

What is the relationship between Philanthropy, Materiality and Public Space?

This article explores the dynamic between public space and material representations of philanthropy. It adapts the conception of public space in terms of layers: physical, code and content (Lessig 2001; Németh 2012). The article discusses physical forms of philanthropy and the codified norms, processes and relationships in material representations of philanthropy (code). To this end, part one examines how gifts of buildings and the memorialisation of philanthropy embody the philanthropic dominance of public space. Part two explores how the (re)appropriation of public space(s) encapsulates what happens in, and in relation to physical manifestations of philanthropy (content). Specifically; (i) the uses of spaces (ii) deliberation in public spaces; (iii) the decolonisation of philanthropic processes and practices; and (iv) the complementarity of public space and the public sphere. The article offers a novel heuristic for philanthropy and public space that can also inform conversations between development professionals and donors, and public debate.

Philanthropy, public space, materiality

This article explores the dynamic between philanthropy and public space. In *Philanthropy and Digital Society: Blueprint*, Lucy Bernholz (2020a) calls upon philanthropists to protect characteristics of public space; for example, access, agency and interest (Benn and Gaus 1983). They are asked to: ‘protect access to information, the people’s ability to participate and the existence of digital, physical and liminal spaces that encourage pluralistic participation’ (Bernholz 2020a, p.17). This is pertinent following the COVID-19 pandemic. The spatiality of the social and economic disparities revealed by people’s experiences prompted calls for foundations to reflect on where they fund; the communities they support, and how they relate to grantees, with particular calls for active listening in/to communities and flexible funding (Orensten and Buteau 2020). This requires attention to where and how philanthropy operates in the present *and* in the past.

This article augments Bernholz’s call by addressing an important gap in our knowledge and understanding of the conceptual and material dynamics of philanthropy and public space (Németh 2012, p.814). Scholars are attentive to how philanthropy shapes public spaces through the study of place and geographies of giving (Hay and Muller 2014). This incorporates foundation initiatives which “target” particular areas or locations in urban governance and revitalisation (Thomson 2019; Pill 2019; Mack et al 2014). This literature also addresses philanthropy and place-attachment (Williamson et al 2021; Marshall et al 2018). There is less attention to place-as-locale; ‘the structured micro-sociological content of place’, that is, the environment in which we perform everyday routines and interpersonal associations (Agnew 1987, pp.25-28). Moreover, Fuentenebro and Acuto (2022) underline the need for scholars to explore how neo-liberal, entrepreneurial philanthropy affects governing in urban contexts, but they also call for a focus on ‘its impact on the city as a place’ (ibid., p.1950, my emphasis).ⁱ However, the exploration of the physical, tangible legacies of philanthropy, from buildings, to

landscapes, to monuments, remains the preserve of architects, architectural historians, and visual and material culture scholars (Kaji-O'Grady 2021; Jovanovich and Renn 2019; Agarez 2019; Prizeman 2016; Van Slyck 1995).

This article adapts the conceptualisation of public space in terms of layers; physical, code and content (Lessig 2001; Németh 2012, p.817, [Table 1](#)). My approach is underpinned by a narrative review of literature on philanthropy and public space, place, material culture and memorialisation. This is conducive to curiosity-driven research which seeks to develop the conceptualisation and theorisation of the dynamic between philanthropy and public space (Baumeister and Leary 1997, pp.312-315). [My central argument is that the theorisation of the philanthropy-public space dynamic should explore how physical forms of philanthropy codify the philanthropist's vision and approach; mediated by norms and processes surrounding the philanthropic relationship.](#) [Table 1 provides a heuristic whereby we subject physical manifestations of philanthropy \(buildings/objects/land\) to inquiry; to unearth what the philanthropist/foundation envisioned for the material gift and the relationships, conditions and circumstances surrounding the gift and codified within it. Using this heuristic as a basis for inquiry, I discuss two examples, which represent physical manifestations of the dominance of philanthropy in public space \(Lefebvre/Smith 1991\): buildings as material gifts and statues which memorialise individuals as instances of 'wrongful commemoration' \(Schulz 2019, p.167\).](#) [The heuristic is particularly timely to the discussion of the memorialisation of philanthropists in statues and/or monuments. We can draw upon these material forms to question philanthropy's role in societies as part of a contested, multi-dimensional historical memory rather than historical fact and/or heritage \(Nasar 2020, p.1224; Drayton 2019\).](#) [Table 1 also facilitates the exploration of how the physical or material forms of philanthropy become, in turn, objects and/or spaces of use and meaningful interpretation \(content\). This creates](#)

opportunities for the physicality and codification of philanthropy to be manipulated and contested through the (re)appropriation of public space(s) (Lefebvre/Smith 1991). Addressing Lucy Bernholz's (2020a) challenge to philanthropy regarding our right to, and the protection of spaces of assembly, I explore how the (re)appropriation of public space(s) entails attention to philanthropy and; (i)the uses of spaces; (ii)deliberation in public spaces; (iii)the decolonisation of philanthropic processes and practices, and (iv)the complementarity of public space and the public sphere. In conclusion, I discuss the scholarly and practical/professional implications of the exploration of philanthropy and public space.

Public Space

There are layers to the conceptualisation of public space. The notion of 'layers' is used by Lessig (2001) to explore the physicality, code and content of the virtual commons. Németh (2012, p.817) adapts Lessig's (2001) heuristic to explore how people interpret freedom and liberty in physical, material space. The *physical* layer refers to the 'medium across which communication travels.' Adapted to physical space, it concerns questions of access, aesthetics and the location of public space. The *code* refers to 'protocols, processes and programming languages' which in physical space is about the norms, 'design guidelines' and governance of public spaces. The *content* refers to the information that is conveyed, which in physical spaces denotes how spaces are used and what they come to mean and/or symbolise. The layers are mutually complementary rather than mutually exclusive (**Table 1**).

The conceptualisation of public space as a physical phenomenon is distinct from related concepts of the public sphere and the public realm (Low and Smith 2006, p.6). The physicality of public space is one of five dimensions of the publicness of public space in Varna and

Tiesdell's STAR model (ownership, control, civility, physical, animation). The physicality of public space refers to its 'macro-design', that is; 'its relationship with its hinterland, including routes into it and its connections with its surroundings (i.e. beyond the place)' (Varna and Tiesdell 2010, p.583). Animation is concerned with the 'micro-design' of the place; whose needs are met by it, and how they are met (ibid., pp.584-585). Thus, accessibility is a defining feature of public space, which embodies how people relate to each other in a space; the dynamics of who has power and exerts control, including whether they limit accessibility and what can happen in a space; and who is/whose interests are represented and catered for (Madanipour 2019, p.45; Németh and Schmidt 2011; Varna and Tiesdell 2010; Ercan 2010, pp.22-25; Kohn 2004). Discussions of the privatisation of public space address how to protect public space from encroachment by private interests and surveillance, but debates are often based on assumptions of clear-cut boundaries between public and private space(s) and stakeholders (Madanipour 2019, p.40; Németh 2012, p.812). However, the roles of non-state actors working alongside and/or in collaboration with public actors in urban design and governance, for example, has challenged assumptions about the resonance and analytic usefulness of the mutually exclusive character of the public/private dichotomy in the conceptualisation of public space (Madanipour 2019, p.40; see Ercan 2010, pp.22-25; Kohn 2004).

The concept of the public realm serves as a bridge between public space and the public sphere; the latter is articulated as 'a political concept (i.e., the politics of the public)' characterised by the bracketing of status and inequality in favour of open, rational-critical deliberation and debate (Low and Smith 2006, p.6; Habermas 1962/1991). The concepts of public space and the public sphere are mutually complementary, particularly in the animation of public space (Varna and Tiesdell 2010, pp.584-585; Madanipour 2010, p.11). Writing from a systemic view of

democracy as ‘composed of multiple and interconnected spaces of communication and contestation’, Parry et al (2020, p.198) define private space as the relationships we cultivate within our private dwellings. Parry et al (ibid.) characterise public space physically *and* in the deliberative character of the public sphere: ‘where governments or civil society organisations convene participatory practices such as citizens’ assemblies, but it is also where social movements occupy squares or hold protests’ (ibid.). Norms, practices and processes of public debate and discussion are codified in and through public spaces of deliberation and decision-making. As a defining characteristic of public space, accessibility fulfils instrumental and expressive functions (Madanipour 2010, p.10). Access to a physical space enables the performance and expression of a range of activities, including social connections and relationships (ibid.).

The dynamism of public space and the public sphere is encapsulated in how the space is used and what specific aspects of public space(s) mean and symbolise to people (i.e., the content layer). Scholars of material culture underline how material objects and meaning(s) are intertwined. They may ‘create and communicate meaning’, including the reinforcement of social and cultural norms in societies (O’Toole and Were, 2008, p.618). Monuments and markers, for example, are often indicative of societal beliefs about what is ‘worth enshrining’ and what values should be celebrated ‘through the monument’ (Smith 2011, p.1255). However, they may encompass more than a single narrative, representing rival memories of individuals and their achievements (Smith, 2011, p.1256; O’Toole and Were, 2008, p.618).

Cassegard (2014) considers the public sphere and public space to analyse bracketing and contestation as two dimensions of the publicness of the public sphere. The occupation of public

spaces, often resplendent in the theatre of symbolic gesture, artistic spectacle and demonstration may serve as an objective ‘unbracketing’ of the bracketing that is intrinsic to the organisation and operation of the public sphere. Thus, contestation implies that it is ‘only by openly challenging exclusion and inequality that genuine publicness can occur’ (Cassegard 2014, p.692; pp.694-5695). Similarly, Lefebvre/Smith (1991, p.28) as part of the discussion of the (social) production of space, argues that spaces may be either dominated or appropriated. A dominated (and dominant) space is a space that is fundamentally altered (‘invariably the realization of a master’s project’) and changing technologies and practices have a role to play in the mediation of this (Lefebvre/Smith, 1991, pp.165-166; see also, pp.29-39). However, domination can only be fully understood with reference to appropriation, which implies the modification of a space to meet the requirements and potential of the appropriating group (Lefebvre/Smith, 1991, p.165). Dominated and appropriated spaces may co-exist in harmony, but they are more likely to be part of a mutually antagonistic dynamic, that gives rise to conflict, in practice and in theoretical debate until one is victorious over the other (Lefebvre/Smith, 1991, p.166).

Drawing on this review of the concept of public space, I develop the following argument, which informs the heuristic in Table 1. Adapting Németh (2012) and Lessig’s (2001) idea of layers, the significance of philanthropy to public space pertains to the physical or material form; for example, the donation of a building, architectural or landscape design and the memorialisation of philanthropy via a monument or statue. The presence of philanthropy in public spaces is *codified* by protocols, processes and norms, which enable the philanthropist to use their resources to advance a particular representation or conceptualisation of a space. In this first part of the article, the heuristic is the basis of inquiry into two examples: the gift of buildings and the memorialisation of philanthropists in public spaces. Drawing upon Lefebvre/Smith’s

(1991) assertion that spaces may be either dominated/dominant or appropriated, I discuss how the materiality of philanthropy creates and communicates visions that invariably constitute its dominance in/over a public space. In part two, I explore how the uses and symbolic interpretation (content) of material forms of philanthropy inform the (re)appropriation of public space.

[Table 1 here]

Buildings as material gift(s)

Assessing the role of billionaire philanthropist, Eli Broad (1933-2021) in Los Angeles (LA), Smee (2021) documents how Broad's support for projects such as The Broad Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and the Disney Concert Hall, amongst others, transformed the 'cultural landscape' of LA. His interest was also in the aesthetic of LA's physical geography; part of his vision was that Grand Avenue, LA would rival Fifth Avenue, New York and the Champs Élysées, Paris (Power 2021; Jasińska and Jasiński 2021, pp.5-6). As an entrepreneurial philanthropist (Maclean et al 2021), Broad was known for his hands-on, driven approach to his philanthropic giving, underpinned by an expectation it would generate a return on his "investment" (Smee, 2 May 2021; Bermudez 2012).

There are parallels between the contemporary philanthropy of Eli Broad and the late nineteenth/early twentieth century philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) and the role of the Project and Works Department (SPO) (1957-1992) in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (established 1956). Indeed, Broad claimed to have been influenced by Andrew Carnegie (Bermudez 2012). **Drawing upon Table 1**, I posit that both philanthropists and the foundation espoused a particular vision of philanthropy that found expression in (*physical*) material form; they were attentive to the efficiency and purposes of the processes through which they gave their money away. The physical manifestation of their philanthropic giving embodies and conveys protocols and processes governing philanthropy and public space(s) (*code*).

Andrew Carnegie and Public Libraries

Carnegie's vision for the construction of public libraries evolved as part of his philanthropic philosophy. From an initial emphasis on paternalistic patronage, he envisaged philanthropy as fundamental to the reconstitution of opportunity and wealth (Van Slyck 1995; Acs and Phillips 2002). This informed the design and purposes of the public library buildings he funded and, by implication, the publicness of libraries as public spaces. A particular interpretation of the purposes of philanthropy was incorporated into their construction:

'His interest in advocating Liberty as opposed to Equality places political emphasis on the notion of public access and serves to frame its architectural interpretation with particular emphasis upon the potential experiences of the individual in his or her navigation of the public realm.' (Prizeman 2016, p.5).

The resources at Carnegie's disposal and the processes through which he gave philanthropically codified his philanthropic vision. Carnegie's resourcing of public libraries represented 'the physical embodiment of the contractual relationship between the philanthropist and the beneficiaries of his gifts, an agreement that specified and limited the recipient's obligations' (Van Slyck 1995, p.42). Similarly, Grimes (1998) documents the resources provided by Carnegie to build libraries throughout the UK and Ireland. Van Slyck (1995, p.xxvi) argues that Carnegie's insistence on involving elected officials turned the funding and roles of libraries into a 'highly charged political issue' that represented a fundamental shift in 'cultural functions' from the private domain to public life. Grimes (1998, p. 28) notes that:

'Complaints were often made that while Carnegie gave money for libraries, the maintenance of them fell heavily on the rates [the payment by citizens of one penny-per-pound for library maintenance, under the Libraries Act]. His answer was that if people were not in a position to

help themselves he did not want to help them. He believed that charity was (in most cases) corrupting.’

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation: Project and Works Department

Amongst other projects in Portugal, including the construction of the foundation’s headquarters and across public health and welfare, science, education and disaster response, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation funded more than 250 grants for construction projects in Iraq between 1956-1981 (Agarez 2019). Unlike the example of Carnegie and public libraries, the foundation’s architectural vision was a product of the ‘small-scale built environment-related bureaucracy’ that developed in the SPO department. Working in Iraq (1957-1973), the projects supported by the SPO were ensconced in the foundation’s goal to exert a form of ‘soft power’ in Iraq and to preserve the oil reserves upon which its endowment depended (Agarez 2019, pp.973-976). The SPO became ‘the technical filter’ between applicants and the foundation’s board of trustees. Moreover, as the foundation sought to have a ‘visible influence’ through large scale building projects (the Modern Arts Centre and the al-Shaab Stadium), the SPO performed further roles on the ground akin to ‘intelligence collection’ and diplomacy (Agarez 2019, p.974). Notwithstanding, the SPO found its critiques/concerns about some applications superseded by the Board’s ‘pursuit of the trust’s higher interests’ (ibid.). The significance of the SPO lies in how ‘architectural quality at large can be understood in relation to institutional frameworks and control, that is, in ways other than through the work of individuals’ (Agarez 2019, p.953). The use of philanthropic resources to realise material projects and to influence architecture may be embedded in bureaucratic application processes and programmes *and* embody a foundation’s broader vision and agenda.

The two examples illustrate the physical dimension of philanthropy and the conceptualisation of public space, which is rooted in blurred divisions of public and private space (Ercan 2010; Kohn 2004). Carnegie's vision of the public library or the projects conceived by the SPO in public service domains are constituted in private spaces yet conceived in the public interest. Hence, these initiatives embodied aspects of public space that are highly valued; that is, built on principles of accessibility and inclusiveness (Varna and Tiesdell 2010, p.579). However, the gifting of the public library and/or other architectural projects is underpinned by processes which enable the philanthropist and/or foundation, from the confines of private spaces, to exert control over the process and to potentially manipulate the political and social structures within which the project is situated. The principles that conceive of public spaces in the public interest belie the dominance of philanthropy, from conception/approach to realisation/construction. This can also inform philanthropy's legacy in public space.

Memorialisation

The philanthropist is memorialised in acts of naming buildings and/or spaces or commemorated in a monument or statue. Edward Colston (1636-1721) was commemorated by the city of Bristol, UK, including for his philanthropy, despite his management role in the Royal African Company (RAC). Nasar (2020, p.1219) describes the RAC as 'the most prominent purveyor of enslaved people in British history.' The toppling of the statue of Edward Colston on 7 June 2020 echoes the removal of a statue of Antonio Lopez y Lopez in Barcelona on 4 March 2018; a philanthropist and politician whose fortune was rooted in the slave trade with Cuba (Drayton 2019, pp.653-654). There is a campaign at Oriel College, Oxford University to remove a statue of Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902), with roots in the campaign that began at the University of Cape Town, South Africa in 2015. This resulted in the removal of a statue of Rhodes from the campus. Rhodes was a politician (Prime Minister of Cape Colony (1890-96) and mining

businessman, who also made his fortune by exploiting people through slavery and trafficking and advocated systemic racism and abuse in the British Empire (Chowdhury 2021, p.288). The analysis of these debates reveals how the physical commemoration of these individuals is embedded in structures, norms and processes that implicate philanthropy in the perpetuation of inequalities.

First, the commemoration of philanthropy in statue form, such as that of Rhodes is part of a wrongful commemoration because it represents and communicates a philanthropy built on prejudice and exploitation (Schulz 2019, p.167). Rhodes's philanthropic bequests were created 'with the purpose of creating and educating a cadre of imperial-minded males to help promote the British empire' (Knudsen and Anderson 2019, p.241). Second, Rhodes Must Fall raises debate about whether we should be beholden to our past heritage and, thus, protect it in perpetuity? Perpetuity has long been a problematic issue for philanthropy; typically discussed as whether we should be beholden to the impulses, ideas and visions of individuals long after they have passed from this world (Reich 2019, pp.58-61). A focus on monuments and statues which commemorate individuals for their philanthropy speaks to questions about how the messages these forms convey about philanthropy should be addressed? Related to this point, third, attention to processes, structures and norms that led to the commemoration of these individuals is a process of confronting the past. Schulz (2019, p. 177) argues that debates about whether statues such as those discussed here should be removed or not is dependent on whether debates are part of 'a wider process of working through the past that the commemoration may be connected to.'

Some scholars and commentators believe that statues like those discussed above should remain in place as a focal point for discussion and debate; as discussed in Knudsen and Anderson

(2019, p.242) and Drayton (2019, p.664). Drayton (2019, p.665) states that arguments to keep statues and monuments belie a myth that the past is ‘monolithic and uncontested’, whereas the salient point is ‘which past the present holds up for examination.’ Moreover, Nasar (2020, p.1224) reminds us that statues are not a reflection of historical fact, but rather ‘historical memory, which is contingent, temporally remote and subject to contestation’ (ibid.). To paraphrase Nasar (2020) the removal of statues like that of Edward Colston provides a ‘learning opportunity’ to reflect on how pasts are negotiated. This can be used to establish key learnings for the present and it requires attention to philanthropy as an essentially contested concept (Daly 2012).

A feature of the concept of philanthropy’s open character is that its meaning changes over time and within discourses and debates (ibid.). In recognising these statues as a point of historical memory rather than fact and/or heritage, thus, open to contestation and contingent, the statue form for example, becomes a basis upon which we can inquire about how much of what we know and accept about philanthropy has changed? The physical markers of a philanthropy remembered are neither fact nor frozen in time. Rather, they are the tipping point for the confrontation of philanthropy’s connections with exploitation, inequalities and injustice in the past and the launchpad for the investigation of the resonance of these themes in the present (McGoey and Thiel 2018; McGoey 2012). Statues such as those of the figures mentioned above raise important questions about the provenance of prominent philanthropic fortunes today, especially those which shape our public spaces through their involvement in specific regions and communities (McGoey and Thiel 2018). Using the material form to work through philanthropy’s past can be framed by the openness of the concept to alteration and critical reflection about its connections to institutional racism and structural inequalities to inform a more transformative vision of philanthropy’s future.

Philanthropy and the re-appropriation of public space

The heuristic outlined in Table 1 invites us to think about the dimensions of the dynamic between philanthropy and public space as form, code and content. The two examples discussed above encapsulate how physical manifestations of philanthropy embody and codify the philanthropic relationship and the vision of the donor. Attention to appropriation (Lefebvre/Smith 1991) compels us to contemplate alternative forms that philanthropy can take in public spaces. This underlines how key “messages” codified in philanthropic relationships and donor visions are modified and/or contested, including via the appropriation of public space(s) as a sphere of dialogue and participation. This is a third and salient part of the dynamic between philanthropy and public space, which underlines the significance of the content layer.

First, public spaces dominated by philanthropy are appropriated as part of their everyday use by individuals. Designers or architects, for example, may also prompt discussion about the use and animation of a space (Kaji-O’Grady 2021; Prizeman et al 2018). The agency exhibited by individuals in public spaces is part of their routines, habits and engagements (Lefebvre/Smith 1991, p.28). The gift of financial resources may also be complemented by individuals’ gift of time through volunteering to broaden what philanthropy means to a space (Warren 2014). Van Slyck (1995, pp.40-41) discusses how the public libraries funded by Carnegie were rooted in ‘contested ground.’ Despite Carnegie’s specific vision in relation to the public libraries, the ways in which libraries were used varied in different contexts and often provided fertile soil for collective gatherings that forged connections between individuals, though not in the name of progress.

Second, the appropriation of public space can be mediated by foundations if/as they seek to redress the dynamics of power relationships inherent in philanthropy. Kraeger (2021, p.2) calls for an emphasis on deliberation which will expand the range and depth of knowledge and experiences that foundations hear from communities. She suggests that philanthropy: ‘move beyond the relational to being embedded and engaged with humility and intentionality’ (Kraeger 2021, p.2; Orensten and Buteau 2020, pp.9-10). The mediating role of philanthropy in the appropriation of public space considers how the public spaces available to citizens are accessible, as well as whether they can be used to facilitate the exercise of their agency and interests. For example, MacKenzie (2020, p.578) discusses how foundations might adopt participatory budgeting (PB) models, suggesting that PB may be particularly suited to foundations that work in spatially defined areas, though adaptable to wider contexts too. As philanthropic individuals and foundations play prominent, proactive leadership roles in public/urban governance, the risk is that the appropriation of public spaces is crowded out by the dominance of philanthropy (Reckhow et al 2020; Thomson 2019). It may also mean that, however well-intentioned the donation, if it is driven by the philanthropist’s interests and aspirations rather than institutional needs, ‘philanthropy re-shapes environments according to the social and political values of the plutocracy’ (Kaji-O’Grady 2021, p.19). The exploration of spatially-driven/grounded models that philanthropy can use to mediate its influence and enhance the roles of citizens, for example, in decision-making processes, is a salient part of the appropriation of public space.

Third, the removal of any statues that are part of a wrongful commemoration of individuals for their philanthropy should be part of a ‘continuous process’ which enables individuals to liberate themselves from the legacies of colonialism and neo-colonial processes (Chowdhury 2021, p.290). Chowdhury (ibid., p.294) argues that:

‘If colonization means imposing an ideology, a culture or a system that takes away people’s freedom to think and act freely and disobediently, decolonisation of a space means liberating someone’s self from mental and physical captivity.’

During the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests of 2020, Buteau and Orensten (2020, p.1) argue that foundations were compelled to confront ‘in a deeper way than perhaps they had before, with anti-Black racism and what it means for their work now and in the future’ (Jung et al 2022; Irfan 2021). Edgar Villanueva (2018) discusses how attention to (de)colonisation compels the philanthropic realm to confront racial exploitation and divisions embedded in white supremacy, saviour complexes and internalised oppression in the (institutional) world of philanthropy, which contributes to social division and instability. Philanthropic bodies engage in critical reflection and action that drives racial equity/equity in areas such as evaluation practices (Dean-Coffey 2018) and through internal reflection and culture change (Azevedo et al 2021; Buteau and Orensten 2020, pp.15-19; Young et al 2017). However, Jung et al (2022, p.9) found that some foundations’ responses to the murder of Mr. George Floyd and the BLM movement communicated both ‘racist (assimilationist and non-racist) messages.’ Although foundations state a commitment to racial equity, as part of an assimilationist approach, they also ‘covertly convey the notion of Black communities’ inferiority as supporting and helping Black people’ (ibid.). Moreover, non-racist communications focus on equity, diversity and inclusion, but at the expense of serious consideration of institutional and systemic racism (op. cit.). Jung et al’s (2022) study underlines how the removal of wrongfully commemorated material representations and symbols of philanthropy should be part of anti-racist discussions and processes if the decolonisation of space is to complement the decolonisation of ideologies and practices as part of an anti-racism movement.

Finally, Bernholz (2020a; 2020b) argues that philanthropy has a role to play in protecting spaces of assembly and individuals' right to assembly from the privatisation and surveillance of public spaces. My focus has been on the form, code(s) and content of public space(s) and philanthropy. Bernholz (2020a, p.27) underlines how the 'power relationships' in digital technologies are reproduced in physical spaces:

'These dynamics include the challenges of instituting public oversight of privatised infrastructure, opaque product designs that determine who sees what and whom, and "spaces" that are maximised for profit instead of participation, equitable access, personal safety or collective deliberation.' (Bernholz 2020b, p.14).

This argument encapsulates the dynamic proposed by Cassegard (2014) between public space and the public sphere. When philanthropic funding becomes part of social movements' resource base, they may disperse from public spaces of contestation and occupation to official channels of advocacy, including online (Parmer and Choudhury 2020). The risk is that philanthropy brackets the scope and depth of debate and participation and limits the opportunities for the contestation of ideas and visions purported by philanthropy in/for public space. Notwithstanding, Bernholz (2020a; 2020b) envisages philanthropy as part of the solution to the (re)appropriation of public space in physical and virtual form. This involves activities from advancing expert-led understanding of digital information gathering and processing; to the exploration of how/to what extent assembly is impacted by digital infrastructures, and equally, how spaces of assembly can be protected from their encroachment. Philanthropy could become a more visible and vocal advocate for public policies that support people's right to gather together and have agency over resources, and how information about their activities is monitored and used (Bernholz 2020a, pp.30-31). This requires that

philanthropy, reviewing its approaches and positioning in relation to public space unbrackets the public sphere and embraces it as a sphere of contestation that plays out in public spaces, both physical and online.

Conclusion

The adaptation of Lessig (2001) and Németh's (2012) conceptualisation of layers of public space is a heuristic for the exploration of the multi-faceted, mutually complementary philanthropy-public space dynamic. The examples discussed in this article, from Carnegie and public libraries; to the SPO in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; and the instances of wrongful commemoration of philanthropic giving show how physical manifestations are part of the conceptualisation of philanthropy, *and* the contestability of philanthropy. Furthermore, the heuristic (Table 1) proposes layers (physical, code and content), firstly, as a basis for articulating how philanthropy occupies public space(s); the provenance of the gift and the philanthropic relationship, including the significance of the philanthropist's vision for a building/object/piece of land, and any conditions surrounding the philanthropic gift. It also suggests how we might capture the evolution of the physical gift over time and opportunities for (re)appropriation by users, including the perpetuation of alternative interpretations of the gift. Second, on this basis, the heuristic prompts curiosity as it facilitates and fosters inquiry about how the conceptual and material are intertwined in debates about philanthropy's past, present and future. Focusing on different contexts, future research could explore the physicality, codification and content of philanthropy in public spaces; for example, using the mutual complementarity of each component to explore the politics of domination and/or (re)appropriation of philanthropy in public space(s) (Lefebvre/Smith 1991). The analytic usefulness of the heuristic could be extended via the adoption of different methodologies. For example, mobile methodologies such as walking interviews may capture people's interactions,

perspectives and experiences of material forms and representations of philanthropy (Daly and Allen 2021). Approaches from other disciplines, for instance, arts-based research have the potential to unearth insights into philanthropy and the material world.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, the article marries two sets of literature that have not been analysed in tandem before. It illustrates the potential for theoretical and methodological insights from urban design, material and visual culture and architectural history to show how inter-disciplinarity can enrich the study of philanthropy. Philanthropy scholars can make richer contributions to topical debates about the politics of memorialisation and the role of (entrepreneurial) philanthropists in urban design and planning.

Table 1 encourages a conversation between development professionals and philanthropists that echoes calls for more deliberation in philanthropic relationships (Kraeger 2021). It can be used by development professionals to organise their discussions with donors about the substantive implications of material gifts, such as buildings, for the *whole* spectrum of an organisation's needs, mission and goals (Kaji-O'Grady 2021). Attention to form (simply, what do you want to build/donate?), code and content can be used to orient the donor (and the recipient) to the nature (and conditions) of the philanthropic relationship that will inform the gift; how it will be perceived and used by people and/or the recipient institution/organisation, and its potential for appropriation to serve a different set of needs and visions (what does it mean to you? What do you think it will mean to others and for the institution/organisation? How will it be used; For what purposes?). Future practice-oriented research could explore the extent to which the heuristic is the basis for clear, if simple questions, which intertwine the material gift with the codification of resources and relationships that are mutually complementary to its potential symbolism, use and interpretation. The heuristic, in turn, has the potential to shape philanthropy's role as advocate in the protection of public space, physically and virtually, and

debate about philanthropy's role in wrongful commemoration and its future contribution to anti-racism. For scholars and practitioners alike, taking up the mantle to address calls for introspection and change, including to protect public spaces, attention to the conceptual and material dynamic between philanthropy and public space will be crucial.

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ⁱ Entrepreneurial philanthropy is a philanthropy which seeks to bring about transformation through the application of business knowledge and practices, with an emphasis on partnership working and outcome driven processes, whose success demands a return on investment (Maclean et al 2021).

ⁱⁱ On a previous project [details withheld for review] I collaborated with [name withheld for review] which used arts-based research to explore the dynamics of place and philanthropy. Engaging with historic and contemporary sites of philanthropy, the project produced artistic works including a handmade artist's book; a film and an exhibition of the book, photographs and objects/artefacts. In developing the artworks, the artist engaged with, and responded to my writing about the concept of philanthropy and its roles in the prevalent policy context, as well as broader literature on philanthropic giving. See: [website withheld for review]