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Resourcing Global LGBTI Movements: Systems Philanthropy for Social Justice

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ABSTRACT

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Foundations seeking to have an impact on the most intractable of problems have spent the last half century experimenting with ways to become more strategic in their efforts. Though commendable, the resultant growth of the strategic philanthropy movement has instead become self-limiting, too often unable to grasp the true complexity of social change and therefore remaining inadequate to address it. In response, this thesis reviews the expanding literature of systems thinking, specifically excavating the contribution of social systems methodologies to the design of philanthropic portfolios. Global foundation grantmaking regarding the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex (LGBTI) communities is presented as a praxis in this respect. Comparing the theory of systems philanthropy with the evolving practice of LGBTI funders demonstrates the extent to which complex problems require a less rigid approach—one more attuned to the lifecycle of emergent solutions, a networked landscape, and the necessity of strategic decisionmaking being located on the frontlines rather than in the boardroom.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, global engagement on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex (LGBTI) people has begun to see a complete reversal. These individuals, once universally relegated to the periphery or the subversive, are increasingly coming out on the world stage, and in many contexts there has been discernible progress toward their full recognition and inclusion in society. Paramount to this shift in attitudes is the growing resourcing of LGBTI movements, and over the same time period we have seen a correlative increase in both the number of funders contributing to LGBTI human rights causes as well as the total amount of funding available. It is in many ways owing to this financial support that organizations working around the world to challenge the status quo have arisen and thrived. Yet, with ever more actors emerging to demand human rights regardless of their non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), there is a need to grapple not only with materially reaching those requiring investment, but also the obligation to leverage the available funds to their maximum potential so as to magnify the impact of the resources at hand.

Philanthropy writ large has long struggled to find solutions to this challenge of needs increasing faster than pools of funding, and many of the leading funders across various sectors of social change have turned to the practice of strategic philanthropy in that regard—a particular methodology which promises improved outcomes through a renewed attention to portfolio design. While in many instances strategic philanthropy has been sufficient, this thesis will argue nevertheless that it does not appear to be an appropriate nor an effective means when confronted with problems of significant complexity. Instead, the following research presents a theoretical framework deriving from the study of systems thinking, contending that truly

strategic philanthropy must abandon its regimented methods borne from business in favor of tactics that are more attuned to the lifecycle of emergent solutions, a networked landscape, and the necessity of strategic decisionmaking being located on the frontlines rather than in the board room. The questions guiding this research include: What fundamentals of systems theory are relevant to the field of social change? In what ways does the complex global movement advancing human rights for LGBTI people manifest as a system? And, finally, how are funders engaging with that system—not only by investing in individual projects and organizations, but also by preserving the ability of the system itself to adapt and respond to changing circumstances? Applying a systems perspective to examine the flow of resources from some of the largest global funders to the frontlines of LGBTI movements ultimately demonstrates the extent to which funders of LGBTI human rights are pursuing systemic change, in turn revealing a set of aligning principles for what a systems strategy might entail for this sector. Systems philanthropy thus offers funders a means to embrace rather than erase the complexity at the root of violent persecution and discrimination, increasing their impact through a greater understanding of the forces at play and the leverage points that can change entire landscapes.

The structure of this research is as follows: In the theoretical review, the practice of modern philanthropy in terms of its prevailing ideology—strategic philanthropy—is laid bare and exposed for its inability to address complex problems. A discussion of systems theory, systems change, and the literature dictating the mechanisms underlying social systems then coalesces with an examination of the growing body of research on systems philanthropy, detailing how funders can achieve large scale systems change through a different manner of thinking, though perhaps not entirely different tools. The subsequent analysis revives the discussion of systems

philanthropy to determine whether the top global funders of LGBTI issues are already manifesting its methods. It accounts for the landscape of investing in this thematic area, excavates funders' understandings of the scope of the field itself, and uncovers linkages between the leverage points proposed by systems philanthropy and current strategies being undertaken. Examples of several innovative projects serve as praxes bridging systems philosophy with the real practice of international grantmaking regarding complex themes and controversial populations. The final discussion debates the added value of systems philanthropy to funders of LGBTI issues and suggests some further research questions which would expand the scope of this work to engage a wider ecosystem and more diverse set of donor mechanisms working to resource meaningful change for LGBTI people around the world.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Strategic Philanthropy.

The origins of modern philanthropy and foundations find their roots in the 18th and 19th centuries when charities were established to address the ongoing suffering of the growing working class. These early institutions focused on activities such as funding orphanages, workhouses, and settlement houses, striving to alleviate the scourge of poverty through the delivery of services in the absence of an adequate welfare state.[1] It was later during the Industrial Revolution that this landscape started to change, as the success of entrepreneurial figures including Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Henry Ford led to an amassment of private wealth once unheard of. Carnegie himself is credited by many as the founder of modern

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[1] Bigham, J.; Karmali, F.; and Rundle, J. "The Evolving Role of Philanthropy in Global Problem Solving". Global Solution Network. 2016. Pg. 4.

philanthropy, his *Gospel of Wealth* issuing a call to action for the wealthy to commit to the betterment of their fellow men:

> *This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: To set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community—the man of wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.[2]*

While this statement might not find the same hospitable reception today, philanthropy and the foundations which perform it have stayed true to Carnegie's basic mission over recent decades, overarchingly working to improve the conditions of communities around the world with the finances at their disposal. Nevertheless and despite both the best intentions and the formidable funds available, "their resources often pale in comparison to the system that they are attempting to influence. Thus, there is a need to think through how best to leverage those assets."[3] Foundations seeking to address the most stubborn of problems need more than money to facilitate large scale change. As one might expect, the market which generated these vast finances answered this demand for a solution with what the market knows best.

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[2] Andrew Carnegie, qtd. in Bigham, et al. *supra* 1 at 4.
[3] Ferris, James M. and Williams, Nicolas. "Foundation Strategy for Social Impact: A System Change Perspective". N*onprofit Policy Forum*: vol. 1, iss. 1, art 4. 2010. Pg. 17.

Starting in the 1990s and early 2000s and inspired by books such as *Money Well Spent*[4], *Give Smart*[5], and *Giving Well*[6], modern philanthropists made rich by business began to leverage this same acumen and managerial prowess in launching a new breed of foundations. Whereas early charity had addressed the symptoms of suffering, the burgeoning field of strategic philanthropy now sought to take aim at the sources of these common ills with a different, yet already honed, sense of rigor: "They engage in visioning processes, create a mission statement, determine areas of program priority, engage in strategic planning, and adopt statements of values, principles, and ethics."[7] This unsurprisingly led to an essential shift in the relationship of funders and their beneficiaries, as "checkbook charity" was replaced with a new code of conduct wherein grantmakers "moved from a responsive relationship with their grantee communities to a position that assumes more responsibility for identifying and framing problems, as well as for designing strategies to address them."[8] The crusade toward the optimization and efficiency of foundations over the past decade has thus driven a professionalization of philanthropic practice itself in which the effort to improve lives is now formalized through logic models, performance metrics, indicators, and dashboards. Yet it is in this process of planning and evaluation that we uncover an inconvenient truth at the heart of strategic philanthropy, as "these elements alone

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[4] Brest, Paul, and Harvey, Hal. *Money Well Spent: A Strategic Plan for Smart Philanthropy*. New York: Bloomberg. 2008.

[5] Tierney, Thomas J. and Fleishman, Joel L. *Give Smart: Philanthropy That Gets Results*. New York: Public Affairs. 2012.

[6] Illingworth, Patricia M. L., Thomas Pogge, and Wenar, Leif. *Giving Well: The Ethics of Philanthropy*. New York: Oxford UP. 2012.

[7] Patton, Michael Quinn; Foote, Nathaniel; and Radner, James. "A Foundation's Theory of Philanthropy: What It Is, What It Provides, How to Do It." *Foundation Review*: vol. 7, iss. 4, art. 4. 2015. Pg. 8

[8] Patrizi, Patricia; Thompson, Elizabeth Hyde; Coffman, Julia; and Beer, Tanya. "Eyes Wide Open: Learning as Strategy Under Conditions of Complexity and Uncertainty". *Foundation Review*: vol 5, iss. 3. 2013. Pg. 50.

do not make foundations strategic, nor are they enough for strategic philanthropy."[9] In stark

contrast to the idealism it espouses and the return on investments it promises, the model of

strategic philanthropy widely adopted by today's foundations has on the contrary in many

respects merely become another industry inherently limited by the constraints of its dogmatic

business principles. All foundations ought to be strategic in their efforts, no doubt, however the

pressure on foundation staff to produce theories of change and accompanying indicators has

obscured the flaws of planning practice in itself, and impact has suffered as a result.

Quite removed from its ideal, the strategic process of many foundations has largely

comprised of professionals and experts working in isolation "to portray strategy as simple,

certain, and under control" for the purpose of communicating to the board of directors and

relevant stakeholders more so than beneficiaries.[10] This means that "[i]ncreasingly, those with

society's greatest advantages and means decide what is best for the poor and the marginalized,

rather than these disadvantaged groups and the grassroots leaders and institutions that work

most closely with them."[11] The static product of these program team meetings is then either

imposed top-down or marketed through a Request for Proposals process, creating relationship

in which "[g]rantees are treated like employees who are hired to implement a predetermined

strategy" rather than fostering relationships around a shared vision.[12] This "strategic

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[9] Patrizi, Patricia and Thompson, Elizabeth Heid. "Beyond the Veneer of Strategic Philanthropy. *Foundation Review*: vol. 2, iss. 3. 2011. Pg. 52.
[10] Patrizi, et al. *supra* 8 at 54.
[11] Ramos, Henry A.J. "Shortcomings of Modern Philanthropy." National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. 2015.
[12] Darling, Marilyn; Guber, Heidi; Smith, Jillaine; and Stiles, James. "Emergent Learning: A Framework for Whole-System Strategy, Learning, and Adaptation." *Foundation Review*: vol. 8, iss. 1, art. 8. 2016. Pg. 62.

programming"[13], fundamentally relying upon linear causality, punishes adaptation by those on the ground, recording it as either unfounded deviation from or failure to implement the strategic plan. Any inherent capacity for innovation is therefore stifled in this mechanical process, and it is because of this that in 2014 some of largest figureheads behind the doctrine of "strategic philanthropy" publicly admitted that a new method of practice must be found: "We have now come to the conclusion that if funders are to make greater progress in meeting society's urgent challenges, they must move beyond today's rigid and predictive model of strategy to a more nuanced model of emergent strategy that better aligns with the complex nature of social progress."[14]

Systems, Complexity, and the Lifecycle of Emergence.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy, an Australian biologist, offers a concise reprimand of the simple logic sought after by traditional methods of strategic planning: "In one way or another, we are forced to deal with complexities, with 'wholes' or 'systems,' in all fields of knowledge."[15] The essential perspective of systems theory he presents here is in some manner purely a frank acknowledgement of what we each already know and probably take for granted—that "we seem to be victims of 'historical forces'... Events seem to involve more than just individual decisions and actions and to be determined more by socio-cultural 'systems,' be these prejudices, ideologies, pressure groups, social trends, growth and decay of civilizations, or what not."[16] His

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[13] Mintzberg, Henry. "Rethinking Strategic Planning Part II: New Roles for Planners". *Long Range Planning*: vol. 27, no. 3. 1994. Pg. 2.

[14] Kania, John; Kramer, Mark; and Russell, Patty. "Strategic Philanthropy for a Complex World". *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Summer 2014.

[15] von Bertalanffy, Ludwig. *General System Theory* (English Translation). New York: George Braziller. 1968. Pg. 5.

[16] von Bertalanffy *supra* 15 at 8.

general system theory notwithstanding has gone on to spark a revolution in thought that continues to this day, and every time his premise is applied to a new system in pursuit of unveiling its complexity an entirely new field is born. This interdisciplinarity clearly was von Bertalanffy's intention, as general system theory set out to "discover the laws that apply to any system, whether it be a living organism, the network of life, a society, an economy, or a language."[17] In just 50 years' time, there are now thousands[18] of different applications of systems theory encompassing fields from biology to cybernetics to philosophy, which has resulted in some skeptics decrying it as "an unwieldy agglomeration of ideas from numerous intellectual traditions."[19] Even so, many have learned the hard way that the real-world systems we seek to influence "seldom correspond with our desire for simplistic, hierarchical, and linear explanations."[20] Human rights funders know all too well how difficult it can be to change a world which resists at every turn. A study of systems theory therefore offers a unique perspective worth consideration in our attempt to find solutions to violence and discrimination.

To begin at the roots of systems theory, we find across every discipline a common truth— that "the fundamental problem of today is that of organized complexity."[21] This challenge is by no means new, however, and for hundreds of years our attempts to understand the many

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[17] Lilienfeld, Robert. "Systems Theory as an Ideology". *Social Research*: vol. 42, no. 4. 1975. Pg. 640.
[18] Schwarz, Eric; Hadorn, Benjamin; *inter alia*. "Some Streams Of Systemic Thought". Cybertech Engineering. 30 December 2016. Web. 31 Dec. 2016. This on-going mapping attempt by various researchers has networked thousands of streams of thought deriving from systems theory spanning the fields of mathematics, physics, computer science, engineering, cybernetics, systemics, biology, ecology, sociology, and philosophy.
[19] Cabrera, Derek; Laura Colosi; and Lobdell, Claire. *Evaluation and Program Planning*: vol. 31, iss. 3. 2008. Pg. 302.
[20] Cabrera, Derek and Cabrera, Laura. *Systems Thinking Made Simple: New Hope for Solving Wicked Problems*. Odyssean Press. 2015. Pg. 12.
[21] von Bertalanffy *supra* 15 at 34.

complexities of the world has led us strictly to the methods and practice of science: "From a very early age, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This apparently makes complex tasks and subjects more manageable, but we pay a hidden, enormous price."[22] As a theory of "wholes", systems theory and systems thinking inherently take the opposite perspective—that the only way to truly comprehend complex systems is a process of synthesis, not analysis. Rather than convincing ourselves that the whole is merely the sum of its parts, systems thinking redirects our focus and offers us a "framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static 'snapshots.'"[23] The complex whole, as a *complex* of interrelationships, has a different nature than the parts which comprise it, and this is key in determining how we influence systems, wherever and whatever they may be. Systems theory thus "can help us better understand the social constructs we interact with, the machines we use, and the environment we live in. This allows us to optimize them if possible or to be more adaptable in situations which we cannot change."[24]

In confronting the challenges of modern society, we must first acknowledge that there is a clear difference between systems which are mechanical—closed systems, such as the internal workings of an automobile—and those that are not: "[Y]ou cannot conceive of a living organism, not to speak of behavior and human society, without taking into account what variously and rather loosely is called adaptiveness, purposiveness, goal-seeking and the like."[25] On the

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[22] Senge, Peter. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency. 1990. Pg. 3.
[23] Senge *supra* 22 at 68.
[24] Ghosh, Asish. *Dynamic Systems for Everyone: Understanding How Our World Works*. New York: Springer. 2015. Pg. 9.
[25] von Bertalanffy *supra* 15 at 45.

contrary, many of the complex systems that we observe today—including both violence and persecution as well as human rights and social justice—are open, made up of a dense network of interactions and relationships that do not operate in a predictable manner, even on the level of an individual component. It should be no surprise to point out that "[h]uman society is not a community of ants or termites, governed by inherited instinct and controlled by the laws of the superordinate whole; it is based upon the achievements of the individual and is doomed if the individual is made a cog in the social machine."[26] This leads us to consider a particular type of system—a *complex adaptive system*—which is one resulting from "independent agents operating on simple rules that, based on the collective dynamics among the agents, cause the global behavior of the system to emerge."[27] Social systems theory arises from this premise, which has spawned a wide range of literature in the social sciences, including philosophy and sociology. It would be impossible to review the hundreds of threads in this realm of thought, but, for the purposes of this research, the fundamental argument is that "[t]he root causes of a chronic, complex problem can be found in its underlying systems structure—the many circular, interdependent, and sometimes time-delayed relationships among its parts."[28] Achieving human rights accordingly requires targeting the structure of the processes undermining them, not individual processes *per se*. The following is a brief[29] review of some of these basic attributes of

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[26] von Bertalanffy *supra 15* at 52-53.

[27] Cabrera, et al. *supra* 20 at 165.

[28] Stroh, David P. *Systems Thinking for Social Change: A Practical Guide to Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results*. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing. 2015. Pg 39.

[29] Systems theory broadly and social systems theory in particular presents a field of knowledge not possibly reduced to just a few components, however here I include some of the basic pieces that are most relevant to the work at hand. By no means is this meant to be a comprehensive overview of social systems.

complex adaptive systems in order to frame the remaining discussion:

Mental Models. As a mantra, systems thinking foremost teaches us that "[p]roblems are not divorced from the way we think about them."[30] This much should be obvious in terms of human rights, as exclusion and abuses typically stem from entrenched feelings of prejudice and discrimination. Mental models such as these that we build of our world and the challenges within it derive from our particular perspectives and breadths of knowledge, which inevitably make them imperfect: "The problems with mental models lie not in whether they are right or wrong— by definition, all models are simplifications."[31] While our mental models can and do change when confronted with new information, and we are capable of leveraging multiple mental models at any given time, the first step to approaching something from the standpoint of systems thinking is to become aware of the mental models we have formed and the complexities that are obscured within them. This then offers us the opportunity to build new mental models that "better align with real-world systems than those created under a non-systems thinking approach."[32]

Boundaries. Jay Forrester[33], himself a titan among systems theorists, states that "[f]ormulating a model of a system should start from the question 'Where is the boundary that encompasses the smallest number of components, within which the dynamic behavior under study is generated?'"[34] This step of delineation is inherently fraught, as a delicate balance needs

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[30] Cabrera, et al. *supra* 20 at 13.
[31] Senge *supra* 22 at 176.
[32] Cabrera, et al. *supra* 20 at 35.
[33] Jay Forrester spent many years at the MIT Sloan School of Management teaching computer science and systems engineering and was one of the foremost experts in systems thought. I return to review some of his critiques of its contemporary manifestations in my discussion and conclusion. He unfortunately died during the research of this thesis.
[34] Forrester, Jay Wright. *Principles of Systems*. Waltham, MA: Pegasus Communications, Inc.. 1999. Pg. 63.

to be maintained: the greater the number of components, the more complex the model becomes, and thus the most important actors, rules, and interactions risk being obscured. However, the fewer pieces included, the more likely that exogenous factors of unforeseen influence may be overlooked.[35] Setting boundaries as a result of this often calls for collaboration, as "[f]rank conversations may be needed to negotiate where the boundary of a system lies, or in other words, who and what are involved in the problem and the solution."[36] Open systems further complicate this step, as boundaries may in fact be fluid rather than fixed, requiring a constant sensing of how those lines are being altered. Here, then, systems thinking calls for mental flexibility—"the willingness to redraw boundaries, to notice that a system has shifted into a new mode, to see how to redesign structure..."[37] This too lends well to human rights, which, though purportedly universal, are applied unevenly. Interventions seeking to protect human rights inevitably must decide *whose* human rights are in question.

Feedback. With the boundaries drawn, the basic structural elements of systems can be determined, which are feedback loops. Systems are made up of many feedback loops, and these processes are what cause their dynamic and oftentimes unpredictable behavior. There are two types of feedback: reinforcing and balancing. Reinforcing feedback loops drive the momentum within systems, which can be either positive or negative, depending on one's perspective. Oftentimes social systems theorists refer to these as either "virtuous" or "vicious" cycles, as reinforcing feedback loops "explain[] the development of both engines of growth or flywheels as

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[35] Ferris, et al. *supra* 3 at 6-7.
[36] Abercrombie, R.; Harries, E.; and Wharton, R. "Systems change: A guide on what it is and how to do it". New Philanthropy Capital. 2015. Pg. 8.
[37] Meadows, Donella. "Dancing with Systems". *The Systems Thinker*: vol. 13, no 2. Pegasus Publishing. March 2002. Pg 3.

well as spiraling deterioration."[38] For human rights, singular victories can produce many more opportunities, but abuses can also manifest in a slippery slope. Balancing feedback loops, on the contrary, are often more challenging to identify, as they work to offset change in the system to seek a steady state or equilibrium. Changing these processes is typically central to changing the system itself since balancing processes "maintain[] the status quo, even when all participants want change."[39]

   Delays. The next building block of systems is a characteristic of each of these feedback processes: "Virtually all feedback processes have some form of delay."[40] Understanding the differential delays between various feedback processes of a system contributes considerably to the dynamic nature of the system as a whole. There are four types of delays: Physical delays relate to the "time it takes for actual 'stuff' to move from one place to the other or to change from one state to another"; transactional delays pertain to the time it takes per individual interaction—such as "a phone call or a series of contract negotiations"; informational delays measure the time it takes to transmit and process information, as "transmission does not necessarily equal communication"; and perceptual delays occur due to deeply-seated understandings that, even when confronted with new information, "don't necessarily shift as easily."[41] Failing to understand the interaction between feedback delays within a system can be troublesome, as pushing a system to change despite these conditions "produces instability and oscillation, instead of moving you more quickly toward your goal."[42]

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[38] Stroh *supra* 28 at 45.
[39] Senge *supra* 22 at 88.
[40] Senge *supra* 22 at 89.
[41] Kim, Daniel. "Introduction to Systems Thinking". Pegasus Communications. 1999. Pg. 11.
[42] Senge *supra* 22 at 91.

Emergence. The dynamic nature of a complex adaptive system lies not in its boundaries, feedbacks, nor how we perceive of these, but in the emergent phenomena of the system as a whole. These have the following characteristics: "they exert much more power than the sum of their parts; they always possess new capacities different from the local actions that engendered them; [and] they always surprise us by their appearance."[43] Emergence therefore describes how the patterns of interactions within a system contribute to something even more sophisticated and profound than any of the individual components or relationships between these individual components could create. Both human rights and discrimination in this sense are emergent, as they represent not just individual interactions, but rather characteristics of entire social systems. It is through intentionally intervening in this process and timeline of emergence that whole systems can be influenced, which leads us to a new entrypoint and strategy in social change: "By applying the lessons of living systems and working intentionally with emergence and its lifecycle, we are demonstrating how local social innovation can be taken to scale and provide solutions to many of the world's most intractable issues."[44]

Systems Philanthropy.

While not all philanthropic initiatives set out to solve the biggest nor the most challenging problems, many do purport to strive toward large scale social change. Strategic philanthropy we now realize has fallen short of this goal by relying too heavily upon formulaic planning and assessment, subsequently finding itself unable to cope with an increasingly complex world. Drawing upon the fundamentals of systems thinking, the growing practice of systems

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[43] Wheatley, Margaret and Frieze, Deborah. "Lifecycle of Emergence: Using Emergence to Take Social Innovation to Scale". *Cosmos*: vol. XIV, no. 2. Spring/Summer 2015. Pg. 46.
[44] Wheatley, et al. *supra* 43 at 45.

philanthropy on the other hand encourages foundations to shift away from this rigid theory of *change* model toward a new theory of *philanthropy*, which "in contrast, concentrates less on the causal pathways that lead to desired results within a community and more on how a foundation contributes to the success of other stakeholders in the community."[45] This presents grantmakers and foundation leadership with a different way of thinking, as the transformed mindset calls on foundations "to take complex dynamics into account, anticipate resistance to change, and tailor best practices to specific situations."[46] Systems philanthropy invests in strategies that are less about meeting thresholds and replicating model programs and more about "working to create the space where people living with the problem can come together to tell the truth, think more deeply about what is really happening, explore options beyond popular thinking, and search for higher leverage changes through progressive cycles of action and reflection and learning over time."[47] By shifting focus to the complex adaptive systems at the root of intractable problems, foundations improve outcomes through creating space for emerging solutions rather than implanting a solution they have identified from outside or tested elsewhere. The remaining discussion provides a summary of the social change process in this respect, offering guidance on how philanthropy can better adapt to promote and accelerate the emergence of strong human rights movements rather than resign to merely witness the drift back toward discrimination.

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[45] Patton, et al. *supra* 7 at 12.

[46] Stroh, David Peter and Zurcher, Kathleen A. "Leveraging Grant-Making—Part 2: Aligning Programmatic Approaches With Complex System Dynamics". *Foundation Review*: vol. 1, iss. 4, art. 8. 2009. Pg. 72.

[47] Senge, Peter; Hamilton, Hal; and Kania, John. "The Dawn of System Leadership". *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Winter 2015.

Systems Feedback Interventions.

Many human rights foundations and activists have deliberately sought to spark human rights movements, yet few have succeeded in doing so. This in part is because movements arise out of the organic alignment of many actors; they cannot simply be established nor declared. In social systems, movements represent the particular emergent phenomena of self-organization[48], and, while they seemingly appear out of nowhere, they are in fact "a complex result of crisis, resource mobilization, cognitive mobilization, [and] self-production..."[49] A strategy which seeks to facilitate the emergence of social movements, whether they be for human rights or something else, thus requires a different approach, "[i]Instead, increasing the fitness of the system as a whole—improving the knowledge, effectiveness, and resilience of all participants, not only grantees."[50] One way to do this is to amplify the ingenuity of local human rights activists by resourcing the wider community to develop and prototype innovative remedies. Others will naturally self-organize around those solutions deemed most promising, empowering these emerging attractors which draw the system toward an identified goal by scaling their reach and range of influence.[51] This rigorous, yet flexible, method respects the complexity of problems faced around the world and allows those who bear the brunt of them the ability to adapt and transform rather than simply implement. Foundations can still play a part in setting the agenda by convening local stakeholders to determine common goals, but the best solutions will emerge

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[48] Ramalingam, Ben; Jones, Harry; Reba, Toussaint; and Young, John. "Exploring the science of complexity: Ideas and implications for development and humanitarian efforts". Overseas Development Institute: Working Paper 285, 2nd ed. October 2008. Pg. 50.
[49] Fuchs, Christian. "The Self-Organization of Social Movements". *Systemic Practice and Action Research*: vol. 19, iss. 1. 2006. Pg. 111.
[50] Kania, et al. *supra* 14.
[51] Kania, et al. *supra* 14.

naturally by preserving beneficiaries' "freedom to experiment with the best pathways to get there."[52]

Joe Hsueh of the Academy for Systemic Change, building on those before him, illustrates this idea through a five-step process (see Figure 1)[53]: First, quiet-convening brings together a small number of local stakeholders to set the boundaries of the system and begin to map the various feedback processes. Second, facilitators convene a larger set of stakeholders to co-create a shared vision, identify leverage
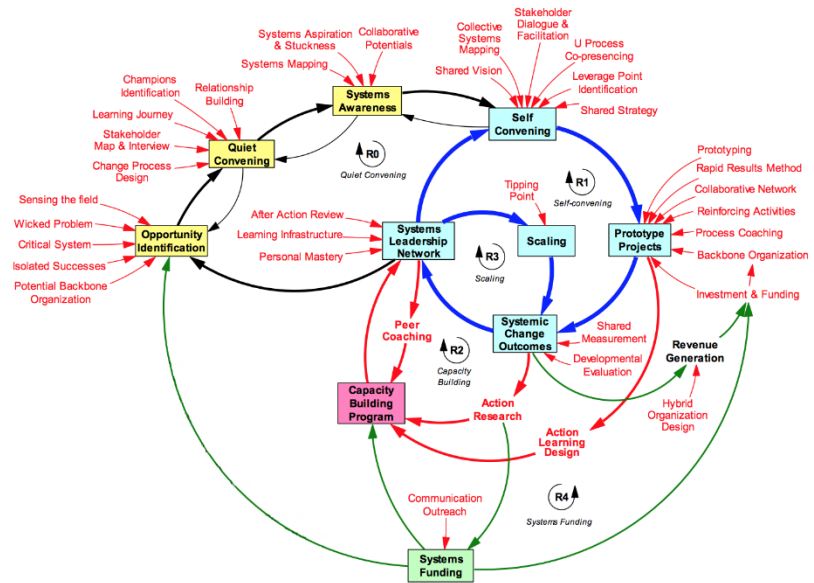

Figure 1: Systemic Change Process Map

points, and begin prototyping projects. Third, the capacity of rising leaders and organizations is built through peer coaching, action research, and developing an infrastructure which strengthens the ability to self-convene. Fourth, prototype projects identified by the convening movement are scaled and replicated elsewhere in the system. And, finally, system funding nurtures systemic change through supporting continuous opportunity identification, prototyping, and capacity building. As the system moves closer to being self-sustaining, we reach the tipping point.

This model provides a framework for a reinforcing feedback process—"virtuous cycle"—whereby system funding merely plays an enabling role for the movement, supporting the process

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[52] Darling, et al. *supra* 12 at 61.
[53] Hsueh, Joe. "Systemic Change Process Map". Academy for Systemic Change. 25 August 2013.

of emergence rather than a particular program or opportunity in isolation from all others. Undermining the various "vicious" and balancing cycles making up the larger system too relies upon a reorientation toward local ingenuity and expertise, both of which are crucial to revealing the leverage points that can be manipulated to slow down or eliminate unfavorable dynamics. These perhaps hold a different meaning in this new methodology, however, as leverage points in systems grantmaking are not merely "mechanical levers that can be manipulated to increase or speed up impact, but relationships, networks, and a deep knowledge of community context."[54] Donella Meadows, another notable systems thinker, writes that leverage points "are places within a complex system (a corporation, an economy, a living body, a city, an ecosystem) where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything."[55] She goes on to provide a definitive list of twelve leverage points (in increasing impact) which can influence any given system as a whole:[56]

> *1) Constants, parameters, and numbers; 2) The sizes of buffers and other stabilizing stocks, relative to their flows; 3) The structure of material stocks and flows; 4) The lengths of delays, relative to the rate of system change; 5) The strength of negative feedback loops, relative to the impacts they are trying to correct against; 6) The gain around driving positive feedback loops; 7) The structure of information flows; 8) The rules of the system (such as incentives, punishments, and constraints); 9) The power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure; 10) The goals of the system (survival,*

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[54] Auspos, Patricia and Cabaj, Mark. "Complexity and Community Change: Managing Adaptively to Improve Effectiveness". The Aspen Institute. September 2014. Pg. 77.

[55] Meadows, Donella. "Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System". Sustainability Institute. 1999. Pg. 1.

[56] Meadows *supra* 55 at 3.

resilience, differentiation); 11) The mindset or paradigm out of which the system—its goals, structure, rules, delays, parameters—arises; and 12) The power to transcend paradigms.

This single list of leveraged interventions along with the model process for resourcing emerging solutions offer a solid framework for any foundation to design a portfolio around systems change. They also demonstrate the extreme scale of impact that is required to produce real results—something the human rights community is very familiar with, but struggles to overcome. The next revolution for human rights funders must as a result of this realization be a coming to terms with the fact that foundations, too, are a small part of larger systems. Current business operations present a few challenges this shift in mentality, and yet it must be accepted and welcomed as an opportunity to truly promote systemic change.

Systems Management.

The scope of a foundation's work regarding collaboration typically manifests in its convening power—that is, funding stakeholders to get together in a room, as in the emergence model. Convening human rights stakeholders, when properly managed, is no doubt a powerful means for aligning goals, agreeing on strategies, and creating space for innovative ideas. Foundations nevertheless in practice too often view themselves simply as the organizers or supporters of these temporary shared spaces, working to move the right chess pieces without seeing the added value of treating social change as a team sport. On the contrary, systems philanthropy proposes that the daunting challenge of systems change "require[s] funders to see their role less as guardians of self-identified change from issue-to-outcome, and more as partners

within a well-functioning ecosystem of support for others."[57] Adopting this viewpoint provides potential for on-going collaboration between human rights funders that may have not otherwise been considered, as, "[g]iven the multiple leverage points in a system, there is an opportunity for foundations to realize how their different efforts might be loosely coupled to create system change."[58] It also represents a paradigm shift in the management of modern philanthropies, many of which have become formidable institutions spanning multiple offices and thematic portfolios so invested in their chains of command that they too stifle any potential for innovation and cross-fertilization. Taking a networked approach refocuses philanthropic strategy on the successes of the whole and not just its part—on the long-term role human rights funders play in the system as opposed to individual interactions with it.[59]

Beginning to reform the status quo of philanthropy as a result of this shift toward an ecosystem model predicates realistic calculation of a few unavoidable and hard truths as well. First, as multiple strategies must be deployed to generate substantial impact on any complex problem, systems grantmakers must accept that change "do[es] not operate on predictable timelines, nor are the most important interventions and investments always clear at the onset."[60] For human rights funders, sometimes an immediate event—a lawsuit, media opportunity, or unforeseen crisis—will necessitate the rapid distribution of funds; other times, a strategy might need to be incremental, with a time horizon of many years, such as policy change. Program

[57] Kippin, Henry. "Supporting Social Change: A New Funding Ecology". Collaborate. 2015. Pg. 4.
[58] Ferris, et al. *supra* 3 at 17.
[59] Wei-Skillern, Jane; Silver, Nora; and Heitz, Eric. "Cracking the Network Code: Four Principles for Grantmakers". Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. 2013. Pg. 24.
[60] "Value(s) for Money? Philanthropy as a Catalyst for Social and Financial Transformation. Salzburg Global Seminar and Hivos. 2014. Pgs. 19-20.

officers at human rights foundations therefore should accept this reality and substitute default project timelines and outcome requirements with a concentration on "the inevitable learning, adaptation—and even failure—that take place over time."[61] Second, this lesson similarly must be applied to the unintended consequences that may arise from any intervention, as the limitation of our mental modelling entails that even the best-intentioned strategy could face unanticipated backlash. In these scenarios, practitioners ought to be responsive and attentive, working together "to understand and capture the ripple effects of their activities. These data (a) provide a broader view of what is or is not being achieved; (b) offer deeper insight into the nature of the problem being addressed and the context in which people are operating; (c) trigger action to adjust or drop strategies that may not be delivering what planners hoped for; and (d) surface emergent and often unexpected opportunities for action."[62]

Underlying each of these challenges—the shift toward a non-hierarchical ecosystem model of a funding community, accepting the infeasibility of fixed timelines, and owning the unintended consequences of philanthropic activities—is inherently an awareness that systems philanthropy calls on foundations to take on greater risk. It should come as no surprise, many of these organizations operating under strict financial regulations, that they are habitually risk-averse. Yet, fiscal responsibility is no excuse to be overly cautious in their primary mission: "The first and most fundamental driver for systems change should be meeting the needs of beneficiaries and understanding the assets they have that can help. This is the reason charities and funders exist—to help people, to understand what problems there are, who they affect and

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[61] Abercrombie, et al. *supra* 36 at 39.
[62] Auspos, et al. *supra* 54 at 27.

how."[63] A greater toleration of risk—of experimentation, failure, and big bets—is crucial to achieving the ultimate goal of human rights systems change, and this will demand "an examination of the culture, strategy, and different tools and techniques of organizations that need to invest in social innovation and complex change."[64] While other funders exist, to be sure, this responsibility is one falling on philanthropy above all others as "foundations are far better suited to do so than are other institutions because they operate on a long time horizon, insulated from financial and political pressures."[65] Risk and failure must be reframed, something that too requires a complete alteration in the contemporary foundation's self-perception.

What management has asked of program officers in the name of strategy is the promise of control, but the primary lesson of strategic philanthropy's failure is that "[p]retending you're in control even when you aren't is a recipe not only for mistakes, but for not learning from mistakes."[66] Thus the foundation as it is now known can no longer be our ideal; it is far too inflexible, and its mechanics themselves are a barrier to achieving fundamental systems change. In its place, foundation staff and leadership seeking to have a real impact on human rights must commit to the principles of a "learning organization", a model made famous by Peter Senge in which "people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together."[67] This new design eschews strategic planning, instead welcoming that the limitations of our mental models as well as the

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[63] Abercrombie, et al. *supra* 36 at 28.
[64] Auspos, et al. *supra* 54 at 59.
[65] Kania, et al. *supra* 14.
[66] Meadows *supra* 37 at 4.
[67] Senge *supra* 22 at 3.

ever-changing complexity of our world means "knowledge is never complete or static."[68]

Monitoring and evaluation of program implementation become secondary to a process of intentional learning, deliberately staking out the unknown and institutionalizing processes for incorporating as well as pursuing constant feedback on performance. Learning organizations additionally seek to be humble, never professing to have all the answers but instead creating conversations and forging connections to surface new ideas and ways of thinking. This model for organization management and design offers human rights foundations a framework for owning and truthfully reflecting the complex adaptive system in which it is simply a node, holding firmly to the lesson that "[n]one of us can ever know enough to guide us into the future without the help of all of the wisdom in the room."[69]

Summary and Discussion.

A significant portion of funders, especially those whose missions are predominantly service delivery, may find that systems methodologies present a significant challenge requiring monumental soul-searching in defining a new path forward and strategy. For these grantmakers, it may also be entirely unnecessary, as "[m]any foundations can continue to do a great deal of good by using the traditional tools of strategic philanthropy to address simple and complicated problems."[70] The key here is to distinguish complicated problems from the complex and to respond appropriately based on the circumstance. Systems philanthropy in these latter cases proposes an alternative for not simply philanthropic best practice, but, rather, "good

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[68] Stroh *supra* 28 at 26.
[69] Darling *supra* 12 at 72.
[70] Kania, et al. *supra* 14.

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principles"[71]. It does not necessarily present grantmakers new tools from strategic philanthropy; instead, "[i]t is the grantmaker's mindset and intent that defines systems grantmaking—not the tool, process or framework."[72] As such, this transformation in thinking toward a systems approach calls on existing philanthropic practice to be leveraged and conceived of in a new way to engage with structures, relationships, feedback, and, ultimately, the underlying systems which drive intractable problems.

This theoretical discussion has traced the origins of and provided the justification for a new approach in foundation strategy and operations on the basis that social problems such as violence and discrimination are often complex, non-linear, and resistant to change. Therefore, the methodology of systems philanthropy recommends that "[a]ny attempts to change the system must address the underlying mechanisms that support change along with controls that keep the system in check."[73] While there are clearly limitations to strategic philanthropy in its inability to adapt and respond to the complexity of these challenges, this does not compel human rights funders to admit defeat and operate with no plan whatsoever: "Transformation and large systems change is not something that can be planned. However, understanding change pathways can support strategies to enhance our ability to produce desired futures."[74] Focusing on the lifecycle of emergence through resourcing the self-organization of human rights movements can still return positive results. This must also be complemented by well-thought interventions across

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[71] Ramalingam, et al. *supra* 48 at 30.

[72] Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. "Systems Grantmaking Resource Guide". 2016. Pg. 5.

[73] Waddock, Sandra; Mescoely, Greta M.; Waddell, Steve; and Dentoni, Domenico. "The Complexity of Wicked Problems in Large Scale Change". *Journal of Organizational Change Management*: vol. 28, iss. 6. 2015. Pg. 1004.

[74] Waddell, Steve; Hsueh, Joe; Birney, Anna; Khorsani, Amir; and Feng, Wen. "Large Systems Change: Producing the Change We Want". *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*. vol. 53. March 2014. Pg. 5.

a range of leverage points as well as a reconsideration of the dynamics and management of funding which stand in the way of progress.

METHODOLOGY

These fundamentals of systems philanthropy informed my subsequent research, which seeks to both understand whether funders supporting LGBTI causes are operating systemically as well as suggest potential opportunities for them to do so. Though there are many donors now supporting LGBTI movements around the world, the scope of this project focuses on grantmaking by major foundations in particular, which represents one of the larger pools of funds available. Foundation grantmakers are considered to include the following:[75]

- Private Foundations: have their own endowments, provided by wealthy individuals or families. Family foundations often continue to have family involvement.
- Corporate/Company: receive funding from their parent company, but operate independently with their own governance.
- Operating: run their own program and services and may or may not provide grant support to outside.
- Public: are public charities that have multiple funding sources including solicited contributions.
- Community: focus on a geographic location.
- Cause-specific: address a single defined need.

Foundations are sometimes endowed, invested, and/or otherwise receive their funds through a variety of means, including individuals, private companies, and state institutions. They partner with other types of donors as well, and many foundations additionally have proxies and offices spread throughout the globe operating in myriad legal circumstances, including sometimes being legally incorporated as businesses or corporations rather than not-for-profits. This thesis does

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[75] Bigham, J.; Karmali, F.; and Rundle, J. "The Evolving Role of Philanthropy in Global Problem Solving". Global Solution Network. 2016. Pg. 6.

not seek to perform a strict analysis of each foundation; rather, it examines the trends in foundation grantmaking and strategy toward LGBTI causes as a whole by focusing on the top foundation funders regardless of their income source or governance. These top funders were selected based on their total reported grantmaking toward global LGBTI causes, defined by their targeting the Global South and East as well as international strategies. Several additional foundations were reviewed due to their interesting contributions to the funding landscape as well as their relationships to the primary funders identified.

My findings derive from a widespread document review of these foundations, analyzing everything from their public-facing websites and publications, news articles profiling them or authored by their staff, summary reports from convenings and strategy sessions, in addition to research specifically commissioned to ascertain the overarching trends and opportunity gaps in current programming. All of this information was sourced online or in print publications, most of it publicly available but several documents provided through a members' portal maintained by the International Human Rights Funders Group. What I sought in this review was to understand not merely what grants are being made, but more specifically the thinking behind these strategies and the degree of reflection and learning occurring behind the scenes. While foundations do not typically make internal strategy documents public, a significant amount of information can be established by performing a narrative discourse analysis of how they describe themselves and their activities. Along these lines, I specifically indexed their mission statements, portfolios, and any descriptive text speaking to *how* they go about their work rather than merely what the work is. Particular attention was paid to any examples of efforts to resource movements rather than individual grantees, partnerships or collaborations between funders, and self-reflections either

on their individual organizations or on the relationship of LGBTI funders to the movement more generally. The existence of specific mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and learning was also noted as well as the specific terminology used when defining the target population or theme.

To provide structure to this research, I tracked these documents alongside the principles enunciated by systems theory and systems philanthropy—specifically, those relating to mental models, boundaries, feedback, delays, emergence, leverage points, as well as learning and risk management. My findings seek to locate these systems concepts in the context of the current philanthropic landscape regarding LGBTI human rights, the bulk of which is organized through examples of program strategies which appear to fit Donella Meadows' description of leverage points[76]. A significant analysis of the ways philanthropic structures are adapting their operations and funding mechanisms additionally lends well to a systems analysis, revealing just how well LGBTI grantmakers are operating systemically. Though my research does consider the landscape as a whole, the frequency certain funders were found to be exhibiting systems practices signals the disparities between individual organizations operating in this space; in the instance that funders individually or collectively could be better aligned, I make those suggestions.

FINDINGS

The circumstances of LGBTI people and those of non-conforming SOGIESC vary widely around the world. In many places, these individuals are protected by matter of law through non-discrimination and hate crime legislation, allowing them to safely live openly and still enjoy access to employment, healthcare, and social welfare. Nearly two dozen states have recognized same-

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[76] Meadows, *supra* 55 at 3.

sex marriage, which, while not a universal goal nor priority of global movements, demonstrates the significant progress achieving inclusion in several regions.[77] Gender recognition laws passed by numerous local and national authorities now enable trans and some intersex individuals to be reissued documents accurately reflecting their gender identities, reducing the stigma and discrimination they face in addition to generating some of the first-ever data on the experiences of this population.[78] LGBTI people also are increasingly represented positively in the media, shifting attitudes and cultures which previously denied their existence. These victories would not have happened but for the concerted efforts of individual activists, civil society organizations, and their funders, all belonging to an ever-expanding field of global advocates working to improve the conditions of members of their communities by various means.

Yet, despite these accomplishments, an overwhelming plethora of challenges around the world remain. The criminalization of same-sex sexual activities continues to have a chilling effect on many communities, forcing countless people to remain closeted or exceedingly discreet in order to evade arrest as well as violence.[79] The devastation wrought by the HIV/AIDS pandemic has disproportionately impacted gay people and trans women around the world, "open[ing] up sexual practices of men who sleep with men to greater public awareness, but also to greater opprobrium."[80] Much of the discrimination these individuals face is in part due to this attention,

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[77] Carroll, A. "State Sponsored Homophobia 2016: A world survey of sexual orientation laws: criminalisation, protection and recognition. International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association"., 11th ed. May 2016. Pg. 12.

[78] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Human Rights Council Report: Discrimination and Violence against Individuals Based on their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity". A/HRC/29/23. 4 May 2015.

[79] Sutherland, Carla. "What do South Africans really think about sexual orientation and gender identity?". *openDemocracy*. 9 November 2015. Web. 30 December 2016.

[80] Gevisser, Mark. "Canaries in the coal mines: An analysis of spaces for LGBTI activism in Southern Africa". The Other Foundation. 2016. Pg. 21.

as both HIV infection and the medical pathologization of homosexuality and gender non-conformity in responding to the crisis have been leveraged to undermine rights advocacy, casting sex, gender, and bodily non-conforming (SGBNC) people more as an epidemiological threat than a minority suffering the effects of widespread marginalization. Furthermore, trans and intersex people in most states cannot access gender-affirming healthcare nor documents reflecting their genders, and "many trans*[81] people without correct vital documents such as birth certificates also have difficulty finding jobs, voting, or obtaining other types of identity documents."[82] Civil society groups seeking to change these narratives have struggled to obtain official registration, often enduring administrative resistance if not outright harassment and abuse from law enforcement in carrying out their activities.[83] Finally, sensational reporting from the media has been a driving factor behind much of this hostility, as unsympathetic coverage has sparked public furor as well as in some instances led to lynch mobs.[84] No doubt, there is still vital work to be done in combatting violence and discrimination based on non-conforming SOGIESC worldwide.

From the standpoint of funders operating at a global level, the first approach to LGBTI issues at this scale can be therefore daunting, if not downright confusing: "Some have successfully achieved equal rights, and are now conquering the final frontiers, like marriage. Others however are still in the gray zone of 'half-hearted acceptance,' while the majority is in a

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[81] "Trans*" is another widely-used signifier, the asterisk serving as a stand-in for various trans identities.
[82] Frazer, S. and Howe, E. "Growing Trans* Funding and Strategy: A report from the field in 2013". Arcus Foundation and Open Society Foundations. 2015. Pg. 46.
[83] Sutherland *supra* 79.
[84] Human Rights Watch. "The Issue is Violence: Attacks on LGBT People on Kenya's Coast". September 2015. Pg. 15.

terrible, even life threatening situation."[85] A systems perspective might present these disparities

simply in terms of "phase space", which is "the analysis of the evolution of systems by considering

the evolution process as a sequence of states in time."[86] Still, another way to understand this

behavior is that the global system of LGBTI rights appears to be operating in interrelated cycles

of "progress" and "backlash"[87]—a process of "limits to growth"[88]. Sue Simon points out, "An LGBT

rights victory in one country may unexpectedly trigger repressive measures in another."[89] This

makes choosing the right time, place, and approach to strategic intervention tricky. There is no

doubt that "[f]unders are critical stakeholders in this work and their investments will largely

impact the speed and geographic scope of progress."[90] However, a lack of nuance and discretion

on the part of a funder—especially those that are located in the Global North and West—can

result in both their presence and their grantee's activities being construed as "a neo-Colonial

imposition"[91]. Such fraught terrain thus makes a systems analysis especially crucial to effective

work: "Because people's lives often hang in the balance, good intentions are not good enough.

The grantmaker's work should have a significant chance of succeeding…"[92]

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[85] Simonyi, András and Pătru, Mihai. "The International LGBT Community Has a Goal... But No Strategy". *Huffington Post*. 9 February 2015. Web. 30 Dec. 2016.

[86] Ramalingam, et al. *supra* 48 at 27.

[87] Gevisser *supra* 80 at 3.

[88] Senge *supra* 22 at 101. "Limits to Growth" is the first systems archetype offered by Senge, which he states is an interplay between reinforcing and balancing feedback processes. He suggests appropriate intervention targets the balancing loop in identifying and subverting the limiting factor.

[89] Simon, Sue. "Expanding Global Philanthropy to Support the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People: Summary Report from a Convening at the Rockefeller Conference Center, Bellagio, Italy; September 15-19, 2008". Arcus Operating Foundation. January 2009. Pg. 6.

[90] Krehely, Jeff and Bush, Linda. "International LGBT Advocacy Organizations and Programs: An Overview". Movement Advancement Project. July 2008. Pg. 8.

[91] Gevisser *supra* 80 at 19.

[92] Seltzer, Michael. "The Case for Using a Social Justice Lens in Grantmaking". Grants Managers Network. 2012. Pg. 16.

Funding Landscape.

Complex as it may be, human rights funders writ large are no strangers to problems like these requiring an exceedingly cautious consideration of the many factors at play. In fact, they may be uniquely positioned in this respect, as an understanding of the underlying processes driving human rights abuses inevitably means that "change at a structural level—change that alters power paradigms and systems—is necessary for the advancement of human rights over the long term."[93] Funders also do not appear to be dissuaded by the task set forth, as the evidence shows a huge amount of engagement despite the inherent difficulty. The Foundation Center and International Human Rights Funders Group found that $2.3 billion had been disbursed for human rights causes in 2013, the most recent year of data. These funds came from 803 foundations in 46 countries, in total comprising roughly 20,300 individual grants for projects around the world. Additionally, 79 percent of these grants included a specific population focus, meaning that funders are already very involved in many battles to combat the discrimination and marginalization faced by communities of a particular identity.[94] This represents a tremendous opportunity for LGBTI civil society organizations to tap into, and increasingly funders are playing an essential role resourcing LGBTI struggles around the world.

A first-of-its-kind report from Funders for LGBTQ Issues and the Global Philanthropy Project surveying foundation and multilateral funding for LGBTI issues discovered that

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[93] Lawrence, Steven and Dobson, Christen. "Advancing Human Rights: The State of Global Foundation Grantmaking—Benchmark Report". Foundation Center and International Human Rights Funders Group. 2013. Pg. 20.

[94] Koob, Anna; Tansey, Sarah; and Dobson, Christen. ", 2016 ed. Advancing Human Rights: Update on Global Foundation Grantmaking". Foundation Center and International Human Rights Funders Group. 2016. Pg. 12.

foundations made nearly $90 million in grants toward LGBTI causes outside of the United States over the course of 2013 and 2014.[95] $69 million of that came from just ten major foundations, and $88.5 million from the top twenty—clearly showing that just a small number of foundations are making big bets on the rights of LGBTI people. These foundations are listed in Table 1 along with their total global grantmaking excluding funding focused on the United States.

1	Hivos - The Hague, The Netherlands	$13,369,497
2	Arcus Foundation - New York, United States	$13,305,950
3	Open Society Foundations - New York, United States	$10,861,825
4	Ford Foundation - New York, United States	$8,125,317
5	American Jewish World Service - New York, United States	$5,479,960
6	M.A.C. AIDS Fund - New York, United States	$4,104,590
7	amfAR Foundation for AIDS Research - New York, United States	$3,629,596
8	Sigrid Rausing Trust - London, England	$3,537,433
9	Levi Strauss Foundation - San Francisco, United States	$3,490,950
10	COC Netherlands - Amsterdam, The Netherlands	$3,168,643
11	Oxfam Novib - The Hague, The Netherlands	$3,019,210
12	Heartland Alliance - Chicago, United States	$2,298,883
13	Dreilinden - Hamburg, Germany	$2,285,822
14	Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice - New York, United States	$2,185,579
15	ViiV Healthcare Research - Triangle Park, United States	$2,131,632
16	Fund for Global Human Rights - Washington, DC, United States	$1,792,682
17	Mama Cash - Amsterdam, The Netherlands	$1,754,197
18	The Obel Family Foundation - Aalborg, Denmark	$1,623,126
19	UHAI East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative - Nairobi, Kenya	$1,341,117
20	Comic Relief - London, England	$1,077,323

Table 1: Top 20 Foundation Funders of LGBTI Issues, By Total Amount (2013-2014), presented in USD

While the majority of these foundation funders are based in the United States, eight are in Western Europe, and one in Kenya. In total, foundation and multilateral funding went to 811 nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit agencies, and other civil society groups focusing on

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[95] Hammond, Naa; Kan, Lyle Matthew; and Maulbeck, Ben Francisco. "2013/2014 Global Resources Report: Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Communities". Funders for LGBTQ Issues and Global Philanthropy Project. June 2016. Pg. 3.

issues outside of the United States, with 1,706 grants flowing to the Global South and East.[96] This

data is essential in determining the current landscape of the movement as well as the resources

at its disposal. Still, diving into the detail can reveal even more as, "[b]y better understanding the

current scale and scope of LGBTI funding, we can better respond to gaps, adapt our goals, and

increase our impact."[97] With just a couple dozen major players, the strategies they individually

deploy has a tremendous impact on the direction and goals of the system as a whole.

Though they each contribute toward LGBTI causes around the world, it is important to

note that there are some major differences even among these top funders. Many disburse funds

in whole or in part deriving from independent wealth or inheritance of private individuals and

families: The Arcus Foundation, Open Society Foundations (OSF), Ford Foundation, Sigrid Rausing

Trust, Dreilinden, and Obel Family Foundation. Others are corporate foundations, meaning that

their funding comes from the profit sharing of their founding companies. These include notably

the M.A.C. AIDS Fund, Levi Strauss Foundation, and ViiV Healthcare Research. Several of the

foundations work closely with their national governments and partner with development

agencies in that regard, notably Hivos and COC in the Netherlands. Others started as small funds

responding to specific humanitarian crises and grew to become major players via both small and

large donations, including amfAR Foundation for AIDS Research, Heartland Alliance, Comic Relief,

and Oxfam Novib (which was founded in 1956 as the Netherlands Organization for International

Assistance and only later became an affiliate of Oxfam International).[98] Finally, several of the top

foundations began and remain funds, largely receiving their monies through disbursements from

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[96] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 27. This figure includes funding made by government sources.
[97] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 5.
[98] "History - Oxfamnovib". Oxfam Novib. 2016. Web. 25 Dec. 2016.

other foundations and individual donors. These include American Jewish World Service (AJWS), the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Mama Cash, and the Fund for Global Human Rights.

Interestingly, few of these organizations focus primarily on LGBTI issues or those explicitly of non-conforming SOGIESC. Astraea is the only philanthropic organization in the world professing to work exclusively on "LGBTQI human rights"[99]. A good number of the top funders more specifically concentrate on HIV/AIDS, such as the M.A.C. AIDS Fund, amfAR, and ViiV Healthcare, though they may support some additional MSM rights-based programming for the purpose of advancing the goal of reducing transmission. Most have wide-ranging portfolios working across a number of issues relating to human rights and development of which LGBTI rights is only a single strategy or even itself part of a larger strategy. Perhaps the most surprising of all is the Arcus Foundation. Though it remains the top private funder of LGBTI rights, it maintains only one other major concentration—Great Apes—stating, "We believe respect for diversity among peoples and in nature is essential to a positive future for our planet and all its inhabitants."[100] From the standpoint of systems thinking, it is therefore important to clearly delineate the mental models these organizations base their efforts on, as there appears to be considerable differentiation between them not reducible to a single motivation. These mental models also contribute to determining the boundaries of the system, which means that different foundations may in fact be working on different conceivable systems, overlapping but not necessarily sharing the same strategic visions as their peers.

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[99] "Astraea - About Astraea". Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. 2016. Web. 25 Dec. 2016.
[100] "Arcus Foundation | Push Boundaries. Make Change". Arcus Foundation. 2016. Web. 25 Dec. 2016.

Mental Models.

There are a handful of predominant frameworks that the top funders reference in relation to their work on these themes. Generally, and perhaps expectedly, "most operate under a human rights approach and prioritise[] issues of civil and political rights."[101] Levi Strauss states that it "works to protect the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS"[102]; COC describes its work as "[o]perating on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"[103]; OSF "seek to combat discrimination by empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex communities to promote and defend their human rights"[104], etc. No doubt, there is logic to this as significant rhetorical power is found in the invocation of rights. A 2014 conference of funders, NGOs, and independent experts titled "Orientations and Identities: Sexuality and Human Rights on the Global Stage" put this plainly: "Participants observed that using a human rights frame for international LGBT rights work creates significant added value. It provides legitimacy, a broader tool kit, and an enhanced ability to connect with allies."[105] That said, rights discourse is invoked in multiple ways by funders and advocates that may alter the particular meaning, as "[s]ome emphasize identity-based strategies and even adopt a minority rights perspective in their advocacy, while others place their work within a broader gender or sexual rights context."[106]

Sexual rights as a model expands and eschews the identification of LGBTI individuals as

[101] Carroll *supra* 77 at 26.
[102] Levis Strauss Foundation. "Grantmaking Guidelines". August 2016.
[103] amfAR. "Fundraising Toolkit: A Resource for HIV-Related Community-Based Projects Serving Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and Transgender Individuals in Low- and Middle-Income Countries". October 2011. Pg. 33.
[104] "GPP Members". Global Philanthropy Project. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[105] Sexuality Policy Watch. "Orientations and Identities: Sexuality and Human Rights on the Global Stage—Meeting Report". May 2014. Pg. 10.
[106] Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 7.

being a particular protected class, moving toward recognition of non-conforming SOGIESC. Arcus'

international work, for example, which is primarily located in its International Human Rights

program, "contributes to the development of a global movement integrating sexual orientation

and gender identity into shared conceptions of human rights."[107] This offers a wider range of

claims under the mantle of rights, most often also incorporating matters regarding sex, gender,

and reproduction more broadly—such as women's rights and access to abortion. However, some

disagreement remains on its utility. Reflecting on the usage of "SOGI"[108] in international spheres,

the same conference participants pondered whether "[w]hile more inclusive and intended to be

more encompassing than many population-specific terms, it nonetheless appears that often use

of the acronym is reduced to shorthand simply to mean lesbians and gay men... Some suggested

that conflating SOGI-related rights with sexual rights generally risks minimizing a broader sexual

rights agenda, which includes privacy, autonomy, freedom to choose a partner, freedom from

violence, and other issues for all people, beyond the confines of sexual orientation and gender

identity."[109] Being careful about distinctions in this sense can produce very different results for

the boundaries of the system. Moreover, even if rights provide a powerful set of tools, the civil

and political rights claims they so often are framed by may not be sufficient. In fact, "[m]any

funders... noted that human rights is still unnecessarily seen as separate from fields such as

development, health, education, environment, and conflict resolution and that human rights

funders have numerous opportunities to bridge these divides."[110]

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[107] "GPP Members..." *supra* 104.
[108] "SOGI", "SOGIE", and "SOGIESC" are different permutations recognizing an expanding attempt to be more inclusive.
[109] Sexuality Policy Watch *supra* 105 at 4.
[110] Lawrence, et al. *supra* 93 at xvi.

Social justice is most frequently offered as an alternative, not only in its usefulness for subverting growing crackdown on funders and activists promoting "human rights" themes, but because "[e]ffective social justice philanthropy aims to end the injustices suffered by one group of people at the hands of another. These injustices often result in social, economic, and/or political inequalities. But rather than focus on the effects of unjust treatment, good social justice grantmaking attempts to undo the mechanisms of oppression."[111] This expansion of focus can be strategic, providing a greater number of leverage points in the overall system. Arcus' International Human Rights program, for example, is one strategy in its overall Social Justice portfolio[112], and Astraea works for "racial, economic, social, and gender justice"[113]. The weakness of "social justice" nonetheless lies in the lack of an agreement as to what exactly it encompasses. One survey of 100 practitioners of "social justice" philanthropy suggests that this ought to include eight traditions:[114] 1) structural injustice; 2) universal human rights; 3) fairness/equal distribution of resources; 4) legalism/rule of law; 5) empowerment; 6) shared values; 7) cultural relativism; and 8) triple bottom line. This is a pretty wide range of potential strategies, which may ultimately dilute the power of "social justice" itself as a mental model by negating any ability to distinguish the borders of a system which we seek to change.

Jay Forrester cautions that mental models "are fuzzy, incomplete, and imprecisely stated. Furthermore, within a single individual, mental models change with time, even during the flow of a single conversation. The human mind assembles a few relationships to fit the context of a

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[111] Seltzer *supra* 92 at 15.
[112] Arcus Foundation. "Social Justice Program". 2007. Pg. 1.
[113] "Astraea - About Astraea". Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[114] Ruesga, G. Albert and Puntenney, Deborah. "Social Justice Philanthropy: An Initial Framework for Positioning This Work". Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace. 2010. Pg. 5.

discussion. As debate shifts, so do the mental models."[115] Funders of queer issues, as we can see,

often work across multiple mental models, funding LGBTI rights alongside reproductive health,

HIV response and prevention alongside economic and racial empowerment. The boundaries of

the system as it is collectively understood as a result appear to be incredibly porous, which could

pose a problem in system-wide coordination. Yet there are leverage points shared across these

mental models which clearly show opportunity for changing systems from every perspective. The

next section traces the general leverage points enumerated Donella Meadows closely[116],

examining the various ways that foundations working across the themes of LGBTI rights, sexual

rights, and social justice attempt to influence overarching systems. I've organized her leverage

points into two broad themes: the structures of funding and strategic interventions.

Leverage Points.

Structures of Funding.

The Global Resources Report, while rightfully accounting for the millions of dollars

disbursed toward LGBTI programs around the world, provides some unfortunate perspective in

going further to explain that, for every $100 awarded by foundations working on human rights

generally, only 13¢ of that specifically benefitted LGBTI communities.[117] Similarly, Urvashi Vaid,

the former executive director of Arcus, commented, "In every region, the level of funds available

for LGBT work remains inadequate to the needs and demands of grassroots organizations."[118]

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[115] Forrester, Jay. "Counterintuitive Behavior of Social Systems". *ClexChange*. 1995. Pg. 3.
[116] Meadows *supra* 55.
[117] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 2.
[118] Parkhurst, Marcie and Johnson, Amber. "Mobilizing Resources for the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Challenges and Opportunities". Arcus Operating Foundation and FSG Social Impact Advisors. Pg. ii.

Accordingly, the first leverage point—changing the parameters of the system—works by deliberately growing the resources available for all the other potential leverage points.[119] This is something that funders have clearly been working on, and the most recognizable mechanism has probably been through the design of dedicated matching funds earmarked for specific purposes. The International Trans* Fund, for example, was established by AJWS, Arcus, OSF, and Levi Strauss, and is housed at Astraea. It seeks "to create sustainable resources for strong, trans*-led movements and collective action, and to address—and ideally eliminate—funding gaps impacting on trans* groups across the globe."[120] The Global Trans Initiative is another fund led by Arcus and the NoVo Foundation with the purpose of "significantly increas[ing] the amount of grantmaking and the availability of other philanthropic resources to not only improve, but also increase access to basic protections and opportunities for a community that has experienced an intolerable degree of violence and discrimination."[121] By bringing the NoVo Foundation as well as others to the table, Arcus is leveraging at least $20 million, but only contributing $15 million from its own assets. In a field where only $90 million was disbursed in two years, that is a significant contribution.

Along those lines, LGBTI foundations have additionally increased the amount of funding available by collaborating to surface resources not previously accessible. The 2008 *Mobilizing Resources*... report states, "While increasing the financial commitment of existing funders may be helpful, identifying and connecting new sources of funding to the movement is also

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[119] Meadows *supra* 55 at 6.
[120] Davis, Masen. "International Trans* Fund Overview". Global Philanthropy Project. March 2016. Pg. 1.
[121] Lee, Roz. "Join Us on the Leading Edge of Social Change". *National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy Quarterly Journal*. Spring 2016. Pg. 1.

important."[122] Just eight years later, there has already been a tremendous effort to coordinate funding from outside the foundation space, and Astraea again is a leader here. In 2012, it was a founding partner of the Global Development Partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Since launch, the founders have leveraged additional funding from Arcus; the Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute; Williams Institute; Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Rights (RFSL); and the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.[123] J. Bob Alotta, the executive director of Astraea, commented, "The Partnership is the single largest pool of resources for LGBT human rights and, vitally, an investment in the infrastructure, tools, and leadership that lay the groundwork for long-term engagement in participating countries and regions."[124] Arcus furthermore took a leading role in the establishment of the Global Equality Fund, another partnership that brings together nearly two dozen bilateral, corporate, foundation, and nonprofit funders for the purpose of increasing the overall amount of funding available for LGBTI issues.[125] This type of cross-sectoral collaboration means that the number and size of resource pools are only growing over time, generating even greater support for interventions and impact across the entire landscape.

Cross-sectoral work is likewise important in the field itself, as efforts to spark regional, national, and local movements require infrastructure, not just money. This is a second leverage

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[122] Parkhurst, et al. *supra* 118 at 3.

[123] USAID. "The LGBTI Global Development Partnership". 27 June 2016. Pg. 1.

[124] J. Bob Alotta, qtd. in Naasel, Kenrya Rankin. "Meet The LGBTQI Community's Biggest Champion". *Fast Company*. 5 November 2014. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.

[125] Global Equality Fund. "Global Equality Fund 2015 Annual Report". 23 June 2016.

point: the sizes of buffers and other stabilizing stocks, relative to their flows.[126] Backbone

organizations operate as these stabilizing institutions in that they serve a number of functions

central to broader social movements: "providing overall strategic direction, facilitating dialogue

between partners, managing data collection and analysis, handling communications,

coordinating community outreach, and mobilizing funding."[127] Where LGBTI-specific backbones

do not yet exist, funders have been able to leverage pre-existing human rights NGOs working in

the same area, "encouraging and/or requiring the human rights defenders and legal aid groups

they already fund to work with the LGBT community."[128] These types of alliances not only foster

inclusion of non-conforming SOGIESC in existing programs, but can also provide vital incubation

support for nascent movements not yet able to receive funds and without access to facilities.

LGBTI-specific backbones eventually ought to serve this purpose for their communities, and

groups like the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA)—

which has nine chapters by region, as well as the Coalition for African Lesbians (CAL), OutRight

Action International (OutRight), among many others, serve as backbones for funders to

strengthen movements by supporting a central attractor. The backbones themselves become a

stabilizing mechanism both by subgranting resources to the many groups they interact with while

also making use of their stronger roots by advocating on behalf of entire fields when confronting

larger issues, such as civil society crackdown.

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[126] Meadows *supra* 55 at 7.
[127] Hanleybrown, Fay; Kania, John; and Kramer; Mark. "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work". *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. 26 January 2012.
[128] Galst, Liz. "Saving Lives, Promoting Democracy, Alleviating Poverty, and Fighting AIDS: The Case for Funding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Populations". Arcus Operating Foundation. March 2010. Pg. 6.

A funder must still be cautious in working with backbones, nonetheless. Though they are crucial for every change ecosystem, there is a practical limit to their utility: "Often you can stabilize a system by increasing the capacity of a buffer. But if a buffer is too big, the system becomes inflexible. It reacts too slowly."[129] As Arcus notes, funders ought to "[a]void overstretching LGBT rights organizations that become donor 'darlings' with too many demands or excessive project-funding requests."[130] This means that funders and backbones both "must maintain a delicate balance between the strong leadership needed to keep all parties together and the invisible 'behind the scenes' role that lets the other stakeholders own the initiative's success."[131] No doubt, here lies a difficult calculation and high stakes, as the infrastructure is necessary in order to build a movement, but, just as in strategic philanthropy, focusing too much on infrastructure at the expense of flexibility can stymie experimentation, innovation, and put a halt to the emergence lifecycle. One activist in Mozambique laments this, stating "We do not have a movement in Mozambique. We only have Lambda."[132] LGBTI funders, very much aware of this issue, do seem to have found an alternate means to provide that necessary structure while maintaining the room to grow, change course, and thus adapt to new opportunities. Regardless, some substantial barriers to changing the status quo must first be addressed to make the solution operable, foremost in the application and administration of grants themselves.

Meadows argues that the structure of material stocks and flows is another leverage point in any system, writing that "[t]he only way to fix a system that is laid out wrong is to rebuild it, if

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[129] Meadows *supra* 55 at 7.
[130] Simon *supra* 89 at 15.
[131] Galst *supra* 128.
[132] Anonymous activist qtd. in Gevisser *supra* 80 at 33.

you can."[133] This may be necessary, as the structural status quo of international grantmaking has itself become a primary challenge for LGBTI funders and their grantees to overcome. Foundations in the United States, for instance, must make grants "in accordance with IRS procedures for making an 'equivalency determination' or exercising 'expenditure responsibility.'"[134] These administrative measures to prove funds are being remit toward charitable causes ultimately exclude many local organizations that cannot meet the requirements—especially those which are "unable to get the official legal status or recognition (because of restrictions, safety issues, or their minimal organizational capacity) that is often a prerequisite for funder support."[135] Recipient countries make this even harder by putting up their own administrative barriers. Russia is one notorious case, having introduced "foreign agent" laws requiring civil society organizations receiving international funding to register as foreign agents and submit to greater financial scrutiny. These laws also block funding across the board in many cases since "[t]ax-exempt grants from foreign organizations may only be made to Russian citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) if the donor is on a government-approved list, a list that now excludes private foundations."[136] Various countries have passed similar laws, most of which specifically are responding to the supposed "foreign interference"[137] of LGBTI funding.

Even if, despite these hurdles, organizations are able to access funding, they still face

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[133] Meadows *supra* 55 at 7.
[134] Dorf, Julie. "Giving Out Globally: A Resource Guide of Funding Mechanisms to Support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights in the Global South and East". Arcus Operating Foundation. January 2009. Pg. 10.
[135] Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 18.
[136] Global Philanthropy Project. "The Perfect Storm: The closing space for LGBT civil society in Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Kenya, and Hungary". 2016. Pgs. 6-7.
[137] Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 16.

administrative burdens. One primary issue is that they too frequently receive project grants, restricting expenditures to program-related activities. Such funding becomes an obstacle to growth as grantees consequently "lack the flexible funding and operational support that enable investments in organizational sustainability (salaries, benefits, capacity development, etc.) or allow them to respond nimbly to new opportunities or challenges."[138] This last point is important since the timelines of grants present a critical administrative strain that broadly limits the potential of the system, and thus offers yet another leverage point in that "[d]elays in feedback loops are common causes of oscillations... A system just can't respond to short-term changes when it has long-term delays."[139] There are two component delays here: First, in part due to the risk involved in international grantmaking, many grants are made on fixed timelines of a year or less. Such short implementation periods make long-term change hard to resource, as "[g]aps between project grants often temporarily stall activities and compromise the relationships trans* organizations have with their constituents and communities."[140] Half of the work of organizations operating under this burden becomes donor stewardship, applying for renewals or additional support and going through the motions of grant applications rather than the programs the grants are meant to support. Reporting also becomes futile since short timelines mean "many in the philanthropic landscape measure success through immediately visible short-term goals."[141] Outcomes in social change are hard to measure over a single year, but indicators of success are

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[138] Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. "We are Real: The Growing Movement Advancing the Human Rights of Intersex People". 2016. Pg. 29.
[139] Meadows *supra* 55 at 8.
[140] Frazer, et al. *supra* 82 at 59.
[141] "Trust in Community: Profile of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice". *Indie Philanthropy*. 16 October 2014. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.

still required for approval.

Second, the delay between applying and receiving funds makes responding to both crises and opportunities impossible. One grantee interviewed by the Movement Advancement Project stated, "We often need money in days, not weeks, months, or years."[142] The inability to access funding on a timely basis can make entire social movements vulnerable to instability and unable to meet the needs of their constituents. Even worse, it can leave them powerless in the face of violence and crackdown. This, considered collectively with the many other structural shortcomings of current grantmaking administration—from inaccessible or difficult applications to restricted grants to delays in both implementation and approval—needs to be addressed, since the result is a lose-lose situation: "Funders feel they cannot achieve the impact that they want, while practitioners feel they cannot get the money that they need, especially long-term, flexible funding to confront the really difficult issues."[143] Fortunately, LGBTI funders have long been aware of these issues and are pioneering in their overhaul of funding structures to find solutions.

Wanja Muguongo, executive director of UHAI, delivers a damning reprimand of the status quo of international LGBTI funding:[144]

If the big human rights donors truly want to internationalize the human rights movement,

they'll have to start trusting us with their money. Sending support down the funding chain,

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[142] Anonymous grantee qtd. in Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 17.
[143] Edwards, Michael. "Beauty and the Beast: Can Money Ever Foster Social Transformation?" Hivos. 2013. Pg. 7.
[144] Muguongo, Wanja. "To Truly Internationalize Human Rights, Funding Must Make Sense". *openDemocracy*. 19 January 2015. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.

from group to group, from New York to Africa, doesn't work. As each group takes a cut,

the sums get smaller, but the reporting and accountability obligations get bigger. And the

local groups' actual level of control, and their ability to work effectively, disappears. This

kind of piecemeal, broken-telephone strategy wouldn't work if the funding were heading

in the opposite direction, from Nairobi to New York. Why, then, do they think it will work

in Africa?

Muguongo may in fact be the perfect person to state this, as she leads one of the flagship

solutions to the structural problems with traditional grantmaking—a regional intermediary, or "a

nonprofit organization or community foundation that provides specialized grantmaking services,

in combination with particular expertise and knowledge about the issues, populations, or

geography in question."[145] These pass-through mechanisms are a growing field, and LGBTI

funders in particular have leveraged them wisely. Not only do they "provide a pivotal bridge for

institutional and individual donors who do not have the capacity to engage in the complexities of

international grantmaking to support local NGOs working on LGBT rights,"[146] but they also reduce

some of the regulatory barriers on international grantmaking in general.[147] As a result,

intermediaries are able to operate on a more responsive level with grantees, capitalizing on their

local expertise to support innovation and sustainability through core support grants and directing

funds in many directions rather than solely to a backbone organization. Another example is

ISDAO, an intermediary for West Africa launched just in the past few months "dedicated to

strengthening and supporting a West African movement for gender diversity and sexual rights by

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[145] Dorf *supra* 134 at 5.
[146] Simon *supra* 89 at 18.
[147] Parkhurst, et al. *supra* 118 at 10.

adopting a flexible approach to grant-making and building a culture of philanthropy committed to equality and social justice."[148] Joined by the Other Foundation in Southern Africa, this network of regional intermediaries has revolutionized the structural landscape of funding for LGBTI causes in Africa to be more accessible, more adaptable, and, crucially, more impactful.

A related revolution in LGBTI grantmaking has been a renewed commitment to understanding the time horizon of change—both in the long-term and the immediate. Sigrid Rausing Trust is one funder which is aiming to establish long-term relationships, and it does this by allowing renewal grants to be considered for three consecutive three-year terms for a total of 10 years with minimum grant administration.[149] In doing so, it joins a growing trend of major funders recognizing that "social change doesn't happen overnight."[150] Astraea goes on to explain: "Core to our philosophy is building long-term, multi-year funding relationships. We're often the first funder to groups working in challenging situations, and we remain responsive when roadblocks come up and short-term goals must shift."[151] This responsiveness is also newly instilled in the resourcing of rapid response mechanisms around the world. Some of these rapid funds have resulted from immediate crises giving rise to a significant need for emergency grants. The Russia Freedom Fund by Arcus, OSF, and the Council for Global Equality, for instance, was established "in response to the recent and dramatic expansion of discrimination and violence directed at LGBT people in Russia, following anti-propaganda and other legislation passed earlier

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[148] "About Us". *ISDAO—Initiative for West Africa*. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[149] "How We Work". *Sigrid Rausing Trust*. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[150] "What We Do—Grantmaking". *Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice*. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[151] "What We Do—Grantmaking Philosophy". *Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice*. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.

this year [2013]."[152] Yet LGBTI funders have also provided earmarked grants to traditional emergency intermediaries such as Front Line Defenders[153] and the various chapters of the Urgent Action Fund, which allows online, text, and mobile funding applications for turnaround in as little as a week.[154] With emergency support procedures in place, local activists are able to be bolder and more outspoken while always knowing that there is somewhere to turn if things go sour.

This changing structure of LGBTI grantmaking in the pursuit of greater flexibility and responsiveness is fundamentally shaping a new landscape for the field—one which is more conducive to the lifecycle of emergence. Still, there is another step in this direction grantmakers must and are already beginning to take which represents simultaneously a significant achievement in humility and a new paradigm for learning and strategy. Recalling the deep structure of the global movement—the "limits to growth" caused by interlinked feedback processes of "progress" and "backlash"—systems thinking teaches us something perhaps counterintuitive: While we ought of course to strive to undermine the source driving backlash, an important leverage point is also found in limiting the gain around positive feedback loops, as "a system with an unchecked positive loop ultimately will destroy itself."[155] By no means does this suggest that either funders or activists should be still or retreat from the frontlines. Rather, this final leverage point calls on funders to understand and remedy the overgrowth of progress in some areas to address those left behind—particularly those who bear the brunt of the backlash. It is a reminder of the diversity the movement and a demand make sure gains are not

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[152] "Advocates for LGBT equality launch Freedom Fund to support LGBT Russians". Arcus Foundation. 28 November 2013. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[153] Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 26.
[154] "GPP Members..." *supra* 104
[155] Meadows *supra* 55 at 11.

disproportional, but rather spread evenly amongst community members.

A core tenet of systems change states, "It is essential that systems interventions remain rooted in action and do not become removed from the people in society they are designed to help."[156] While this may be true, from the beginning this is not what has been practiced. In reality a disproportionate amount of funding has been and continues to be disbursed solely in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic—meaning that "[t]he focus on HIV/AIDS and MSM needs, together with the lack of strong gender consciousness among many MSM leaders, ensured the marginalization of lesbians, bisexuals, and trans* people."[157] This oversight occurs at the level of grantmakers as well as on the ground. The Global Resources Report found that 82 percent of foundation and government funding did not have a population focus and thus it was awarded to "LGBTI people" broadly.[158] Nonetheless, in 2013 the median annual budget for intersex-led groups was less than $5,000,[159] and 20 percent of trans organizations had no budget at all.[160] As the participants of the "Orientations and Identities" conference noted, "the inclusions of 'T' and 'I' in LGBTI is too often tokenistic, without meaningful engagement with trans and intersex issues."[161] The "imaginary collective"[162] of "LGBTI" obscures the fact that it is primarily cis[163] gay men and lesbians who truly reap the benefits of global resource mobilization, and therefore

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[156] Abercrombie, et al. *supra* 36 at 10.

[157] Armisen, Mariam. "We Exist: Mapping LGBTQ Organizing in West Africa". Astraea Foundation. 2016. Pg. 10.

[158] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 22.

[159] Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice *supra* 138 at 3.

[160] Frazer, et al. *supra* 82 at 5.

[161] Sexuality Policy Watch *supra* 105 at 4.

[162] Davis, Masen; Gunther, Sarah; Scamell, Dave; and Cabral, Mauro. "A Paradigm Shift for Trans Funding: Reducing Disparities and Centering Human Rights Principles". *Harvard Kennedy School of Government LGBTQ Policy Journal*: vol. 1. 2015-2016. Pg. 104.

[163] "Cis" refers to "Cisgender"—meaning those who are not either trans nor intersex

funders ought to recognize how the movement must be resourced differently: "To be inclusive and effective, unique strategies are needed to reach different constituencies, in terms of sexual orientation, gender identity, class and race. Supporting only one kind of work will lead to a limited representation of the LGBT community and its needs."[164]

Some movement has already begun to diminish and dispel these discrepancies. The International Trans* Fund and Global Trans Initiative, referenced earlier, are clear attempts to fill the funding gap for trans communities. The Intersex Human Rights Fund additionally was launched by Astraea and Arcus in 2015 along with support from two individual donors, and, as a first-of-its-kind resource, sets out to support the "resilience, creativity and growth of intersex activism and to address the dearth of funding for intersex issues and communities."[165] Though admirable to be sure, each of these funds still requires the initiative of funders themselves to recognize and make room for trans and intersex needs. Commenting on the launch of the International Trans* Fund, several funders and trans leaders pivotal in its conception wrote, "In order to truly realize the rights of trans people, money must be put directly in the hands of trans activists."[166] Sentiments such as these are spreading, and many human rights funders "are increasingly viewing grantees as experts, and as such are designing grantmaking strategies that respond to priorities as articulated by grantees."[167] The first step in this devolution was to empower backbones and then regional intermediaries to have more say in strategic decisionmaking as it plays out in any given context. The final step is a devolution of

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[164] Simon *supra* 89 at 6.
[165] "Astraea Launches the World's First Intersex Human Rights Fund". *Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice*. 25 October 2015. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[166] Davis, et al. *supra* 162 at 107.
[167] Lawrence, et al. *supra* 93 at 21.

decisionmaking even further—and, again, LGBTI funders already pioneering this by moving toward participatory models.

Participatory grantmaking is, at its core, a recognition of an obvious, yet too-often ignored, fact—that "those at the front line of service delivery have first-hand experience of both the system within which they are embedded, and the real problems their clients face, and are often able to use their role, connections and experience to lever systemic change."[168] Traditional grantmaking places decisionmaking power in this hands of elite experts, most of the time removed from the issue they are funding not merely by thousands of miles, but by not having experience of it whatsoever. They only learn what works through the annual reports they receive, filtered through their grantees' wish for continuance. This problem we saw in strategic philanthropy, but in systems grantmaking it finds a solution through participatory models, which "seek to change the power dynamics inherent in philanthropy, especially between the Global North—where funding decision making and financial resources are concentrated—and the Global South, where many grantee beneficiaries are located."[169] Both UHAI and the Other Foundation are notable examples innovating this practice. In 2015, UHAI brought together a Peer Grants Committee made up of nine activists from four East African countries. These activists deliberated and were given the power to award two categories of grants: Msingi grants for seed funding to new organizations and to initiate small-scale activities, and Tujenge grants for core support, initiating large-scale activities, and program activities developing from or that build

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[168] Abercrombie, et al. *supra* 36 at 12.
[169] Lawrence, et al. *supra* 93 at 21.

upon existing work.[170] This clearly allows for a different type of strategy and rightfully prioritizes the knowledge of activists and the emergence lifecycle.

The Other Foundation's participatory method was similar.[171] In 2013, its first round of grants, it selected twelve peer reviewers from six countries in Southern Africa, all responding to an open call. These reviewers worked in four teams, facilitated by foundation board members, to review 114 applications from seven countries. The grant categories included:

1. The Namaqualand Daisy Grant: for individuals engaging in research and cultural work to advance the rights and well-being of LGBTI people in Southern Africa.

2. The Inyosi / Honey Bee Grant: for all organizations including unregistered, start-up organizations, for project based work to advance the rights and well-being of LGBTI people in Southern Africa.

3. The Hungwe / Fish Eagle Grant: for registered organizations undertaking project based work or for core support to advance the rights and well-being of LGBTI people in Southern Africa.

4. The Mosu / Umbrella Tree Grant: for national or regional organizations playing an 'anchor' role in advancing the rights and well-being of LGBTI people in Southern Africa.

As a result of this process, 32 grants were awarded across five countries in Southern Africa, supporting projects as varied as research into midwives' treatment of intersex babies to the Out in Africa film festival. Though this only represents approximately $225,000, the practice is a

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[170] Cook, Barbary and Vieira, Bia. "The Road to Successful Partnerships: How governments in the Global North can effectively partner with intermediary organizations to support LGBTI communities in the Global South and East". Global Philanthropy Project. June 2016. Pg. 42.
[171] Sutherland, Carla and Xaba, Khosi. "Participatory Grant Making: A success story from Southern Africa". The Other Foundation. 2015.

promising departure from the rigidity of traditional grantmaking structures in favor of one that is nearly the complete opposite. It is also the culmination of multiple leverage points LGBTI funders are deliberately targeting to make the funding structure—and thus the overall system— more conducive to the change they seek. In the end, LGBTI funders are already demonstrating how the needs, experiences, and knowledge of grantees can be made central.

Though there is much evidence of LGBTI funders adapting their funding structures, priorities, and methods to be better aligned with systems methods, there is still room to improve. Two opportunities in particular stand out. First, the Global North, and specifically the United States and Canada, continue to receive a grossly disproportionate share of funding. The Global Resources Report found that 51 percent of foundation and government support went to just those two countries, for a total of nearly $220 million. No region outside of Canada and the United States received more than $50 million, even Western Europe ($22 million).[172] One possible solution to the gaps in international funding might consequently involve a strict analysis of the funding of the Global North to understand whether it is being leveraged, is efficient, or is even necessary in some cases. Second, while this research did identify some promising trends in foundation grantmaking, 54 percent of global LGBTI grantmaking is done by just 16 government and multilateral agencies—probably even a low estimate given the incomplete dataset.[173] Though some collaborations between foundations and these government and agency funders are resourcing systemic change, further research and analysis would be necessary to determine the extent to which this class of funders is also thinking systemically. If they are not, forward-

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[172] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 2.
[173] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 2.

thinking foundations ought to prioritize strategies to make sure those significant resources are leveraged more strategically.

Strategic Interventions.

Whereas the previous section addressed the structure of funding itself, now I move on to consider the program strategies funders are pursuing in order to resource system-wide change. Again, there are very clear connections between the leverage points dictated by systems thinking and the real practices of LGBTI funders and their grantees. In the following, I focus on six of these synergies in order to measure the extent to which funders, one way or another, have determined to affect systemic change rather than simply alleviate the symptoms of exclusion based on non-conforming SOGIESC.

First, in seeking to tackle the backlash cycle the last section left unchallenged, it is necessary to focus on the leverage point found in the strength of negative feedback loops. This is, expectedly, complex, as "[a] complex system usually has numerous negative feedback loops that it can bring into play, so it can self-correct under different conditions and impacts."[174] Backlash must therefore be seen as a combination of various forces with the common goal of reestablishing the status quo where issues of non-conforming SOGIESC are invisible or actively suppressed. The specter of backlash also serves as a prior restraint preventing positive growth since "[s]ome LGBT rights groups have limited organizational capacity and are unable to connect with donors because they exist in an unsafe environment and cannot function openly."[175] Emergency grants providing relocation and security training are the foremost responses to

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[174] Meadows *supra* 55 at 9.
[175] Simon *supra* 89 at 18.

violent persecution and crackdown, especially in the case that it is extrajudicial. The Fund for Global Human Rights is one foundation that works in this area, "[f]acilitating security training for frontline activists and linking grantees with international, regional, and national experts that can coordinate prevention and responses to security threats."[176] Participants at a 2011 donor conference agreed that funders of LGBTI grantees in hostile environments ought to build contingency planning into their grants from the start, even allocating a certain portion to be reserved for emergency purposes.[177] The Other Foundation also found "positive indications arising from the engagement of LGBTI organisations and their allies with law enforcement agencies, an area that is traditionally been a source of violence... This has been achieved by 'sensitization' programmes, and by approaches to the agencies to demand protection against criminal actions against LGBTI people."[178] Broader civil society crackdown, which LGBTI organizations are frequently some of the first victims of, requires a different approach. The Global Philanthropy project suggests in these situations that funders "[s]upport organizations monitoring general restrictions on freedom of association and expression to also explicitly monitor laws and policies targeting LGBT groups, as these restrictions on LGBT groups may be early indicators of closing space."[179]

Monitoring does not need to be limited to freedom of association, however, but can instead become part of a wider range of activities providing additional leverage. A recurring

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[176] "Activism Under Threat". *Fund for Global Human Rights*. 2016. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[177] International Human Rights Funders Group. "First Do No Harm: Grantee safety for LGBTI and disability rights campaigners and other human rights defenders". April 2011. Published notes available on request.
[178] Gevisser *supra* 80 at 26.
[179] Global Philanthropy Project *supra* 136 at 5.

problem in LGBTI rights work is simply the lack of data, which Meadows notes "is one of the most common causes of system malfunction. Adding or restoring information can be a powerful intervention, usually much easier and cheaper than rebuilding physical infrastructure."[180] There are two components to this: First off, there is a need for better data on LGBTI funding. Sara Gunther of Astraea begs funders to disaggregate their data, writing, "The more our human rights data can tell us specific and meaningful stories about where our money is going, the more we can make informed choices about who and how to fund."[181] The 2016 Global Resources Report is an excellent response to this call for knowledge, but it too is imperfect, stating in its first few pages that "while we have captured information about the majority of funders that award large amounts of funding for LGBTI issues, we know there are some that we missed, especially local funders, corporate philanthropies, and various institutions that award one or a handful of grants that focus on LGBTI communities."[182] Funders must each individually commit to closely tracking, categorizing, and reporting their grants so that the aggregated data can reveal the true nature of the funding system and informed decisions can be made to fill the gaps.

Additionally, funding is incredibly important in documentation activities across the world to provide a measure of violence, persecution, and discrimination itself. Andrew Park puts this plainly, writing that, "private funding has been and can continue to be the primary source of support for activities to document and publicise trends of violence and discrimination..."[183]

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[180] Meadows *supra* 55 at 13.
[181] "Knowledge Is Power: LGBTQI And Human Rights Funders, Disaggregate Your Data!". *International Human Rights Funders Group*. 22 July 2015. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.
[182] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 5.
[183] Park, Andrew. "Grantmaking for SOGI programmes". *Forced Migration Review*: vol. 42, iss. 1. April 2013. Pg. 62.

Activities such as the Trans Murder Monitoring Project by Transgender Europe, the International

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association's State Sponsored Homophobia Report,

Bio-Behavioural Surveillance Surveys for HIV/AIDS monitoring, and many others ground LGBTI

movements in data, offering a better basis for activism as well as building a case for support to

potential funders. Without these, it would be impossible to know the true scale of violence,

persecution, and discrimination, and yet data on many communities (including trans and intersex

populations) and in many regions is still missing. Systems thinking teaches us that "[o]nly when

we allow organizations to look at troubling information and trust people within them to

reorganize around that information that we get truly transforming levels of change."[184] The same

holds true for social movements, and funders should prioritize the creation of critical knowledge

and datasets as a primary lever for creating change.

One principal arena where data becomes crucial is in advocacy for policy change, which

is one of the most easily understood and prioritized strategies across human rights funders since

"it is hard to imagine a social system of interest to foundations that is not shaped to a substantial

degree by public policy."[185] The Global Resources Report found that as much as 49 percent of

foundation and government funding went toward human rights advocacy, including challenging

discriminatory anti-LGBT laws, decriminalization and justice reform, gender identity protections,

marriage/civil unions, immigration and refugee issues, nondiscrimination protection, sexual and

reproductive rights, and fighting religious exemptions.[186] These legal and legislative approaches

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[184] Wheatley, Margaret. "Chaos and Complexity: What Can Science Teach?" *OD Practitioner*. Fall 1993. Pg. 8.
[185] Ferris, et al. *supra* 3 at 13.
[186] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 18.

offer leverage through changing the rules of the system: "If you want to understand the deepest malfunctions of systems, pay attention to the rules, and to who has power over them."[187] This can happen at many levels, but one key strategy has been to work with global bodies such as the United Nations, in effect creating opportunities across the entire world as "[r]egional, national, and local activists can use such advances to pressure other institutions, governing bodies, or specific governments to adopt similar language or perspectives in their own work or their own laws."[188] Nonetheless, policy reform is also perhaps too often put on a pedestal without regard for the linearity it presupposes. It may not be as simple as many funders pretend.

Sutherland and Klugman write that "there has been a growing focus on policy change as it is a visible and measurable signifier of the more amorphous notion of social change. Such donors have viewed policy change as a logical and linear process that can be achieved by grant making to a few partners, working on behalf of a broader movement."[189] In fact, "[t]here is a chicken and egg relationship between legal and policy reform on the one hand, and social inclusion on the other..."[190] An alternative vision is offered by Julia

Figure 2: Framework to Support Public Policy Strategy

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[187] Meadows *supra* 55 at 14.
[188] Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 7.
[189] Sutherland, C. and Klugman, B. "Finding a common ground: A participatory approach to evaluation". *African Evaluation Journal*: vol.1, iss.1, art. 39. 2013. Pg. 2.
[190] Gevisser *supra* 80 at 6.

Coffman at the James Irvine Foundation in Figure 2. Rather than relying on lobbying and litigation as typical advocacy strategies do, this framework "encourages foundations to think first about which audiences they need to engage and how hard they need to 'push' those audiences toward action."[191] As a result, it more holistically considers the various systems which contribute to simultaneous shifts in public awareness and legal or legislative outcomes, allowing for grantmakers to devise a strategy that sees a wider range of potential grantees as indispensable to efforts to change the system's goals.

These efforts to raise public awareness and hopefully influence societal attitudes present an incredibly powerful form of leverage, as they seek to change the mindset or paradigm out of which the system has arisen.[192] In that sense, funders work across several related strategies beyond policy advocacy. One is community, which is a primary concern for LGBTI individuals, most of whom are born into environments that do not understand them or are outright hostile toward them. Funding cultural centers, demonstrations, and Pride events is a predominant means through which grantmakers support community building, physically carving out space for LGBTI people to express themselves, either privately or publicly. Another important mechanism for building community is the arts in that, "[w]ithout arts and culture, coalition and movement-building are less likely and often impossible."[193] Astraea's Global Arts Fund supports everything from video to poetry to painting, performance, dance, and music, and yet it is one of the only funders which chooses to do so. Arcus, another key player, contributes alternatively to raising

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[191] Coffman, Julia. "Foundations and Public Policy Grantmaking". James Irvine Foundation. March 2008. PG. 6.
[192] Meadows *supra* 55 at 17.
[193] Enríquez-Enríquez, Mónica. "The Art of Change: Arts and Culture in the Advancement of Human Rights". *International Human Rights Funders Group*. 27 September 2012. Web. 26 Dec. 2016.

public awareness and building community through its Global Religions program, understanding that "[b]y supporting pro-LGBT Christian and Muslim groups, the foundation hopes to increase the number and effectiveness of faith messengers who can widely convey opposition to anti-LGBT bigotry and violence."[194] Of the $3 million in funding for faith-based programs recorded by the Global Resources Report, Arcus is the primary backer.[195] This is incredibly important work, as faith continues to underlie the majority of the hateful attitudes that LGBTI people endure globally, even in the Global North and West. LGBTI communities of faith also often find themselves at odds with their larger LGBTI movement, so Arcus' role supporting faith communities here fills a critical need of that particular constituency.

For many movements not able to physically convene through demonstrations or group meetings, visibility is achieved primarily through strategic use of the media, particularly social media: "Digital movements mean that those often silenced can speak truth to power. They have critical mass on their side. Not being constrained to physical space means that movements can also gain momentum rapidly and those voices that are often silenced can be amplified."[196] This offers a relatively inexpensive and safe means to promote LGBTI issues to a public audience, mitigating the risks undertaken by public demonstrations in defiance of the law or the threat of violence. Nevertheless, activists cannot always control the narrative, which has become apparent in the reckless outing of activists by local media agencies—putting individual LGBTI people at real

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[194] Hannah, Daryl. "What's Arcus Doing To Support The World's Most At-Risk LGBTs?". *Inside Philanthropy*. 13 May 2014. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.
[195] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 24.
[196] J. Bob Alotta qtd. in Naasel *supra* 124.

risk of intimidation and violence.[197] Funders such as the Heartland Alliance have responded to such incidents by supporting media sensitization programs[198], promoting the belief that "the training of journalists and their editors in issues that impact LGBT individuals can help defuse potentially incendiary coverage of both individuals and groups."[199] This may indicate a further instance of learning, as the linear logic between visibility and a shift in public sentiments has not always proven itself. The Other Foundation, for example, found that "in countries where the backlash cycle is still operative, this newer generation report that it has 'learnt the lesson' about visibility: the groups operate in a more covert, or at least cautious, way, than their antecedents did."[200] Funders must be cautious in privileging or prioritizing the visibility of movements as a result, always being mindful to work with activists in context to determine whether such attempts to raise awareness could result in backlash, and, if so, what contingency plans are in place for those who face it.

The investments in community and visibility are strategic for the purpose of raising awareness, of course, but funders must be wary too of what they ask or expect of movements. After all, movements are only as strong as the members comprising them. This gives rise to another important leverage point residing in the goals of the system, which for social systems relate to the movement's survival, resilience, and evolution.[201] The Global Resources Report

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[197] Peterson, Andrea. "The Internet Is Both A Blessing And A Curse For Uganda'S LGBTI Activists". *Washington Post*. 15 March 2014. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.
[198] Johnson, Cary Alan; Mladjenovic, Lepa; and Zdrojewski, Nicole. "Toolkit for Integrating LGBTI Rights Activities into Programming in the E&E Region". United States Agency for International Development. September 2014. Pg. 29.
[199] Galst *supra* 128 at 9.
[200] Gevisser *supra* 80 at 34.
[201] Meadows *supra* 55 at 16.

found that Health and Wellbeing received 23 percent of the total funding across 2013 and 2014, but 77 percent of that was solely for HIV/AIDS work.[202] This is not to downplay the important role HIV/AIDS funding has served. The Other Foundation's research into Southern Africa, for example, found that "[i]In every one of the ten countries under study, an LGBT movement has been incubated through the AIDS epidemic and, specifically, through the allocation of funding to groups that can provide outreach to the 'key populations' of 'men who have sex with men' and, more recently, 'transgender women'."[203] The opportunity here is when HIV/AIDS funding is flexible to the extent that it can also support broader social and systems change efforts. ViiV Healthcare is one such funder making this leap, its Positive Action MSM and Transgender Programme setting out to support MSM and trans communities "as they strengthen their capacity to lead, participate in policy-making and advocate addressing the health disparities and health service access issues keeping MSM/T individuals from lifesaving prevention and treatment."[204] In environments where direct funding for LGBTI rights work is impossible or dangerous, "key populations" funding may be the only way at all to resource groups facing marginalization and exclusion on the basis of their non-conforming SOGIESC, making it even more valuable.

The conversation on health although must still be expanded, as there are other health crises that require attention. Trans communities, for instance, face significant health disparities, and yet the priorities of donors working on trans issues remain legal and policy advocacy (78

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[202] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 18.
[203] Gevisser *supra* 80 at 21.
[204] "Positive Action for MSM and Transgender". *ViiV Healthcare*. 2016. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.

percent), attitude change (60 percent), and anti-violence (51 percent).[205] On the contrary, "Globally, the work trans* organizations are not currently doing that they most want to do include providing social services (35 percent), provision of health care (31 percent) and safety and anti-violence work (28 percent)."[206] Much of this need includes a greater focus on resourcing transition-related care, including access to and subsidies for hormone replacement therapy and even gender affirmation surgery. Such milestones are landmark to trans individuals, but they are often left to fund these either through their own savings or crowdsourcing. Intersex communities also confront immediate challenges in affirming healthcare access, many having been subjected to painful and unnecessary procedures their entire lives. This is why some of the primary work of intersex activists includes "engaging a range of practitioners, including surgeons, endocrinologists, psychologists, midwives, nurses as well as medical students in through formal trainings, as guest lecturers and through one-on-one engagement."[207] The consequence of these personal struggles is felt by the wider movements, as burnout reduces the forward momentum and undermines the overall sustainability of groups receiving funding. Astraea's 2016 report on intersex rights therefore appropriately recommends that funders support the creation of spaces "not only for strategizing and mobilizing, but for experience sharing, rest and respite."[208] The wellbeing of activists should not be overlooked in the systems change process.

The resilience of LGBTI movements is a complex problem, and it must be addressed through a variety of means. Affirmative healthcare access is absolutely one essential strategy,

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[205] Frazer, et al. *supra* 82 at 40.
[206] Frazer, et al. *supra* 82 at 15.
[207] Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice *supra* 138 at 24.
[208] Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice *supra* 138 at 30.

but systems change here must also go further to recognize that "[b]ecause LGBT people are some of the most marginalized individuals within their own countries and communities, they experience some of the direst economic circumstances. Often, their educational opportunities have been brutally limited by anti-LGBT discrimination, harassment and violence in schools and neighborhoods."[209] For human rights funders, this perhaps is unfamiliar territory as rights lenses so often focus on civil and political inclusion with little attention paid to economic disparities. The State Sponsored Homophobia report bemoans this fact, remarking that "neither human development nor economic development appear among the top categories of funding for LGBT issues, and in one study 'economic development' received less than one percent of total funding."[210] Hivos is one funder standing out in this area, and it prides itself on being "the first organisation in the world to put LGBT rights into a poverty alleviation/international development framework."[211] Solutions are myriad, including everything from inclusion programming at schools (which only receives 2 percent of funding[212]) and criminal justice reform to support for LGBTI job training and social enterprises.[213] Ultimately, the narrative of social exclusion cannot be changed without a similar focus on economic exclusion, and funders of LGBTI issues have room to grow in this particular area. As such, a purely rights-based approach may falter here, requiring funders to recenter notions of social justice to consider longer-term poverty alleviation and development.

To conclude this discussion of leverage points, one final strategy remains which inherently targets emergence itself, ensuring that the system maintains the capacity to incubate and

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[209] Galst *supra* 128 at 10.
[210] Carroll *supra* 77 at 26.
[211] "LGBT Rights Facts and Figures". *Hivos*. 2016. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.
[212] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 18.
[213] Galst *supra* 128 at 11.

develop new ideas. Meadows writes that one of the greatest points of leverage in any system is its power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize. In fact, she says that "[t]he ability to self-organize is the strongest form of system resilience."[214] For LGBTI activists or those of non-conforming SOGIESC, this is often one of the first barriers they encounter, as "[m]any organizations working on sexual orientation and gender identity are isolated."[215] To truly act systemically, however, they must be able to self-organize, and increasingly "[g]roups want funding to meet with one another on a regular basis so they can better collaborate and build coalitions to tackle especially complex problems and entrenched obstacles."[216] This is an area that there is extensive and growing engagement by global LGBTI funders, with conferences happening on local, regional, and global levels on an on-going basis. Many times, these convenings are organized by backbones for their constituents. The chapters of ILGA, for example, organize regional conferences on an annual or semi-annual basis. OutRight also holds an annual OutSummit, bringing LGBTI leaders from around the world together at the United Nations headquarters. All of these receive significant funding from foundations such as Ford, OSF, Arcus, Levis Strauss, and more. UHAI additionally organizes the biannual Changing Faces, Changing Spaces conference, which is "a safe, creative and facilitative space for African activists to strategise, network, plan and reflect on achievements and challenges within our movements."[217]

A core component to translating self-organization to true emergence, however, requires somewhat more than merely gathering LGBTI activists in a common space. Recalling the Systemic

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[214] Meadows *supra* 55 at 15.
[215] Simon *supra* 89 at 6.
[216] Krehely, et al. *supra* 90 at 18.
[217] "Creating a Just Resistance: Our Struggles, Our Strides..." *UHAI East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative*. 2016. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.

Change Process Map suggested by Joe Hsueh[218], the ability to self-organize sustainably relies upon funding for capacity building activities, and it is only through this critical support for leaders and organizations that prototype solutions can emerge, be developed, and scaled.[219] Astraea identified this need in their West Africa landscape report leading up the launch of ISDAO, writing, "There is a surge in LGBTQ organizing in the region, but the emerging leaders are mostly young and relatively inexperienced. They have passion but often lack the skills needed to move their initiatives beyond the initial stages, especially in places where no previous LGBTQ-led and/or MSM-led organizing has taken place."[220] Capacity building and leadership development are therefore where the resiliency of the system becomes fully evolutionary, and LGBTI funders are already engaged in this, providing training and technical assistance "around grant writing, communicating with donors, information technology, strengthening financial systems/reporting and improving evaluation methodology."[221] Building the capacity of leaders is part of resourcing the fundamental infrastructure and momentum of movements, and it is only through investing in individuals and organizations that new ideas can stand the test of time.

Hivos and UHAI offer an example of good practice here, collaborating on an interesting capacity building initiative, *Ji-Sort!* UHAI explains: "We are committed to identifying and supporting young, nascent ideas, sustaining funding over the years to allow for institutional development, and accompanying our funding with tailored capacity support in order to grow activist organisations to the kind of structural integrity that attracts further funding."[222]

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[218] See Figure 1, pages 21-22.
[219] Hsueh *supra* 53.
[220] Armisen *supra* 157 at 24.
[221] Simon *supra* 89 at 18.
[222] "GPP Members" *supra 104*.

Accordingly, the *Ji-Sort!* program has built the capacity of 25 East African LGBT groups through a

"three-year process that includes peer exchange, tailor-made training, leadership development

and organisational coaching."[223] Mama Cash has perhaps an even more integrated program,

stating that, "Emerging organisations address new manifestations of injustice, or they develop

innovative approaches that challenge deep-seated discrimination... Accompaniment is the name

that Mama Cash has given to the non-financial support we provide to our grantees.

Accompaniment means we are there for them in ways that go far beyond simply providing

money."[224] This strategy builds in technical assistance for early-stage organizations, showing a

concrete investment in identifying emergent solutions and making them sustainable. Funders

nonetheless may also delegate capacity building and technical assistance, instead leveraging

these activities as part of a networking plan. AJWS takes this approach, funding larger human

rights groups to assist emerging grantees, in effect "recognizing the importance of creating

opportunities for learning between international, regional, and grassroots organizations, as well

as opportunities for grassroots organizations to become key actors in shaping the international

human rights agenda."[225] Each of these commitments to convening and building the capacity of

groups signifies the opportunities presented by solutions just on the horizon, as well as the role

of funders in maintaining the ability of movements to survive, emerge, and, inevitably, evolve.

There are several opportunities for funders to nonetheless to improve their support for

emerging strategies beyond capacity building and technical assistance activities, primarily

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[223] "LGBT Rights..." *supra* 211.
[224] "Mama Cash's grantmaking supports women's, girls', and trans rights around the world." *Mama Cash*. 2016. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.
[225] Lawrence, et al. *supra* 93 at 24.

involving revisiting and assessing their application processes. Dreilinden, the Fund for Global Human Rights, Levi Strauss, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, and several others each do not accept unsolicited proposals (but for some instances in the case of emergencies). It is likely that these funders have contributed toward intermediaries or other mechanisms that *do* accept unsolicited proposals, however systemic change is brought to a halt when the door remains closed to opportunities you might not see. LGBTI individuals and communities who have lacked the capacity to build relationships with funders and attend international networking events often cannot succeed without open calls for applications. On that same note, even donors that do accept unsolicited proposals ought to make their applications easier, and, importantly, offer them in multiple languages. Nearly all applications are available in English (94 percent), but other languages are woefully unaccommodated for: Spanish (45 percent), French (33 percent), Russian (24 percent), Arabic (12 percent), Portuguese (9 percent), German (9 percent), and only one LGBTI donor offers materials in Mandarin.[226] This administrative barrier to funding could mean that billions of people are ineligible simply because of their language skills. Finally, though funders are recognizing the utility of flexibility and long-term core support, these practices are still lacking. 79 percent of LGBTI grants for the Global South and East were restricted for specific programs in 2013 and 2014, and 45 percent of that funding was for one year or less.[227] Funders have already identified every one of these administrative barriers as a challenge for grantees; they need only make good on their own recommendations.

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[226] Frazer, et al. *supra* 82 at 43.
[227] Hammond, et al. *supra* 95 at 30.

Learning in Systems.

Already we are beginning to see that LGBTI funders resourcing movements advancing rights and social justice for those of non-conforming SOGIESC have targeted many leverage points, adapting both their own structures as well as their programmatic portfolios in order to create systemic change. Just as their grantees, however, LGBTI funders cannot presume to operate in isolation. As nodes in the ever-expanding constellation of LGBTI actors, each must reconcile its own goals with the priorities of the movement itself, ultimately understanding the particular contributions it can make as part of a change system rather than simply episodic interventions seeking systems change. This was one of the key prerequisites to the aspiration of learning organizations, and it is another area where LGBTI funders are making headway.

Collaboration and coordination have already been seen in several of the funds launched: the International Trans* Fund, Global Trans Initiative, Intersex Human Rights Fund, and others all represent mechanisms through which funders are coordinating and pooling their grantmaking to create greater impact with the same (or perhaps additional) resources. Yet these funds in some manner represent the outcomes of coordination, not specifically the coordination itself. One means that LGBTI funders have traditionally coordinated their actions has been through affinity groups. In this space, there are multiple that offer opportunities for collaboration and learning: "Funders Concerned About AIDS; Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues[228]; Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health and Rights; Gill Foundation's OutGiving; Global Grantmakers Forum; Grantmakers Without Borders; Hispanics in Philanthropy; the International Human Rights

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[228] Their name was later changed to Funders for LGBTIQ Issues

Funders Group; and others."[229] These groups, even if they are not LGBTI-specific, provide forum space for new ideas to be presented and tested as well as housing institutional research into the grantmaking trends of those spaces themselves. This often includes tracking and mapping grants, as seen by the International Human Rights Funders Group's Advancing Human Rights: Knowledge Tools for Funders initiative—a program which performs research on human rights toolsets for the grantmaker community, ultimately working with the Foundation Center to publish its findings and develop maps disaggregating the data to reveal trends, including on LGBTI grantmaking.[230]

Akin to the International Human Rights Funders Group, Funders for LGBTIQ Issues has contributed to research for LGBTI funders specifically, and there is a history worth recounting of just how important it has been. A 2007 report by Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues, "A Global Gaze: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Grantmaking in the Global South and East"[231], was the first-ever landscape scan of international LGBTI grantmaking. It found **"pressing needs for emergency support, capacity building, human rights training, coalition building, advocacy initiatives and educational programs."[232] A conference later that year in Amsterdam funded by Arcus and attended by 30 LGBTI funders, in reflecting on this data, discovered that "there is little coordination among donors and no network where international LGBT rights funders could exchange strategies, pool resources or work under a shared human rights framework."[233] Arcus as a result set out to change this. In 2008, it funded a convening in Bellagio,

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[229] Dorf *supra* 134 at 13.
[230] "Advancing Human Rights: The State of Global Foundation Grantmaking". *International Human Rights Funders Group* and *Foundation Center*. 2016. Web. 29 Dec. 2016.
[231] Espinoza, Robert. "A Global Gaze: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Grantmaking in the Global South and East". Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues. 2007.
[232] Simon *supra* 89 at 2.
[233] Simon *supra* 89 at 2.

Italy, inviting 29 foundations, human rights champions, and international LGBT advocates "to forge concrete plans to meaningfully increase philanthropic resources to support vulnerable and underserved populations of LGBT people, particularly those living in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Latin America."[234] As part of this, Arcus also commissioned four research reports:[235]

1. Giving Out Globally: A Resource Guide of Funding Mechanisms to Support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights in the Global South and East. By Julie Dorf for the Arcus Operating Foundation.

2. International LGBT Advocacy Organizations and Programs: An Overview. By Jeff Krehely and Linda Bush for the Movement Advancement Project.

3. Mobilizing Resources for International LGBT Rights: Challenges and Opportunities. By Marcie Parkhurst and Amber Johnson for FSG Social Impact Advisors and the Arcus Operating Foundation.

4. Together, Apart: Organizing Around Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Worldwide. By Scott Long for Human Rights Watch.

The Bellagio meeting was just a first step, and since there have been a handful of additional Conferences to Advance the Human Rights of and Promote Inclusive Development for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons, in Stockholm in March 2010, Berlin in December 2013, Washington, D.C. in November 2014, and Montevideo in July 2016. Each has become "a mechanism through which progress has been tracked and pushed forward."[236]

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[234] Simon *supra* 89 at 1.
[235] Simon *supra* 89 at 23.
[236] Cook, et al. *supra* 170 at 7.

An important outcome of this undertaking was additionally the 2009 founding of the Global Philanthropy Project, a collaboration of 16 funders and philanthropic advisors of LGBTI issues seeking to expand global support for LGBTI issues in the Global South and East. It does this by "building the knowledge, skills and capacity of GPP members and other funders to enhance their effectiveness as grantmakers, and to increase the number of funders and amount of funding available across sectors to support global LGBTI issues."[237] Since its founding, GPP has produced original research, participated in convenings, and, notably, established and continues to host three working groups focusing on the structure of funding: the Bilateral Working Group, coordinating activities with governmental and bilateral agencies; the Individual Donor Working Group, researching and organizing catered toward individual donors without an established charitable fund; and the Trans* Funding Working Group, supporting collaborative efforts to increase overall funding for trans issues.[238] The Global Philanthropy Project thus unmistakably represents a substantial investment in the network coordination and collaboration of LGBTI funders themselves, which no longer operate in isolation.

The extent to which this system is able to learn is a final point to be elaborated. There is no doubt that recent achievements in coordination, collaboration, and research suggest LGBTI funders are working to be more responsive and share lessons and strategies. This is incredibly important, and these activities should be continued. There must nonetheless be a means for funders to not only learn from one another, but to learn from their grantees themselves. Nicolette Naylor, the Southern Africa regional director for the Ford Foundation, writes, "For one

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[237] "Who We Are". Global Philanthropy Project. 2016. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.
[238] "Who We Are" *supra* 237.

thing, the Global North has to do a whole lot less preaching and talking and a whole lot more listening and learning. We're so busy giving advice and implementing solutions that come from New York, Geneva and Brussels that we've lost touch with the needs and realities of the LGBTI community."[239] LGBTI funders, in contrast, are making learning a priority in a few distinct ways.

A 2013 meeting in Berlin titled "Advancing Trans* Movements Worldwide" offers one instance where the input of activists was incorporated from the start, and in fact, by the end of that meeting "trans activists and funders had identified recommendations to increase and improve funding to trans movements, including establishing mechanisms for ongoing learning and collaboration, conducting a trans movement and issue mapping in order to better inform donor coordination and investment, and exploring the possibility of a global fund for trans activists."[240] This fund would later materialize as the International Trans* Fund, which preserves as a guiding principle, "We hold self-determination as a core value. Trans* leadership, decision making and power are critical to the Fund. We believe trans* people are creative and resilient, and fully capable of creating, improving, and sustaining their communities and movements."[241] The participatory grantmaking models reviewed earlier share this sentiment, and the act of working with peer reviewers is another opportunity for continued learning. A report supported by Levis Strauss on participatory methods found, "Participatory Grantmaking Funds serve as a powerful intermediary between grassroots organizing and traditional institutional donors,

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[239] Naylor, Nicolette. "The Global North Has To Stop Telling LGBTI People In The Global South What To Do, And Start Listening". *Bhekisisa*. 4 July 2016. Web. 27 Dec. 2016.
[240] Davis, et al. *supra* 162 at 109.
[241] Davis *supra* 120 at 2.

functioning as a learning hub for institutional donors and participants."[242] Simply the process of

working together with activists on the ground rather than exchanging application materials and

emails is where learning truly happens. Astraea reflects this perspective acutely, refuting

detractors to state, "Critics say we are not strategic, based on top-down thinking. As a

foundation, we have a unique vantage point working with many movement organizations and

our strategy, in fact, is to facilitate change with activists leading the conversation."[243]

The combination of both learning and evaluation is probably best exemplified in a case

study on participatory evaluation from 2013. A series of workshops with eleven intermediaries

funded by Arcus revealed that, while there was resistance to a donor-driven agenda, the

intermediaries could not adequately explain their own strategic thinking. The collaborators thus

agreed to a pilot baseline study of Kenya, funded by Arcus, Hivos, and the Urgent Action Fund–

Africa, and from the very beginning designed to be a collaborative learning process for grassroots

activists and funders. Coordinated by UHAI, the first series of workshops set out to refine

potential outcomes in a policy change strategy, recognizing fully that "there is no inevitable

relationship between social problems and efforts to address them because society is highly

complex with multiple and unpredictable factors influencing any specific changes."[244] The

collaborators identified six areas necessary to policy change (Figure 3):[245] 1) problems; 2)

solutions and/or policy or service implementation options; 3) politics; 4) bureaucracy and/or

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[242] Lafeyette Practice. "Who Decides: How Participatory Grantmaking Benefits Donors, Communities and Movements". 2014. Pg. 4.
[243] "Trust in Community..." *supra* 141.
[244] Sutherland, et al. *supra* 189 at 4.
[245] Sutherland, et al. *supra* 189 at 4.

administration; 5) courts; and 6) public values and actions. This complexity analysis confirms that "achieving change cannot be accomplished by one person or one group. It requires collaboration."[246] Yet the researchers also concluded: "...whilst the achievement of a social movement's goals cannot be
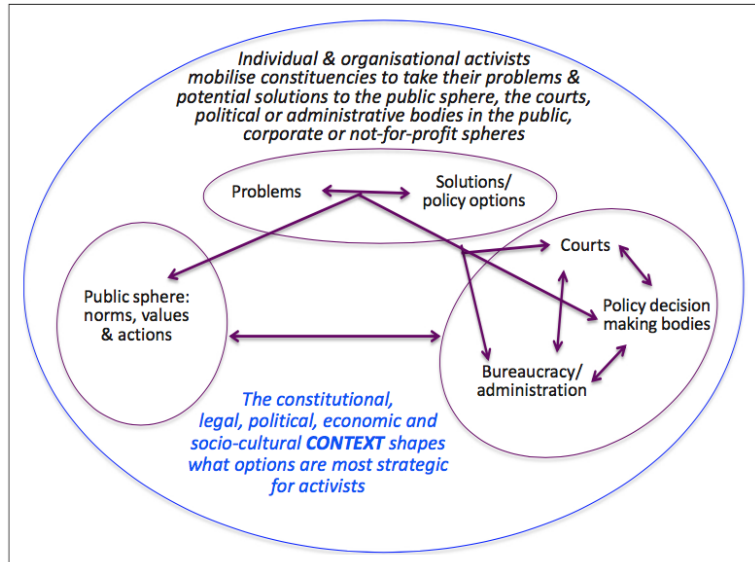

Figure 3: Model for analyzing the advocacy process to influence public perspectives and actions, and for influencing decision makers to make, retain or implement policies

predicted, it is possible to identify the extent to which an initiative for social change is strengthening over time."[247] They then suggest eight "outcome categories":[248]

1. Strengthened organisational capacity including whether groups are registered, have systems of governance and financial management, leadership, strategic and communications capacity, adaptability;

2. Strengthened base of support, that is, the breadth of membership or public figures supporting the issue;

3. Strengthened alliances between organisations working on the same issue, and with organisations and networks on other issues;

4. Increased data and analysis from a social justice perspective;

5. The development of consensus around a common definition of the problem and possible

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[246] Sutherland, et al. *supra* 189 at 5.
[247] Sutherland, et al. *supra* 189 at 5.
[248] Sutherland, et al. *supra* 189 at 5.

policy options by an ever-widening constituency of people (both of which will also evolve over time with new insights, data and constituencies informing them);

6. Increased visibility of the issue in policy processes resulting in positive policy outcomes, including maintaining gains, and maintaining pressure through on-going monitoring of the implementation of policy. A litigation process and judicial finding would also fit within this outcome;

7. Shifts in social norms (such as decreased discrimination against a specific group or increased belief that the state should provide high quality education). That said, along the way, one may start to see shifts in public understanding and visibility of the issues, as the problem definition or potential solutions gain social acceptance over time; and

8. Shifts in population-level impact indicators (such as decreased violence against women, suicides of gay youth, or increased educational achievement amongst groups with historically poor achievement).

A subsequent series of workshops enabled the research team and Kenyan grassroots activists to assess to then "map" the various organizations working in Kenya on issues related to SOGI, providing, what in systems thinking terms, would be a "phase space" analysis. Below are two separate mappings, the first produced in 2006 (Figure 4) and the second in 2011 (Figure 5):[249]

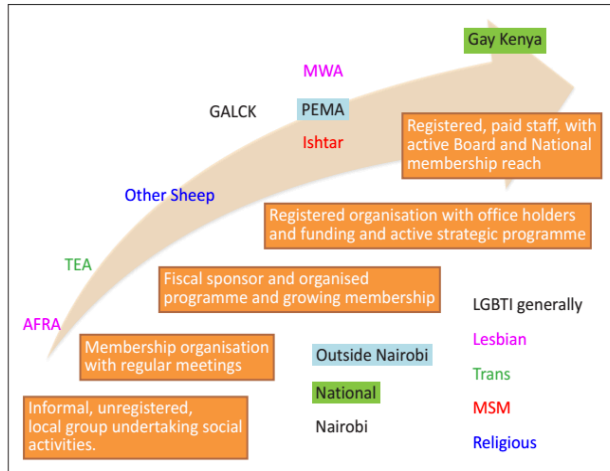[249] Sutherland, et al. *supra 189* at 8-9.

Figure 4: Figure 4: Chart of organisations working on SOGI-related issues in Kenya (2011)
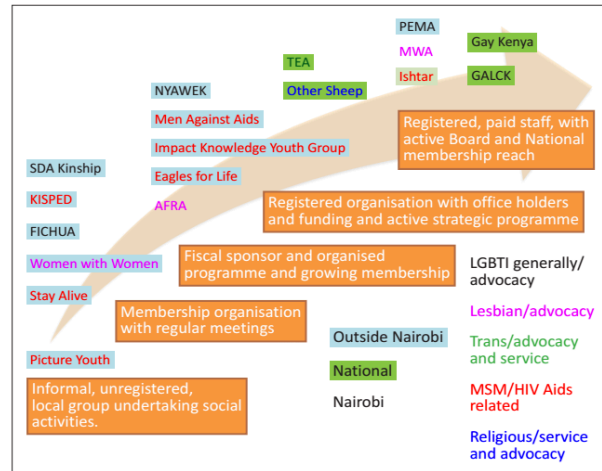
Figure 5: Chart of organisations working on SOGI-related issues in Kenya (2006)

Though this entire project took several years, the participatory process entrenched both learning and collaboration as a fundamental strategy in Kenyan organizing around non-conforming SOGIESC. The final products of the project furthermore serve as lasting tools in order to determine leverage points for policy change across multiple spheres comprising the Kenyan social system and also as a means to measure progress over the long-term in something other than simple outcomes. The researchers conclude, "The broader value of this kind of approach is to ensure that donor programming and activist agendas are grounded on the actual context and dynamics in a specific country, rather than the hopes of donor boards or programme officers on other continents."[250] As far as a learning organization might be realized, this process reveals some deep thinking far beyond the rigid evaluations and indicators offered by traditional grantmaking.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

William Schambra, a philanthropy advisor, wrote in 2014 in response to the fall of

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[250] Sutherland, et al. *supra* 189 at 10.

strategic philanthropy and rise of complexity thinking, "There are very few pesky, inquisitive flies on the sumptuous mahogany walls of American foundations."[251] As one of those pesky flies, the past several years of this research I have undertaken has foremost sought to identify good versus bad practices, promising models, and effective means to empower those who need it. Systems grantmaking is one of the rising stars in philanthropy which offers these solutions, and increasingly major foundations are moving toward this type of analysis in their strategic planning, collectively understanding that "[p]eople have designed the systems within which they live. The shortcomings of those systems result from defective design, just as the shortcomings of a power plant result from erroneous design."[252] This project, from a similar standpoint, set out to assess the extent to which current funders of LGBTI issues are thinking and acting systemically and making changes where need be to generate the impact they seek. While it originally hoped to offer a new paradigm for thinking, what it found was somewhat unexpected—but perhaps it should not have been.

Systems thinking for social change declares that "changing systems requires a healthy and well-coordinated nonprofit ecosystem comprising foundations, grantees and affected communities. When one part of the nonprofit system changes for better or worse, the entire system is affected."[253] Practitioners at all levels and across sectors continue to learn the hard way that the interconnectedness of social problems requires a different kind of approach—one that meets the complexity we are challenged by rather than distilling simplicity wherever it can. In

[251] Schambra, William. "Is Strategic Philanthropy Yesterday's News?". 10 June 2014. Web. 14 Nov. 2016.
[252] Forrester, Jay. "Designing the Future". *ClexChange*. 1998. Pg. 6.
[253] Jagpal, Niki and Laskowski, Kevin. "Real Results: Why Strategic Philanthropy is Social Justice Philanthropy". National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. 2013. Pg. 13.

fact, systems analysis as a specific methodology may be a latecomer in the practice of social change, as "[t]he concepts and language surrounding systems change may be new to some, but acting systemically is something that many in the social sector already do by putting beneficiaries at the centre of their work, as well as advocating for strategic or policy-level change."[254]

In overviewing the top LGBTI funders, what becomes clear is that many of the leading philanthropies are already acting systemically: They are working to change the rigid structures which stand in the way of innovation; they are rejecting strict timelines for change and instead focusing on relationships, networks, and community; they are pioneering ways to involve or even hand over decisionmaking power to beneficiaries; and they are working across a variety of leverage points, on the basis of a number of mental models, all with the intention of fostering a world more accepting of non-conforming SOGIESC. While specific systems methodologies, jargon, and toolkits may not have been deliberately deployed, there is no doubt that funders in this area are targeting the system at its roots. Perhaps this is merely a sign of a different type of overlap, as Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski writing for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy point out, "We contend that, at their best, social justice philanthropy and strategic philanthropy are not at odds. Indeed, the two are one and the same." Social justice as a framework, when properly practiced is a systems approach. LGBTI funders therefore might be predisposed to such thinking given the challenge of the intractable problem they are charged with solving:[255]

Unlike other struggles for human dignity, LGBT issues are not limited to race, color,

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[254] Abercrombie, et al. *supra* 36 at 10.
[255] Simonyi *supra* 85.

gender, social classes, religious or cultural background, economic possibilities or political

convictions. An LGBT strategy should be global and comprehensive in vision, consider

every group's sensitivities. Within the global LGBT strategy, communities should be

considered and approached based on all their distinctive characteristics including the

political environment, cultural, historic or social particularities.

The sheer fact that experiences of SOGIESC are so cross-cutting is one clear reason why systemic

approaches may be a given and all other attempts to offer solutions short of social justice have

been deemed inadequate. A coevolution of systems grantmaking and social justice strategies

deserves additional research to draw out linkages between the two models.

One leverage point listed by Donella Meadows I've left out of this analysis—the point of

highest leverage, in fact. She writes, "People who cling to paradigms (just about all of us) take

one look at the spacious possibility that everything they think is guaranteed to be nonsense and

pedal rapidly in the opposite direction. Surely there is no power, no control, no understanding,

not even a reason for being, much less acting, in the notion or experience that there is no

certainty in any worldview."[256] The leverage point here is in detaching yourself from that

certainty, staying flexible in your understanding, and realizing that no paradigm is ever actually

"true". Strategic philanthropy, systems thinking, social justice, and any number of

methodologies, ideologies, theologies, etc. try to mask the complexity of the world with a way to

reduce it and make it legible. There is nevertheless an emergent power in refusing to tame that

complexity. Wheatley, another systems thinking titan, concludes, "To stand at the edge of that

abyss and to throw in our tools and techniques and to know that out of that process something

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[256] Meadows *supra* 55 at 19.

more wonderful, more useful, more helpful can come, I believe, is the real challenge."[257] For all

the time we spend crafting strategies and making plans, the world will never be predictable; it

will undoubtedly always be mired in chaos. The best solutions to our biggest problems will come

when we learn to live with that chaos and the ways it will never cease to surprise us.

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[257] Wheatley *supra* 184 at 9.