organizers reproduced what Nelsen and Barley (1997, p. 650) call "recursive scripts" in performing highly ritualized performances. In philanthropic events such as these, human agency "has

been institutionally authorized and constrained; social actors enact constitutive, institutional scripts that link their identities to prescribed behaviors and broader logics of action" (Creed *et al.*, 2002, p. 475). As the data show, there was some kind of temporal sequence, which is representative of many organizational activities scripting (Mueller and Carter, 2005). In contrast, fundraisers and conferences are based on a script "available independent from its realization in an actual performance" (Alexander *et al.*, 2006, p. 349). The 'abstract' script is translated into a flow of action that involves the separation of actors and stage directors, in this case, event performers and event organizers. Speakers enacted scripts and delivered assertive, expressive, declaratory, commissive and directive speeches while advocating for philanthropy (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: The performance content of staged philanthropic events

Speech act	Illustrative quotes of speeches at staged philanthropic events
Assertive	• Mankind has never been so prosperous. Globalization is lifting millions out of poverty which is great. Yet the gap grows, inequality grows. (National Award Ceremony) • Local authority budgets have been slashed. (National Award Ceremony) • We had added up £2.6 million into our endowment. (Local Assembly) • Less prosperous places, lower than the local authority level, having less formal charitable activities in drawing fewer resources. (Local Assembly) • The evitable consequence of that has been that the wealth has become more, more and more concentrated. (Local Conference) • It's actually built into the system that donors come first. (Local Conference) • There is very little room for experimentation and innovation in the public sector. It tends to be bureaucratic. (Local Conference)
Directive	• How can people not see this? How can people not make a case for dramatic changes in the taxation system? (Local Conference) • Let's think about the context. Let's be aware of what happens in terms of global income and wealth distribution. Let's think about proper taxation policies and proper redistribution policies. (Local Conference) • You can really change their lives. (Local Conference) • Please make sure to meet all the 320 you do not already know. (National Conference) • Can you please focus instead on the worst of what is going on, the worthiest of what's happening? (Local Assembly)

	• Please have a look at [the refreshed website] if you haven't already. (Local Assembly)
	• Philanthropy is not only for the rich, not only for one age group but for all of us. (National Award Ceremony)
	• There is an urgent need, as you heard from [host] and [host], for both more and better philanthropy to unlock more private wealth. (National Award Ceremony)
	• I like to take a little time to think about a scenario. (Local Fundraiser)
	• Please be generous. (Local Fundraiser)
Expressive	• It was great to see students coming into the room. (Local Fundraiser)
	• Jack, my husband, and I are delighted to be able to financially give to the foundation. (Local Fundraiser)
	• It's an absolute and genuine pleasure to be here today. (Local Fundraiser)
	• I have to say that I am also a late boomer. I got everything free. This makes me feel very privileged. (Local Fundraiser)
	• It was a no-win situation … We really worried about … (Local Fundraiser)
	• Philanthropy gives me a sound of life and everything that I would miss. (National Award Ceremony)
	• [We are] proud to sponsor the awards from the outset. (Local Award Ceremony)
	• We're very fortunate indeed to have such an exceptionally accomplished group of panel members. (Local Conference)
Commissive	• We want to continue to lay the groundwork really for a stronger organization and voice representing the foundations and the broader movement of independent philanthropy. (National Assembly)
	• We focus particularly on continuing to help to make the organization fit for the future and fit for purpose. (National Assembly)
	• I suppose we are trying to reinforce. (Local Fundraiser)
	• I believe it's doing what we can to help build resilience for individuals and communities across Wales. (National Conference)
	• I want to be part of that as the Welsh government working with you to deliver. (National Conference)
	• That's the sort of facility we want to create. (Local Conference)
	• Why shouldn't it promise to be as good as adults will go? (Local Conference)
Declaratory	• We'll now have a system of welcoming a new Chair. (National Assembly)
	• The winner of this category [is name], and let's hear from them. (National Award Ceremony)
	• [Event Owner] has announced the category winners of its Unsung GeNerosity Heroes competition as nominated by the public. (Local Conference)
	• I can declare that based on the democratic vote, the audience believes that philanthropy does do more for society than it does for donors. (Local Conference)

| | • It is [name] who wins the lot. (National Fundraiser) |

This chapter has shown how organizers learn from audience feedback as the final phase of elite philanthropic events. It shows that the learning phase does not involve similar metrics for evaluation but a variety of standards of measurement that are "inherently future oriented, directed towards what lies ahead" (Maclean *et al*., 2011, p. 30). Organizers used different metrics to reflect on how to translate the outcome of non-routine events into the flow of everyday organizational life. The learning phase thus underpins the process of becoming, "the reweaving of actors' webs of beliefs and habits of action to accommodate new experiences obtained through interactions" (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002, p. 567).

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has identified and elucidated the sensemaking processes embedded within elite staged philanthropic events, defined as *conceiving*, *preparing*, *selling*, *performing* and *learning*. It offers further evidence to confirm the idea that leaders and dominant stakeholders have a key role to play in sensemaking – in my case sensemaking amongst event managers and external philanthropic agents – crucially influencing organizational processes and outcomes (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis and Lawrence, 2003; Maitlis and Sonnenshein, 2010; Marshall and Rollinson, 2004; Tourish and Robson, 2006; Weick *et al*., 2005). Having analysed both the structural and processual dynamics of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy, drawing on a wide range of empirical data collected from eight core cases, in the next chapter I draw together the key findings from the research and summarize how the thesis contributes to knowledge of both philanthropy and more generally to research on staged events.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore the nature and purpose of staged events in the functioning, maintenance and development of organizational fields. I thoroughly reviewed the existing literature on the topic, which turned out to be scant, both theoretical and empirical, before deciding to carry out a field-wide, qualitative study based on eight in-depth case studies of elite staged philanthropic events in the UK. Drawing on abductive reasoning, the fine-grained analysis of assemblies, conferences, fundraisers and award ceremonies enabled me to generate contextually informed readings of interactions between event actors and also allowed for *real-time, moment-by-moment tracking* of crucial actions and outcomes (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2003; Moeran, 2009; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). The good fortune to have observed what happened not only on the stage but also behind the scenes has since caused me to think critically about elite philanthropic events and their role in British society and more generally. On the one hand, I have been positively impressed by performances extolling 'giving back' to society at fundraisers, establishing rationales for philanthropic endeavours at conferences, reaffirming common purpose at assemblies, and celebrations of virtuous wealth at award ceremonies. On the other hand, I have become alert to the darker side of philanthropy, of the social micro-processes created by elite philanthropic events that arguably bolster domination by the wealthy, helping lock in economic and social inequalities. As David Callahan explicitly puts in *The givers: Wealth, power, and philanthropy in a new gilded age*, "philanthropy is becoming a much stronger power center and, in some areas, is set to surpass government in its ability to shape society's agenda" (Callahan, 2017, p. 7). Indeed, wealthy individuals, couples and families hold considerable power, enabling self-serving manipulation of legal and regulatory rules to ensure the system continues to work in

their favour. Orchestrating and participating in elite philanthropic events, from fundraising gala dinners to prominent award ceremonies, have long been part of upper-class members' agendas as they seek to shore up their positioning within the field of power at the local, national and global levels (Harvey *et al.*, 2011).

This final chapter outlines the main findings of my study. In the next section, I summarize my core argument and offer a view of elite staged philanthropic events at the individual, organizational and societal levels based on the results presented in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. At the end of the section, I answer the master research question: *what is the role of staged events in the functioning, maintenance and development of organizational fields?* I then articulate the contributions to scholarship made by this research and the implications it has generated for practice. The limitations of my study and potential avenues for further investigation are suggested in the following section, after which I conclude by offering my final reflections on elite staged events and philanthropy.

8.2 Core argument and main findings

I presented my empirical findings in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, which focus sequentially on *context*, *power*, *performance* and *process* to advance understanding of the role of staged events in shaping organizational fields. This section outlines the core argument of the study by first answering the four secondary research questions raised in my four empirical chapters. Following this, I draw together the threads of my argument to answer the focal research question posed at the start of this thesis.

Staged events and elite philanthropy

Chapter 4 of my thesis posed the question *what is the context in which elite staged philanthropic events take place in the UK?* In answer, I suggest that elite staged philanthropic events operate in the UK within a philanthropic tradition that originated in early modern times and has persisted despite the growth of the welfare state. Since the 1980s, the country

has adopted and translated US philanthropic models to create new charitable institutions such as community foundations that have revitalized the philanthropic field (Harvey *et al.*, 2020). My findings suggest that the UK is far from being an institutional laggard in philanthropy, notwithstanding the relatively small scale of elite giving when compared to the US.

Today we live in a new age of inequalities (Piketty, 2014). Over the past forty years, inequalities of wealth, income, health, among many others, have increased dramatically in developed countries (Atkinson, 2015; Bourguignon, 2015). The gap between poor and rich has expanded, and as a result food banks have become prevalent in countries like the UK despite their having high mean average incomes. Core to my findings is that elite staged philanthropic events are profoundly implicated in justifying increasing inequalities within the UK as they operate "through the persuasive use of ethically charged language", increasing "toleration of the *status quo*" (Harvey *et al.*, 2020, p. 13). Organizers and attendees act as the power brokers and white knights of modern-day capitalism, rhetorically deploying the "vocabularies of motives" (Mills, 1940) crucial to the weaponization of elite staged philanthropic events.

I propose a typology of elite staged philanthropic events that is dependent on geographic scope, whether local or national, and the orientation adopted, whether symbolic or economic (see Figure 8.1). Local philanthropic events are characterized by their drive to build solidarity and common purpose within disadvantaged communities, whereas national philanthropic events champion generic causes such as equal opportunities and rights and justice for all. Symbolic events are institutionally oriented, typically generating ceremonial rituals to enhance the standing of those involved, whereas economic events are transformationally oriented, driven by the desire to generate income and expand donor pools. When these distinctions are juxtaposed, four generic event types emerge, labelled here as 'ritual performer', 'societal stabilizer', 'community navigator' and 'transformational change

driver'. Ritual performers and societal stabilizers are under the category of renditions, including assemblies and award ceremonies, and community navigators and transformational change drivers belong to the category of bouts, including conferences and fundraisers whose outcome, as shown in earlier chapters, is not predictable at the beginning.

Figure 8.1: Typology of elite staged philanthropic events

Scope

	Local	National
Symbolic	Ritual Performers	Societal Stabilizers
Economic	Community Navigators	Transformational Change Drivers

(row label: **Orientation**)

This thesis suggests that elite staged philanthropic events may serve to legitimize wealth and inequality, but the good faith and intentions of most participants are not in question. Rather, those involved in the staged events are subject to "institutional influences … to make charitable contributions in return for acceptance and legitimacy" (Saiia *et al.*, 2003, p. 175). This resonates with the view expressed in much of the literature that while elites are under pressure to behave philanthropically, they stand to benefit from the enhanced reputations and access to prized networks that philanthropy affords them (Bishop and Green, 2008; Maclean and Harvey, 2020; Ostrower, 1995, 2002).

Power in elite philanthropic events

Chapter 5 of my thesis posed the question *how is power deployed within elite staged philanthropic events?* In answer, I suggest that elite philanthropic events deploy power by mobilizing capital held by elite actors operating within the field of power, which has profound implications for the reproduction of what Bourdieu calls the "class structure" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Analysis of structural arrangements confirmed that staged philanthropic events "provide the 'props' and accoutrements for elites that conceal the arbitrary nature of elite power and make it appear as if preordained" (Maclean and Harvey, 2019, p. 1).

This research shows how elite philanthropic events, strategically and consciously, create fields, each being a social space with its own rules of functioning. It shows that each philanthropic event mirrored the social space with its own autonomy, its own dominant and subordinate agents and practices, and its struggles for inclusion and exclusion (Calhoun and Wacquant, 2002; Oakes *et al.*, 1998). The argument made here is that elite philanthropic events are not staged on a level playing field. Instead, they are inextricably bound up generatively with processes of capital formation within the field. Fundraisers, as shown in Chapter 5, revolve around a dynamic process of economic capital formation, soliciting cash for targeted causes that promise social betterment. Since wealthy donors hold controlling positions within such interactions, the enactment of fundraiser power is strongly implicated in the enactment of economic power. Attendees' positioning in the arena is contingent on the volume of economic capital they hold and contribute to the event. Those who donate on a larger scale are positioned at the pinnacle of the event space, whereas those who donate smaller amounts are situated at a lower level. Hence, fundraisers are highly stratified, marked by naked displays of power.

Economic capital, however, has a lesser role to play in assemblies than does social capital. The AGM relies crucially on social capital in controlling its protocols and agenda,

which provides greater autonomy for organizers over what constitutes interactions. The source of power in conferences derives from the formation and mobilization of cultural capital in the form of philanthropic expertise, knowledge and experience. The professional identity of both organizers and attendees serves as an important source of cultural capital at conferences. Award ceremonies confer reputation, prestige and legitimacy on philanthropists involved in significant philanthropy. The structural arrangement of award ceremonies underpins the idea of "symbolic association" (Harvey *et al.*, 2011; Maclean and Harvey, 2019), and engaging in public display sets philanthropic elites apart, conferring distinction, while providing access to social and positional equals.

In other words, my research has identified elite staged philanthropic events as an important mechanism for capital conversion. Fundraisers and award ceremonies endorsed typically by wealthy elites may convert economic capital into social and symbolic capital through commitment to philanthropic causes. Conferences and assemblies attended mostly by philanthropy professionals create opportunities for converting social and cultural capital into economic capital in the form of increased charitable funds. These hidden micro-processes support Bourdieu's idea that "the truth of any interaction is never entirely to be found within the interaction as it avails itself for observation" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 16). The visible façade of elite philanthropic events hides an invisible and unstated truth: that they are in themselves a structuring-structure for the consecration of elites and hegemonic reproduction.

Dramaturgical perspectives on staged philanthropic events

Chapter 6 of my thesis posed the question *what are the frontstage and backstage performances of elite philanthropic events?* In answer, I suggest that the frontstage performances of elite philanthropic events involve what Goffman (1959, pp. 44-59) calls "idealization", generating idealized impressions, which are desirable and welcomed by the audience, and painting the event owner in the best light possible. Event organizers

represented the "officially accredited values of the society" (Goffman, 1959, p. 45), presenting themselves as highly professional, knowledgeable or generous agents identifying with particular causes at fundraisers, creating fellowship amongst existing and aspiring philanthropists at award ceremonies, forging philanthropic networks at conferences, and building commitment and solidarity at assemblies. Audiences were so absorbed that they might be heavily 'taken in' by the assumptions idealized on the frontstage. On the backstage, organizers stayed away from audiences to prepare frontstage performances in ways similar to strategists who "prepare their responses to the agendas for open meetings" and "stage-manage" the presentation of ideas (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008, p. 1412; Samra-Fredericks, 2004, 2005; Whittle *et al.*, 2020). Backstage interactions also involve the generation of dissatisfaction and criticism of frontstage performances, becoming "a wearing litany of problems, game-playing and blame-dodging" (Martin, 2014, p. 177). Guests also recognized that they might be misdirected to adopt "a dishonest and intentional misrepresentation of the 'true' situation" (Solomon *et al.*, 2013, p. 209).

My research identifies elite staged philanthropic events as riddled with contradictions, tensions and discrepancies. The point of my analysis, however, is not to reveal malfunctions or problems that are without doubt representative of many staged events in organizational life, but to underscore the "concealed practices which are incompatible with fostered impressions" (Goffman, 1959, p. 71). While idealizing stories delivered during frontstage interactions could be viewed as a type of "strategic manipulation of impressions" (Goffman, 1959, p. 90), I see it as purely part of the job that needs to be done by event organizers. The process through which certain voices were 'muted' and certain behaviours kept 'out of sight' is, I argue, "a political and power-laden process" (Whittle and Mueller, 2009, p. 139), enabling the production of idealistic visions of philanthropy. Moreover, my data show that both the 'powerless' and the 'powerful' equally have motives and incentives to handle frontstage and

backstage performances differently, resonating with the idea of James C Scott who has thoroughly examined this relationship: "[t]he offstage transcript of elites is, like its counterpart among subordinates, derivative: it consists in those gestures and words that inflect, contradict, or confirm what appears in the public transcript" (Scott, 1990, p. 10). Therefore, frontstage and backstage should be seen as relevant concepts to all actors involved in the drama (Mair and Hehenberger, 2014; Ringel, 2019; Ybema and Horvers, 2017).

In accord with Goffman's ideas, embarrassment emerges as a crucial emotion that drives interaction: event owners strive to present good impressions because they fear being embarrassed in front of their guests. Guests likewise might feel embarrassed should they feel involved in a charade. Organizers manage impressions by choreographing interactions because they want to avoid embarrassing themselves. Considering that I draw heavily on Goffmanian insights to study staged philanthropic events, it is perhaps unsurprising that I interpret their performances as fundamentally theatrical. Equally, informal interactions with my research informants, especially the local philanthropy professionals I got to know well, suggest that they themselves, at least subconsciously if not always reflexively, are aware that they are actors in a dramaturgical world.

Processual analysis of elite staged philanthropic events

Chapter 7 of my thesis posed the question *how do elite staged philanthropic events work to achieve performative purposes?* In answer, I establish that elite staged philanthropic events travel through five generic phases of conceiving, preparing, selling, performing and learning, in order to be performative. The weaving of the five phases into an unfolding staged philanthropic event "intimates a sense of the becoming of things" (Maclean *et al.*, 2011, p. 33; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Elite staged philanthropic events are fluid, dynamic entities (Bakken and Hernes, 2008; Gioia *et al.*, 2000). Organizers, on a continuous basis, make sense of what style an event should take, what template it draws on, what story is to be told, the

extent to which the event is scripted, and the metrics used to evaluate the event. Each staged event emerges and unfolds as a system of meaning within the philanthropic field. My analysis of backstage meetings and interviews underscores the role of framing (Creed *et al.*, 2002; Fairhurst and Saar, 1996; Fiss and Hirsch, 2005; Goffman, 1974) in guiding event actors in emerging plots. I have also shown how organizers rebuild frames for interpreting the event structure – a process many organizational researchers call 'reframing' (Carroll and Simpson, 2012; Reger *et al.*, 1994; Whittle *et al.*, 2015).

My data show that the simpler the staged philanthropic event, the less its audience is divided and the more the components of its performance are integrated. This applies to assemblies and award ceremonies. With 'obligatory' participation, focused and homogeneous attendees, sacred stories, and routine production conveying social and symbolic value, it is not surprising that the interaction effects of assemblies and award ceremonies are immediate and rarely deviate from the expectations of organizers and scripts. In these more 'archaic' styles of staged philanthropic events, "social hierarchies simply could issue commands, and ritualized ideological performances would provide symbolic mystification" (Alexander, 2004, p. 545). In contrast, the more complex, dynamic and differentiated the staged philanthropic event, the more components of its performances are separated, as seen in fundraisers and conferences. In these more loosely orchestrated forms of staged events, attendees and organizers are more progressive and forward-looking, and the outcome is more open-ended, contingent on real-time interaction. Typically, these philanthropic events unfold with partially agreed scripts. Because organizers cannot fully anticipate actual interactions between philanthropic elites, they do not prepare carefully woven scripts, giving event guests "plenty of scope for inventions" (Boulton, 1960, p. 183). My purpose in this thesis has been to compare and contrast the nature of different types of staged philanthropic events, to encapsulate how a performative dimension can be added to organizational perspectives.

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The role of staged events in shaping organizational fields

What, then, is *the role of staged events in the functioning, maintenance and development of organizational fields*? Based on the empirical evidence analysed in this research, I suggest that the role of staged events in organizational fields lies in the *mobilization of power and ideology to regenerate institutional arrangements*. Strategic event actors contribute resources and ideas crucial to the reproduction and perpetuation of existing infrastructures within the organizational field. Staged events should not be seen as a supplement to other more regular social gatherings. Their non-routine nature is distinctive and enables *performative* enactment of norms, value, voice, reality, relationship, power and support, among many others. With the constitution of diverse guest audiences, event organizers, as skilled agents, are driven to stage a show in the desirable and appealing form of face-to-face interaction. Fligstein's (1997) notion of social skills is important here. Event actors employ their social skills to work the room and make sense of action, and the wider public appreciation of their disinterestedness and civic mindedness legitimize their endeavours (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 389; Harvey *et al.*, 2011; Maclean *et al.*, 2015b). According to Fligstein (1997, p. 400), "if others think that one wants something and that it is narrowly for selfish purposes, then they are unlikely to try to negotiate". This is particularly true for staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy.

Moreover, I hold that staged events, just like protests and marches, play a *supporting*, almost infrastructural, but not *decisive* role in shaping organizational fields. They stand in contrast with organizational meetings, which have been identified by strategy researchers as the key locations to bring about change (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008; Whittington, 2006; Whittle *et al.*, 2020). As Hendry and Seidl (2003, p. 183) explicitly put it: "The basic function of episodes is simply to make it possible to suspend and replace structures for a certain time period". Different from strategists, staged event actors, through networks and

alliances built within the dynamics of the temporal agency, seek to influence decision-making processes, public opinion and the logic of practice in a more *subtle* and *supportive* manner.

8.3 Research contributions

To date, there has been little academic research examining the role of staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy. This thesis represents the first systematic field-wide study of its kind. It makes an original empirical contribution to the existing literatures on philanthropy and the functioning of staged events within organizational fields. Theoretically, the study takes a pioneering approach by drawing on both Bourdieusian and Goffmanian social theory to study the social micro-processes that underlie elite staged philanthropic events. The extensive research carried out to identify the structural and processual dynamics of assemblies, fundraisers, conferences and award ceremonies has made visible the role they play in the functioning, development and maintenance of the philanthropic field. More specifically, five main theoretical contributions stand out:

1. My analysis is based on the notion that there are fragile relations between structure and process, where structure is the more solid and process the more fluid. Drawing on insights from Bourdieu and Goffman, I find that elite staged philanthropic events are a form of *performative agency* connecting *entities* with *processes* and *outcomes* with *experiences*.

2. I specify an elite philanthropic event as *a non-routine class reproducing structuring-structure* operating through performative interactions within the field of power. My research shows how assemblies, fundraisers, conferences and award ceremonies reproduce both elites and field structures through the mobilization and conversion of different forms of capital.

3. I conceptualize the relations between frontstage performances in which event actors present idealized impressions and backstage work that prepares, controls, discredits,

criticizes and undermines those impressions. In doing so, I contribute to the literature on management and organization studies by developing *a dramaturgical perspective on staged events.*

4. I contribute to the process literature by identifying five generic phases through which elite staged philanthropic events unfold as *conceiving*, *preparing*, *selling*, *performing* and *learning*.

5. I move beyond the existing philanthropy literature in putting forward a new typology of elite philanthropic events, classified as *ritual performers*, *societal stabilizers*, *community navigators* and *transformational change drivers*.

8.4 Implications for practice

My research findings indicate the need for event professionals to take a more strategic approach to organizing and conducting elite philanthropic events with the proximate or ultimate goal of attracting more charitable funds from existing or potential wealthy elite donors. To achieve this goal, I offer three recommendations:

1. Organizers should recognize the considerable power held by individuals involved in elite philanthropic events. Core to the planning process is the pre-selection of high-profile attendees, and organizers should thoroughly research their positions, standing and networks in advance to make sure the event runs in their favour. Understanding the real motivation of attendees before choosing appropriate protocols and etiquettes to facilitate elite philanthropic networking is important for the success of the event.

2. Organizers may consider using a theatrical approach when conceiving elite philanthropic events to increase impact. Worth noting is that the success of an event performance depends crucially on maintaining a clear distinction between the frontstage and backstage. The polishing, preparing, controlling and discrediting act should be banished behind the scenes when guests are present.

3. Organizers should carefully tailor events rather than pursuing 'one best way' as each elite philanthropic event has its unique purpose and its own logics of structure, process and performance. Well told stories are compelling and attendees favour stories that repeat archetypal myths. The learning process also matters. The power of timely follow up by event owners should not be forgotten. While event owners often get in touch afterwards by sending a thank you email to attendees, my findings suggest that increased giving follows from effectively demonstrating positive outcomes and symbolic association of attendees with such outcomes.

8.5 Limitations and future research

My research has evident limitations. First, the elite staged philanthropic events analysed in this thesis all took place in the UK. This might restrict the applicability, relevance and implications of the research since other countries have different institutional environments and philanthropic traditions. It should be said, however, that one of the cases (the Local Conference) may be classified as an extreme case and hence especially valuable because of its exceptional standing as the first event of its kind in the world. Secondly, the primary focus of my research is on highly orchestrated, performative staged events in the conduct of elite philanthropy, potentially restricting the generalizability of my findings. Thirdly, my findings were generated mainly through analyses of observational notes, interview transcripts and documents produced by organizing committees. Such qualitative analysis is subjective, and different interpretations and conclusions may be drawn by others (Bell *et al.*, 2018; Silverman, 2016). However, during the course of my research, it became evident that there are notable similarities in cultures, societies and philanthropic traditions between the US and UK. Therefore, there are opportunities for further research to explore how elite philanthropic events operate in the US and then to generate comparative insights on philanthropic

gatherings, about which we know little from the existing literature, either theoretically or empirically.

As the study unfolded, I came to realise that staged events are not just empirical sites for research but also fulfil theoretical criteria. I intend to write a number of papers that seek to advance knowledge of staged events and their role in organizational life and wider society. The first of these will offer a dramaturgical perspective on the performativity of staged events. A second paper will focus on the ethical ambiguities manifest during the staging and performance of elite philanthropic events. A third paper will seek to advance theoretical understanding of role of staged events in the formation, governance and evolution of organizational fields.

8.6 Final thoughts

Marcus Aurelius (167) said, "[t]ime is like a river made up of the events which happen, and a violent stream; for as soon as a thing has been seen, it is carried away, and another comes in its place, and this will be carried away too". This rings true. Just as actors in the philanthropic field organize performative staged events that punctuate the continuous stream of routine daily occurrences, so the events themselves are superseded, their impacts rapidly diluted if not completely swept away. Thus, the necessity swiftly arises to repeat, recreate and restage what has gone before. The idea of structure is perhaps better understood as something regularly recreated than as something of permanent substance. For me, the fragile relationship between structure and process is endlessly fascinating. Staged philanthropic events are particularly interesting, given their fluid and sometimes unpredictable outcomes, which make their performance all the more complex, interesting and dynamic.

Over the course of writing this thesis my confidence has grown that the object of study – to better understand the role of staged events in field dynamics – is important and worthwhile. I feel that I am onto something academically important. Yet, equally, I have

grown to understand just how hard it is truly to discern the meaning of what I observe as a social scientist. At times I feel like someone who has donned a white coat and spends all day looking down a microscope at minutia in the hope of observing the social processes within events. At other times I feel like a novitiate theorist desperately trying to think beyond the compelling ideas found in the likes of Bourdieu's *The state nobility* or Goffman's *The Presentation of self in everyday life*. The overall sense I have is that my thesis is a first word not the final word, a provisional rather than definitive set of thoughts and findings on a topic of substance. Perhaps my main contribution is to have confirmed from the perspective of staged events that nothing in the world of elite philanthropy can be taken at face value. While attending events and listening to emotional speeches, I now always ask myself *why is it that inequality still exists and is even getting worse if we have so many generous philanthropists doing so many outstanding things to put the world to rights?*

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