POST CAPITALIST PHILANTHROPY

EXAMINING THE NARRATIVE LANDSCAPE FOR CULTURAL EVOLUTION

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WHITE PAPER

By Culture Hack Labs & Transition Resource Circle

Executive Summary

This white paper is a joint collaboration between the *Transition Resource Circle* (TRC) and *Culture Hack Labs* (CHL). The focus of this work is on institutional philanthropy as it has the potential to play a critical role as a "territory of transition" toward *post capitalist realities* - rebalancing wealth, knowledge and power while repairing historical injustices. We believe that the wealth currently concentrated and privately held in the unaccountable and often occluded sector of philanthropy is the world's shared, collective endowment, which includes many aspects of wealth beyond money. This shared wealth has been built on the backs of countless generations and an accretion of human, and more-than-human labor, destruction and sacrifice. We also believe that the meta-crisis is not something outside of us. All of us who are embedded in capitalist modernity are complicit (to varying degrees of course) in perpetuating the dominant culture.

Philanthropy believes it is part of the solution. And sometimes it is. Yet, all too often, philanthropy exacerbates our current exploitative system through undemocratic and unaccountable processes - for example, by increasing endowments through existing market mechanisms - and through a lack of imagination on how to support the requisite paradigm shifts.

We believe that the philanthropic sector requires a deeper structural analysis of power, privilege and capital; a more experienced understanding of how to build transition infrastructure; a stronger relational web of partners, communities and organizations; a circle of allies to support the necessary inner work of contemplation and accountability, decolonization and spiritual/political praxis to go beyond extractive capitalism and make kin with the living world once again. We call this work *Justice Plus Onto-Shifts*.

What *Justice Plus Onto-Shifts* tries to do is not simply ask for a seat at the table, but to deconstruct the table, the room and the house of capitalist modernity itself by exposing the traditional conceits of philanthropic language & practices, by offering new potential avenues & frames for discourse, and by convening a community-of-praxis that is willing to redefine the limits of traditional philanthropy to help create post capitalist possibilities within the ecosystem of philanthropy.

This research starts by drawing an empirical picture, a snapshot, of the current narrative landscape within philanthropy - how some actors within philanthropy are speaking about the sector, their work and role, and what that says about our vision for wealth itself. The first part of this research concludes by arguing that we need to move from a structure of philanthropy and logic of wealth rooted in notions of control/extraction towards liberation/regeneration.

From our research we identified six narrative communities:

1. **The Future of Philanthropy is Business as Usual:** This community, represented by big philanthropies, does not criticize the current system that underpins and enables philanthropy to exist and that furthers the crisis. It focuses on the symptoms of the system, and does not question its own role: economic growth is central to its operating system.

2. **Systems Change:** Philanthropic institutions that talk about root causes and the intersectionality of the crisis. Though they do not necessarily pinpoint the need to change the system of late-stage capitalism nor do they speak to their complicity in the system.

3. **Decolonization is a Wake-Up Call:** Civil society, activists and philanthropists focus on redistributing power and money. Philanthropy recognizes its complicity in the systems that need changing.

4. **Philanthropy-as-Reparations:** An offshoot of the decolonization community where there is increasing realization that wealth has been extracted through colonial means, then philanthropy as reparations.

5. **The New Custodians:** Philanthropic institutions and civil society argue that money should be in the hands of the communities. The traditional structure of philanthropy is being reimagined: not just in discourse, but in practice too. They are inspired by more relational and eco-centric frameworks from grassroots community organizing, social or Indigenous movements.

6. **Reimagining Wealth:** Actors reimagining wealth to include resources that are not monetary, e.g. skills, knowledge, leadership, land, connection to earth, seeds, clean water, etc. In some cases, Indigenous communities are framed as the original philanthropists as sharing is a foundational value.

Plotting the narrative communities on the map enabled us to see patterns and consider the evolutionary capacity of each narrative community towards liberation and regeneration. We conclude by pointing to a new/emerging/ancient horizon - *wealth as a transition pathway* - where wealth is alchemized through philanthropy to serve liberation and regeneration and usher in post capitalist realities worth living. We conclude the report with specific reframes that are rooted in post capitalist logic and semantic frames.

The overarching semantic frame we work with is: "Wealth as a Transition Pathway". The underlying logic and goal is transforming the essence and function of wealth to build post capitalist infrastructure, utilizing and alchemizing wealth in the short window of time it is still valuable. This is achieved through three key metaphors: (1) Wealth as Mycelium; (2) Composting Hierarchies into Rhizomes and; (3) Philanthropy as Ecosystem Cultivation.

Part 1: Analysis

Background

Thank you for taking the time to embark on this collective sense-making journey with us. This report is a collaboration between the *Transition Resource Circle* (TRC) and *Culture Hack Labs* (CHL).

TRC is an assemblage of activists, writers, cosmologists, researchers and others focused on addressing the root causes of our meta-crisis. We are focused on building *transition pathways* to guide us through the meta-crisis to adjacent possible futures that serve Life[1]. We work with/in/through philanthropy to alchemize and liberate capital to usher in post capitalist realities through practices rooted in liberatory and post-anthropocentric values such as solidarity, interbeing, relationality, reciprocity and animism[2].

CHL supports organizations, social movements and activists to create cultural interventions for narrative-led systems change. Our mission is to change the cultural narratives that create and justify ecological breakdown, extraction, racialized hierarchies, patriarchy, inequality and poverty. We believe that power rests on the ability to harness and control language; and that humans make sense of their world through stories (see CHL White paper[3]). The humanist and capitalist values typified by the Enlightenment manifested through colonialism, "accumulation by dispossession" and neoliberal hegemony have brought humanity and much of the living world to the brink of extinction[4]. Developing new social and cultural beliefs is a critical lever in this transition towards post capitalist systems.

Going forward, the "we" of this white paper refers to this joint research project between TRC and CHL.

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1   *The meta-crisis is a term that refers to the interconnected, cascading crises of ecological collapse, climate change, species extinction, increasing pandemics, institutional racism, rising authoritarianism, spiking inequality and inhumane poverty, amongst other factors. The premise is that all of these consequences are the logical outcome of our dominant economic, political, and cultural system.*
2   *Post capitalism is an umbrella concept for us to better understand what we want to transition out of and transition into. Post capitalism is not simply another 'ism' to replace previous ideologies. It is not a euphemism for socialism or anarchism or Nordic capitalism, although it may contain some elements of each. Post capitalism is a conceptual container for social pluralities based on shared values that stem from an experience of the shortcomings of the existing system and the lived experience of life-centric alternatives. See Ladha & Murphy (2022), Post Capitalist Philanthropy.*
3   *https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-one-culture-and-the-anthropocene/culture-and-the-anthropocene-whitepaper/*
4   *"Accumulation by dispossession" is a process identified by neo-Marxist geographer David Harvey in which peasants were separated from common lands along with their traditional means of subsistence, and turned into a landless proletariat class, forced into wage labor. This process formed the basis of capitalist social relations. Harvey, David. "The 'new' imperialism: accumulation by dispossession." In Karl Marx, pp. 213-237. Routledge, 2017; Harvey develops Marx's concept of "primitive accumulation" https://www.exploring-economics.org/en/discover/anti-capitalist-chronicles-accumulation-by-disp*

Introduction: Why Philanthropy?

The focus of this work is on institutional philanthropy as it has the potential to play a critical role as a "territory of transition" toward *post capitalist realities* - rebalancing wealth, knowledge and power while repairing historical injustices. We believe that the wealth currently concentrated and privately held in the unaccountable and often occluded sector of philanthropy is the world's shared, collective endowment, which includes many aspects of wealth beyond money. This shared wealth has been built on the backs of countless generations and an accretion of human, and more-than-human labor, destruction and sacrifice. We also believe that the meta-crisis is not something outside of us. All of us who are embedded in capitalist modernity are complicit (to varying degrees of course) in perpetuating the dominant culture[5].

Philanthropy believes it is part of the solution. And sometimes it is. Yet, all too often, philanthropy exacerbates our current exploitative system through undemocratic and unaccountable processes - for example, by increasing endowments through existing market mechanisms - and through a lack of imagination on how to support the requisite paradigm shifts.

As we have argued in *Post Capitalist Philanthropy* (Daraja Press, 2023), philanthropy serves as a "framework enabling tax-free, privately controlled accumulation of assets in order to solve the very problems that wealth accumulation creates in the first place." As such, philanthropy represents the "most symbolic paradox of capitalism."

We believe that the philanthropic sector requires a deeper structural analysis of power, privilege and capital; a more experienced understanding of how to build transition infrastructure; a stronger relational web of partners, communities and organizations; a circle of allies to support the necessary inner work of contemplation and accountability, decolonization and spiritual/political praxis to go beyond extractive capitalism and make kin with the living world once again. We call this work *Justice Plus Onto-Shifts* (JPOS).

We borrow the term "onto-shifts" from the work of David Bollier and Silke Helfrich in their important book, *Free, Fair and Alive*: *The insurgent power of the commons.* Ontology is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of being. It is our subjective understanding of the "isness" of the world, of reality itself. What ontology teaches us is that the manner in which we approach (our ontology) can often be more important than what we think we are approaching (our epistemology). What we have seen in the social justice space more broadly, and in philanthropy more particularly, is a calcification of justice narratives and a collapsing of identity politics that reify the "us-versus-them" frame and further polarize factions, even amongst progressive and radical groups.

The result is often a reification of the current neoliberal paradigm. Justice starts to look like

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5   *Here is an article written by TRC co-directors Alnoor Ladha and Lynn Murphy for CHL that dives deeper into the machinations of philanthropy as a territory of transition: https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-02-territories-of-transition/wealth-as-territory-of-transition/#note14*

more inclusion within the life-destroying system. What *Justice Plus Onto-Shifts* tries to do is not simply ask for a seat at the table, but to deconstruct the table, the room and the house of capitalist modernity itself by exposing the traditional conceits of philanthropic language & practices, by offering new potential avenues & frames for discourse, and by convening a community-of-praxis that is willing to redefine the limits of traditional philanthropy to help create post capitalist possibilities within the ecosystem of philanthropy.

Context

We are in the midst of a meta-crisis. Ecological collapse, climate change, rising inequality, authoritarianism, institutional racism & patriarchy, and other systemic issues are all part of a complex web of an intersecting crisis stemming from a growth-based economic system. The modern incarnation of this system - neoliberal capitalism - is based on an underlying logic of separation from each other and the living world. Embedded within this logic is the false assumption of human exceptionalism (i.e. anthropocentrism), rationalist-materialism, and entitlement-based exploitation. The neoliberal system, and the meta-crisis it fuels, is not something that only lives outside of us: these logics and systems operate within us, and through our relations, institutions, cultures, narratives and beyond.

This report looks at how the system of neoliberal capitalism and its underlying ontologies-the foundational lens of how we perceive and construct reality- operate through the narrative landscape of institutional philanthropy. With an estimated global value of roughly 2.3 trillion or 3% of global GDP (a similar size to Canada's GDP) philanthropy can be considered one of the top ten wealthiest industries in the world[6]. Created as both an externality and extension of capitalism itself, philanthropy relies on economic growth to operate, exist and grow in influence.

Fortunately, as with all paradoxes, possibilities also emerge. A growing number of individuals and institutions within philanthropy recognize the deep contradictions within the sector, critiquing its ongoing capitalist-colonialist practices, and calling for radical change. This research situates itself within this wider ecosystem, and endeavors to walk in solidarity with the many efforts and movements to transform philanthropy to respond to our world in crisis.

To that end, we explore how philanthropy might transition from the current logic of capitalism where wealth is generated through extraction and used as a means of control to a paradigm where philanthropy engages in healing and liberating wealth in service to Life. The research concludes by pointing to a new/emerging/ancient horizon - *wealth as a transition pathway* - where wealth is alchemized through philanthropy to serve liberation and regeneration and usher in post capitalist realities worth living. We conclude the report with specific reframes that are rooted in post capitalist logic and semantic frames.

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6   https://www.privatebank.citibank.com/newcpb-media/media/documents/insights/Philanthropy-and-global-econo-my.pdf

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Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify narrative interventions that advance post capitalist philanthropy. By post capitalist we are not referring to a system that temporally exists after capitalism, but rather, adjacent systems that may already exist that are informed by the impoverishment of capitalism. Post capitalism is informed by capitalism but is not an end-state that simply comes after it (which is why we spell the two words separately without a dash).

There are simultaneous post capitalist realities that exist right now, some of which have existed for hundreds of years (e.g. various Indigenous cultures) and some for decades (e.g. Zapatistas, Rojava). Also, an aspect of many lived alternatives to capitalism is to deconstruct the conditioning of future fixation, of a belief that a new society will necessarily be better. As such, we aim to stand in the present, rooted in a deep historical understanding while actively building new-ancient-emerging ways of living, knowing and being beyond the logic of capitalism.

Therefore, post capitalist realities share a set of values including solidarity, reciprocity, generosity, cooperation, altruism, non-violence, relationality, interdependence, regeneration, care, interbeing and interbecoming. The aim of philanthropy within this model is to use capital, in the short period of time it is valuable, to liberate capital and to create post capitalist infrastructure (from community organizing infrastructure to food/water/land/medicinal/educational sovereignty.

This research paints an empirical picture, a snapshot in time, of the current narrative landscape within philanthropy - how some actors within philanthropy are speaking about the sector, their work and role, and what that says about our vision for wealth itself. We then move to a reframe strategy that offers suggestions on potential narrative avenues to help support post capitalist philanthropy.

Culture Hack Labs (CHL) has developed a rigorous narrative analysis methodology (starting in 2011, initially through the work of the *The Rules* collective) to expose, disrupt and shift cultural narratives and assumptions. CHL then works to reframe and change the narrative discourse.

The CHL methodology has five components: *Ask, Listen, Understand, Recode* and *Intervene*. First an inquiry is defined, then CHL collects and analyzes data in order to propose reframes that can then be tested as part of a narrative intervention. Working in collaboration with social movements and/or groups of activists, we collectively organize and strategize around the reframes. The remainder of this report focuses primarily on the first three steps of the philanthropy narrative analysis: *Ask, Listen* and *Understand*.

Ask:
Starting with a Point-of-View, this section provides the goal and intention of the narrative intervention, contextualizes the data collection and informs the analysis. For this research, TRC provided the following intention: "Engaging in post capitalist philanthropy requires actively giving up capital and other forms of traditional power (e.g. through different grantmaking practices, spend-down of endowment, etc.) while shifting consciousness (onto-shifts). Our vision includes the eventual dissolution of institutional philanthropy as part of a broader strategy of creating transition pathways to post capitalist realities."

Listen:
The next step is to listen and understand the narrative landscape. The CHL listening model is how data is collected and the parameters set: What do we listen to? Where? How? For How long? More details are provided in the section below.

Understand:
The analysis of data collected is used to identify narrative communities (i.e. actors engaged in a similar conversation using similar narratives over a period of time) and their language. We make a map of the main narrative communities, the frames they propagate, and assess the potential for narrative evolution. In this case, narratives that could transition towards post capitalist philanthropy.The next phase of the research involves a narrative reframe to activate new logics, ideas, and beliefs. This reframe is then used in narrative interventions.

Listening Model

We first conducted "small listening" (the manual collection of data), which allowed us to identify texture and nuances in the narrative space around philanthropy[7]. We used keywords to access current debates in and around the philanthropic sector such as "Strategic philanthropy", "outcomes based philanthropy", "decolonizing wealth" and "Just Transition". Our keywords were identified through exploration of the PCP book, consultations with TRC & allies, and conducting web searches of philanthropic spaces online[8].

We then conducted a "big listening" model which reveals more overarching and quantitative patterns in the narrative space. This was done using a data-monitoring platform to reveal more quantitative insights (what are the conversation nodes, what are the top conversations, frequency of words, top locations of the conversation, etc). For approximately one month in late 2023, we searched keywords such as "Decolonization" and "Just Transition" alongside "philanthropy" across globally and publicly accessible data sources[9]. For a full list of our big listening keywords see this *Appendix*.

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7 *A narrative space is where a group of narratives coexist and interact with each other within a specific timeframe.*
8 *See pages 19-21 for a table of chosen keywords in the full background research result https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VienFcEx_6_4mHrgBECQ-88LLjPL2i5NNz5mzR1_BGk/edit*
9 *We also incorporated synonyms or words that displayed "family resemblance" to philanthropy in order to increase likelihood that the data collected is relevant to the research context: (philanthropy OR philanthropic Or philanthropist OR funders OR funding OR endowment) NOT ("federal funding" OR "government funding").*

Findings

Our analysis of the narrative landscape is based on the Three Horizons framework as described in the PCP book to categorize current philanthropic endeavors[10]. The table below describes each horizon.

Horizon 1 is characterized by sustaining ***business as usual***, often focusing on reform efforts that do not fundamentally challenge the deeper logics of current systems. Within philanthropy this could include efforts to improve democracy, advance green economy initiatives, reform education, etc.
Horizon 2 represents ***disruptive innovation*** that transform or render Horizon 1 efforts irrelevant to varying degrees when they become successful. These can also start out in Horizon 2 then get co-opted and absorbed by Horizon 1. Other forms of disruptive innovation can serve as a bridge pathway, what we call transition pathways, from Horizon 1 to Horizon 3. This could include decentralized, sovereign direct democracy and governance; localized production and consumption; decolonising philanthropy.
Horizon 3 is how we envision philanthropy in an ***emergent (unknowable) future***. We articulate post capitalist principles and practices such as relationality, interdependence, interbeing, regeneration, care, etc. A world in which philanthropy is not preceded by or perpetuating an extractive capitalist model, a world where we see other forms of autonomous, local governance, bioregional and community sovereignty.

Horizon 1 key insights:
- Narratives in Horizon 1 suggest that philanthropists are not so conscious of their own role in upholding the capitalist system.
- Since the pandemic, philanthropists recognise the intersections of crises[11].
- Philanthropy is now part of the broader movement to recognise and respond to the climate emergency[12] - though the focus is on climate mitigation, not climate adaptation and climate justice[13].
- There is a growing mainstream consensus that traditional philanthropy focuses on symptoms of systems[14], which may cause further harm itself and so philanthropy must

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10   *The Three Horizons framework is used by various sectors to conceptualize disruptions in current systems and transitions beyond existing efforts . See Bill Sharpe's book Three Horizons: The Patterning of Hope. Also, see Post Capitalist Philanthropy, pages 99-100.*

11   *https://www.alliancemagazine.org/conf-report/the-next-decade-of-systems-change-philanthropy/; https://omega.ngo/learn-more/the-global-polycrisis/*

12   *https://www.oneearth.org/funding-climate-action-pathways-to-philanthropy/; https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jul/12/us-philanthropists-vow-to-raise-millions-for-climate-activists; https://www.philanthropy.com/article/can-climate-change-be-stopped*

13   *https://www.oneearth.org/how-philanthropy-can-support-climate-justice/; https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/climate-adaptation-needs-urgent-philanthropy-support-and-offers-the-key-to-climate-justice/*

14   *https://www.alliancemagazine.org/feature/decolonising-philanthropy-from-conceptual-apprehension-to-functional-progress/; https://www.thinknpc.org/blog/how-we-can-better-decolonise-and-shift-power-in-our-sector/*

focus on root causes. "Systems change" is a growing buzzword for philanthropy in Horizon 1 although it should aptly be related to Horizon 2[15]. This type of co-optation before embodiment is common within the philanthropic sector.

• Private foundations are increasingly turning to the Just Transition framework and Green New Deal to offer practical direction for "systems change"[16].

Horizon 2 key insights:

• Narratives in Horizon 2 recognize that systems need to change (similar to the discourse within Horizon 1) *plus* a recognition of philanthropy's complicity in maintaining that system[17]. The conversation is more about redistribution of power and money through decolonisation and funding social movements.

• Funders in Horizon 2 are wanting to fund social movement infrastructure[18], and seem to be considering more land-based movement such as agroecology[19] and food sovereignty[20], as these conversations are edging towards mainstream discourse.

• The "decolonise philanthropy" narrative has become more mainstream in the public debate - among activists/social movements and increasingly among funders as well[21]. As a result, identity, positionality, and privilege discussions among funders are in the mainstream - especially around racial justice and white privilege[22]. Though there is also a healthy skepticism around this[23]: Many foundations talk the talk, yet are still operating through traditional structures that maintain power imbalances, particularly in continuing to grow their endowments[24].

• Decolonization narratives have led to reparations as a practical strategy to follow through[25].

15   https://www.alliancemagazine.org/feature/systems-change-and-philanthropy/; https://philea.eu/events/economic-system-change-boring-buzzwords-or-vital-new-frontier-for-philanthropy/
16   https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/reimagining-philanthropy-and-investments-learning-journey-justice-funders; https://justicefunders.org/thought-leadership/just-transition-for-philanthropy/; https://www.laudesfoundation.org/latest/blog/2022/02/accelerating-our-progress-towards-a-just-transition
17   https://skoll.org/2021/08/02/why-philanthropy-needs-to-change-the-way-it-thinks-about-proximity/; https://english.ckgsb.edu.cn/knowledge/article/peter-buffett-and-the-curse-of-philanthropic-colonialism/; https://lodestar.asu.edu/blog/2022/03/philanthropy-needs-change-what-can-be-done-fundraising-equity-now; https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/11/uk-charity-foundation-to-abolish-itself-and-give-away-130m
18   https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/the-case-for-funding-social-movements/; https://www.jrct.org.uk/movement-fund-pilot; https://twitter.com/hashtag/FundMovements?src=hashtag_click
19   https://www.edgefunders.org/edge-members-agreocology-space-session-0-building-movement-resilience-agroecology-funding-latin-america/
20   https://thousandcurrents.org/areas-of-work/#food-sovereignty
21   https://forgeorganizing.org/article/philanthropy-can-must-help-dismantle-racial-capitalism; https://nonprofitquarterly.org/money-as-medicine-leveraging-philanthropy-to-decolonize-wealth/;https://blog.submittable.com/5-ways-technology-can-help-decolonize-philanthropy/
22   https://decolonizingwealth.com/; https://ideas.bkconnection.com/how-decolonizing-wealth-is-challenging-philanthropy-to-do-better; https://www.svri.org/blog/funders-must-reckon-true-motivations-philanthropy-if-they-want-decolonis
23   https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-to-truly-walk-the-talk-is-to-decolonize-philanthropy-104130; https://blog.submittable.com/5-ways-technology-can-help-decolonize-philanthropy/
24   https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/comment-lankelly-chase-foundation-closure
25   https://johnsoncenter.org/blog/philanthropy-and-reparations-righting-the-past/; https://www.seattlefoundation.org/blueprint-for-impact/repair/; https://apnews.com/article/reparations-decolonizing-wealth-project-edgar-villanueva-8d73854e275a09fae9b71b37db36ac18; https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/applying-reparations-lens-philanthropy-alexandra-williams/?trk=articles_directory; https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/indigenous-funds-lead-way-decolonize-philanthropy

- Towards the edges of Horizon 2 (at the Horizon 2-3 cusp), narratives start to move beyond Anthropocentrism and start to center the wider web of Life (e.g through concepts like Buen Vivir[26]; Inter-being[27], Ubuntu, Zapatismo[28]).
- Decolonisation narratives have led to a questioning of the dominant epistemologies and ontologies (western ways of thinking/being[29]); reparations; and to Trusts/Foundations questioning their existence, and acting upon it[30].
- The definition of capital is expanded beyond its market definition - to include an array of other resources - for example, access to skills, Indigenous knowledge, clean water, seeds, land, etc[31].

Horizon 3 insights:
- We identified no philanthropic spaces in this horizon, but rather communities and movements embodying principles and practices that exist outside of the system of capital that may move us into Horizon 3. These models of reality are often inspired by and based on Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. For example, communities in Rojava and Comunidad de Paz San José de Apartadó embody values of post-containment[32], of care[33], feminism[34], and collectivism[35].

Narrative Communities:
From the key insights outlined above, we then identified a number of Narrative Communities (NC's). NC's are: Actors that are engaged in a similar conversation using similar narratives over a sustained period of time. These NC's draw a picture of the narrative space.

It is important to note that we do not identify all NC's that exist within the space. Rather, we focus on NC's with the highest *potential for evolution* -i .e. the capacity to move towards systems built upon post capitalist values such as regeneration, relationality and interdependence[36]. In other words, we focus on the narrative communities with the potential to move towards *Post Capitalist Philanthropy*, as articulated by goals of TRC.

26   https://guerrillafoundation.org/about/mission-values/; *Thousand Currents' Buen Vivir Fund:* https://participedia.net/case/6763
27   https://x.com/GuerrillaFound/status/1697545275491934480?s=20
28   https://oneproject.org/what-we-do/
29   https://thephilanthropist.ch/en/decolonizing-the-philanthropic-mindset/; https://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/decolonizing-knowledge-in-philanthropy-what-does-it-mean/; https://www.svri.org/blog/funders-must-reckon-true-motivations-philanthropy-if-they-want-decolonise
30   https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/11/uk-charity-foundation-to-abolish-itself-and-give-away-130m
31   https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/indigenous-funds-lead-way-decolonize-philanthropy; https://thephilanthropist.ca/2022/04/we-dont-have-a-word-for-philanthropy/
32   https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2021.815338/full; https://cdpsanjose.org/principios/
33   https://www.shikshantar.org/communities-practice/giftival/reclaiming-gift-culture-0
34   http://yris.yira.org/acheson-prize/5263
35   https://globalsocialtheory.org/topics/zapatismo/
36   *Potential for evolution is visually mapped out in the "Understand" phase of the methodology when we use a graph to plot the narrative communities in relation to each other and the desired point of evolution.*

> **Potential for evolution:**
> The potential for evolution of a NC refers to its capacity to bring the narrative space and therefore culture as a whole towards the desired social, economic and ecological transition that is needed to end exploitation, extraction and destruction of all forms of Life.

It is also important to note that, as narrative researchers, our primary focus is analysis of *what people are saying* - not if or how their espoused narratives are put into practice. However we do conduct a basic analysis on the latter when describing the narrative communities - though a more in-depth analysis would require a different type of investigation to narrative analysis.

From our research we identified six narrative communities:

1. **The Future of Philanthropy is Business as Usual:** This community, represented by big philanthropies, does not criticize the current system that underpins and enables philanthropy to exist and that furthers the crisis. It focuses on the symptoms of the system, and does not question its own role: economic growth is central to its operating system.

2. **Systems Change:** Philanthropic institutions that talk about root causes and the intersectionality of the crisis. Though they do not necessarily pinpoint the need to change the system of late-stage capitalism nor do they speak to their complicity in the system.

3. **Decolonization is a Wake-Up Call:** Civil society, activists and philanthropists focus on redistributing power and money. Philanthropy recognizes its complicity in the systems that need changing.

4. **Philanthropy-as-Reparations:** An offshoot of the decolonization community where there is increasing realization that wealth has been extracted through colonial means, then philanthropy as reparations.

5. **The New Custodians:** Philanthropic institutions and civil society argue that money should be in the hands of the communities. The traditional structure of philanthropy is being reimagined: not just in discourse, but in practice too. They are inspired by more relational and eco-centric frameworks from grassroots community organizing, social or Indigenous movements.

6. **Reimagining Wealth:** Actors reimagining wealth to include resources that are not monetary, e.g. skills, knowledge, leadership, land, connection to earth, seeds, clean water, etc. In some cases, Indigenous communities are framed as the original philanthropists as sharing is a foundational value.

Next, we evaluated the *Attention, Network, Power Analysis* of each community. This analysis, summarized in the table below, allows us to uncover frequency, strength and proliferation of specific narratives including which communities are most active and who are the most influential voices, by asking the following:

1. **Attention:** Where/when is the discussion happening?

2. **Network:** What/who are the most influential nodes in the network - voices, actors, domains, platforms?

3. **Power:** What are the power relations in the Narrative Community - who is dominant and where is the potential for narrative evolution? Determining power entails quantitative (i.e. size of the community[37]) and qualitative (i.e. evolutionary capacity and how the community is linked to others in the narrative space) elements. This is a subjective assessment[38].

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37   *We gauge the size of the community by inferring from the number of hits keywords characteristic of the community have: e.g. The Decolonization community is a very large conversation: while searching "decolonisation" next to "philanthropy" shows a smaller conversation (643 hits), decolonisation alongside adjacent keywords such as "black oppression", "racial equity", "privilege" makes this the largest community at 21.1k hits.*
38   *It is inspired by Charles Tilly, a sociologist of social movements's 'WUNC' framework, which argues protests and movements are successful when they display worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment. We focus on unity, numbers and commitment.*

Horizon	Narrative community	Attention	Network	Power
1	1) The Future of Philanthropy is Business as Usual	This community is the oldest in institutional philanthropy and is tied to the logics of philanthropy's inception (as a protection mechanism for the existing system; while receiving publicly conferred benefits such as tax breaks, lobbying power, etc). They exist in global centers of finance and power. A new iteration of this logic can be seen in conversations around crypto-philanthropy, which focus on how to continue business as usual, although cryptocurrencies, to find ever more tax breaks and increase wealth[39].	Big philanthropists such as Gates, Bezos, MacKenzie Scott and their Foundations Also the new crypto-philanthropists. philanthropists.	Low. The conversation is medium-sized. They are powerful in terms of the magnitude of their wealth, their attachment to the global operating system, and the popularity of their 'solutions', such as Green Growth and crypto-philanthropy. However, they are losing legitimacy in the narrative space as they become less popular within mainstream philanthropic discourse that is more concerned about systems change and decolonisation. Given their limited Potential for Evolution - we define the power of this Narrative Community as low.

39   However, there are some movements in crypto-philanthropy that might edge towards Horizon 2's disruptive innovation: the ambitions of these crypto enthusiasts are transparency (each transaction publicly verifiable on blockchain); a borderless/equitable future; and "new paths to wealth and trailblazing methods to share wealth". Read more on: retroactive public goods funding; Optimism Foundation; Gitcoin. https://www.globalgiving.org/learn/cryptocurrency-donations-to-nonprofits/

Horizon	Narrative community	Attention	Network	Power
1	2) Systems Change	This has become philanthropic "common sense" since the pandemic. Globally, funders/segments of the general public are more aware of global dependencies, interlinked crises and the need for systems change.	Private foundations (e.g. Omidyar), networks of funders, philanthropic advisors and consultants, research organizations, and international organizations: systems change is often more institutional conversation, less activists are engaged in this narrative space.	Medium-high. The community is powerful, not only because it is large, but because this narrative has become a common language among institutions. It has a moderate level of Potential for Evolution given that it's starting to speak to underlying systems.
2	3) Decolonization is Philanthropy's Wake-Up Call	This narrative has always existed among activists. However, now activists in the decolonization movement are directing their charges at their funders and pointing out the colonial roots of wealth and philanthropy itself. It is especially prevalent in the North Americas, but also in other contexts such as the UK and Europe more generally[40].	Private foundations and the activist community holding them to account. A prominent example is the Decolonizing Wealth Project.	High. The community is large and powerful: decolonization has entered the mainstream. And its potential for evolution is high given growing awareness around philanthropy's role in colonialist-capitalist systems.

40   *Within philanthropy, the seeds were planted by Indigenous, USA-based philanthropist Edgar Villanueva in his seminal 2018 book Decolonizing Wealth, but the narrative became more popular since 2020 in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests. Villenueva's book provided a language for funders. Other books criticizing the philanthropic space such as Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World by Anand Giridharadas also came out that year.*

Horizon	Narrative community	Attention	Network	Power
2	4) Philanthropy-as-Reparations	While the reparation narrative is not new, this community's reframing of philanthropy as reparation is recent and emerging. It evolved out of the decolonisation narratives that exploded since the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. This is especially prominent in the USA, but growing in other contexts.	Somekey actors in this space include participatory donor networks and funds like Liberated Capital, Solidaire, Justice Funders and Resource Generation.	Medium. This community is quite powerful. While it is only medium sized in terms of keyword hits[41], its power comes from its potential to grow, as actors in this community strive to move decolonisation from a discourse to an action (i.e. its potential for evolution).
2-3	5) The New Custodians	Their growth is an outcome of philanthropy's growing self-awareness and sometimes guilt regarding their roles in maintaining colonial-capitalist systems, popularized by the Black Lives Matter 2020 protests (especially the growth of Black led and social justice oriented foundations). They exist especially in the USA but are increasing in other contexts such as the UK.	Intermediary foundations and member-led foundations, e.g, BIPOC led ones: The Indigenous Fund; Baobab Foundation; Full Spectrum Capital; Lankelly Chase. Also activists, social movements and grantees.	Low. This community is small and thus not so powerful, but ranks high in its potential for evolution. If funds to New Custodians gains legitimacy and traction from funders, then this narrative community could become more powerful.

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41   *The keyword "reparations" alongside "philanthropy" yielded 3.44K hits.*

Horizon	Narrative community	Attention	Network	Power
2-3	6) Reimagining Wealth / The Original Philanthropists	Calls for an expanded definition of wealth have always existed. The exploration and connection specifically to philanthropy is emerging. Questioning western epistemologies/ ontologies has become more common since the decolonization narrative has put decolonise knowledge more into the mainstream. Mutual aid discussions in the global North have blossomed since the pandemic. This community mostly exists in the North Americas.	Indigenous-led intermediary organizations and funders (or, "the New Custodians" from narrative community 5) such as: The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada; Arctic Funders Collaborative. Grassroots organizers and activists experimenting with giving circles, mutual aid, etc.	Low. The community is small, nascent and therefore not powerful. However, it might expand as Indigenous ways of knowing and being edge closer to the mainstream when confronted with the climate emergency and furthering of the decolonization discourse (and practice). It ranks high in terms of its potential for evolution given that it captures post capitalist visions.

In summary, the Decolonization community (3), and to a lesser extent the Systems Change (2) community, appear to be the most active and influential communities in the narrative space during the timeframe this research was conducted. The Business as Usual (1) community is still active and influential but losing power in the narrative space as more recently philanthropic actors speak to addressing root causes, intersecting crises and systems change. The Reparations (4) community is a medium sized community and seems to represent an evolution/off-shoot from the Decolonization community (3). It is possible that the Reparations community (4) might grow as actors in Decolonization (3) increase their power in moving decolonisation from a discourse to an action. The New Custodians (5) and Reimagining Wealth (6) communities remain small and are not as active in the narrative space, but represent communities sitting on the radical fringes of the philanthropy discourse. They have the greatest potential for evolution toward post capitalism.

Frames and Linguistic Analysis

With these narrative communities identified, we then looked at the semantic frames that operate within them. A semantic frame is an underlying cognitive structure that organizes our thoughts and experiences into general (or specific) categories of information; semantic frames are activated by words that evoke a common conceptual domain. That is, they set a specific train of thought in motion, communicating why an issue might be a problem, who

or what might be responsible for it, and what should be done about it[42].

For example, when we talk about controversial public debates, the language used (*take sides, battleground, destroy one's arguments, etc.*) evokes the semantic frame of War where the core elements of warfare such as 'winners and losers', 'territory', 'weapons', 'strategies' are mapped to our understanding of adversarial stances. In this sense, a frame can be thought of as a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning, suggesting "the essence" of an issue[43]. Similar to semantic frames[44], conceptual metaphors are cognitive maps that enable us to understand more abstract ideas drawn from our primary physical experiences in the world.

Using linguistic analysis, we examined patterns in language use across the six narrative communities as well as the inner logic and conceptual metaphors underlying different language choices. The table below summarizes our analysis.

	Narrative community	Semantic frames	Conceptual metaphors
A	The Future of Philanthropy is Business as Usual	*Resolve problem* *Giving*	*HELPING IS GIVING*
B	Systems Change	*Reforming a system*	*WEALTH IS PROTECTION AGAINST HARM*
C	Decolonization is Philanthropy's Wake-Up Call	*Awareness change scenario*	*WEALTH IS PROTECTION AGAINST HARM* *IMPROVING A STATE IS MOTION TO A PREFERRED LOCATION*
D	Philanthropy-as-Reparations	*Cure* *War*	*ADDRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS TREATING A PHYSICAL AFFLICTION* *ADDRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS WAGING WAR*
E	The New Custodians	*Social connection* *Abundance*	*MONEY IS FLOW*
F	Reimagining Wealth	*Sharing* *Motion* *Access scenario*	*MORAL ACTION IS NURTURANCE* *SOCIETY IS A PERSON*

Across the narrative communities, the principle recurrent metaphor invoked is WEALTH IS PROTECTION AGAINST HARM which features in the Systems Change and Decolonization

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42   *Nisbet, M. C. (2009). Communicating climate change: why frames matter for public engagement. Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development, 51(2), 12- 23.*
43   *Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1987). The changing culture of affirmative action. Research in political sociology, 3(2), 137-177.*
44   *The semantic frames presented in this analysis are drawn from two repositories: FrameNet and MetaNet Metaphor Wiki, both from ICSI at University of Berkeley, California. Other sources for the conceptual metaphors presented here are Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2008). Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, and Kövecses, Z. (2010) Metaphor: A Practical Introduction.Oxford University Press, USA; 2 Edition.*

is Philanthropy's Wake-Up Call communities. This implies the purpose of philanthropy (and wealth) is to keep communities from harm. However, the logic of wealth itself, and the harm wealth generation causes, is not questioned.

Personification is also a recurrent linguistic tool in which philanthropy is personified as a caring entity by providing resources. This personification of the sector prevents an analysis of the upstream origins of the money and the logics of ongoing growth.

There is also some focus on conflict (semantic frame: War and conceptual metaphor ADDRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS WAGING WAR) which implies philanthropy has become a contested space in which philanthropists are being held accountable by civil society and their power is being challenged.

Finally, the smaller, more fringe communities like the New Custodians (5) and Reimagining Wealth (6) are moving toward more post capitalist visions and contain language around interconnection and relationality through semantic frames such as: Social Connection, Sharing, and Abundance which reflect the move towards more horizontal and relational ties. The conceptual metaphor MONEY IS FLOW cultivates an understanding of wealth as relational, unlimited and abundant[45].

Attitudinal spectrums

Next, we mapped the key attitudes and frames found within the narrative space along a spectrum (see below) to represent the logic of wealth. This is central to this research: to explore how narratives within philanthropy might transition from the logic of neoliberal capitalism to post capitalist possibilities.

45   https://fullspectrumcapitalpartners.us/
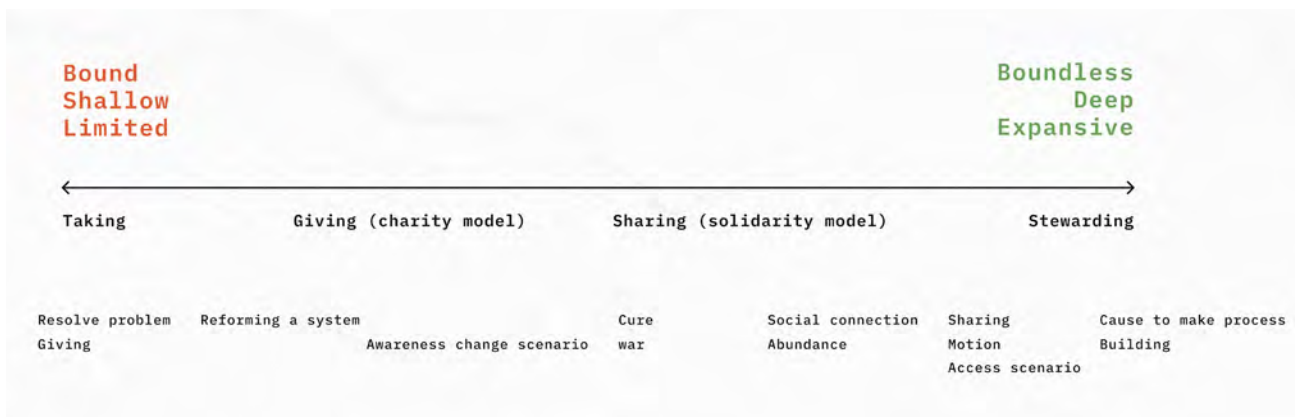
On one end of the spectrum is the logic of wealth as *taking*. Here wealth exists in limited quantities and is acquired through *extraction*. This is reflected in the frames that suggest solving discrete issues/symptoms without considering the root systems that fuel these problems. Here philanthropy receives tax breaks and takes more money through growing the endowment (maintaining the logic of wealth as taking). This then enables the frame of *wealth as giving* which also sits on this side of the spectrum. Those who take can give. It is a charity model of giving that has its origins in Christian Europe and is based on a moral hierarchy of wealth in which rich people are considered inherently better and more moral than poor people. This paradigm leads to further inequalities and power imbalances. This is reflected in the semantic frame of Reforming_a_System: we move towards reforms of philanthropy, but the Systems Change community who evoke this frame are still not explicit about the power imbalances maintained through the charity model of controlled giving.
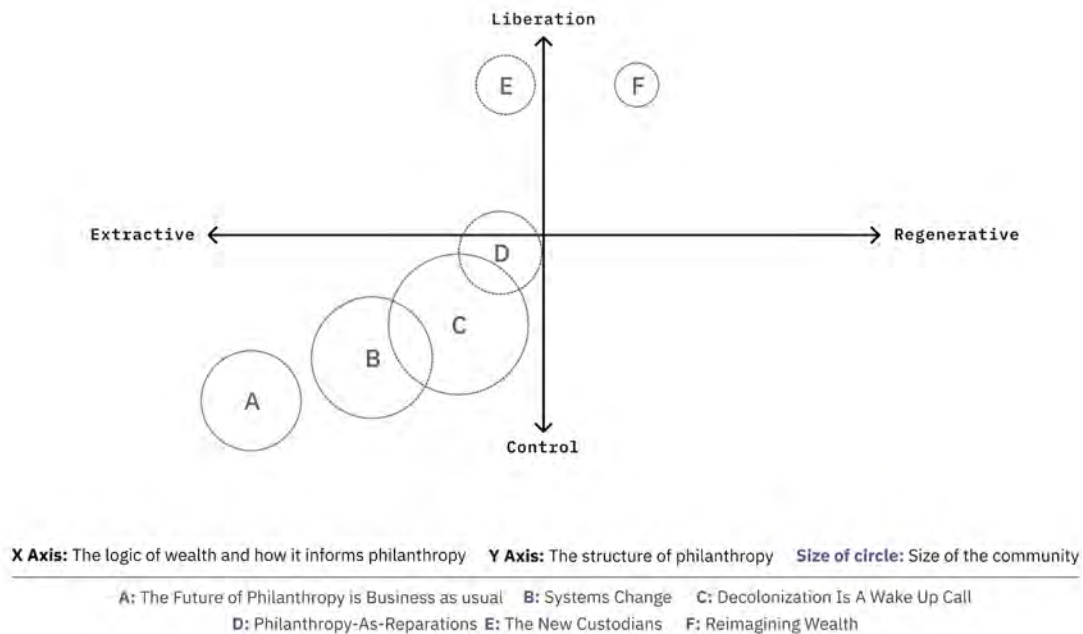
On the other end of the spectrum is the logic of *wealth as sharing* (it belongs to everyone, based on the principle of solidarity). This recognizes that wealth was built upon the backs of countless exploited generations so wealth must be shared. The semantic frames here move towards further awareness that reform-led systems change is not enough: systems need to be decolonized and transformed. This involves healing within marginalized communities from whom wealth was extracted (as reflected in the semantic frames of War and Cure). However, despite the need to share wealth, the wealth holders are still the power holders: wealth still belongs to those who have historically held it.

Finally, we move toward a relational logic of *wealth as stewarding*. The conception of wealth expands; wealth becomes unlimited, abundant and in service of relations and life. Nothing is owned - only stewarded. The semantic frames move towards the logic of stewarding wealth and away from ownership where we find frames of Social Connection, Abundance, Sharing, and Building regenerative paradigms.

Through this attitudinal spectrum, we demonstrate that narrative communities centered on the extractive logic of wealth express semantic frames that tend to be bound, shallow and limited. Whereas those that are moving towards a relational (i.e. post capitalist) logic of wealth, express semantic frames that are deep, boundless and expansive. These communities establish care, relationality and interconnectedness as fundamental principles of philanthropy.

Mapping

Next, we created a map of the narrative space with two axes, each representing the spectrum of narratives that exist within this space.

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   **Y Axis:** The structure of philanthropy   **Size of circle:** Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   **B:** Systems Change   **C:** Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations **E:** The New Custodians   **F:** Reimagining Wealth

The size of the circles represent the size of the community in the current narrative space. Most communities are situated in the bottom left hand quadrant because philanthropy is deeply embedded within the capitalist system. It is structured to maintain control over wealth, as well as perpetuate the extractive nature of wealth. By and large, philanthropic actors grant money acquired through exploitative and extractive activities (fossil fuel, finance, mining, tech, etc). The Decolonization (C) community sits in this quadrant because despite a strong critique of philanthropy's legacy and inherent problems, in general this community still operates within traditional structures of philanthropy that are designed to hold wealth and grow endowments. Reparations (D) are slightly more evolved along this axis as philanthropists are handing over capital, implementing reparations, and loosening their grip. Neither communities (C, D) propose new logics of wealth so they remain on the left hand side of the horizontal axis. The New Custodians (E) is located at the top of the control-liberation axis, as wealth is now intended to be in the hands of those who were dispossessed of it. Wealth is primarily defined by market values (not its capacity to support relationships among living species, or wealth as access to Indigenous knowledge, etc.) so it remains on the left side of the quadrant. Regimagining Wealth (F) is the only community that is both liberatory and regenerative. It challenges Western and capitalist definitions of wealth and re-imagining regenerative wealth beyond the market.
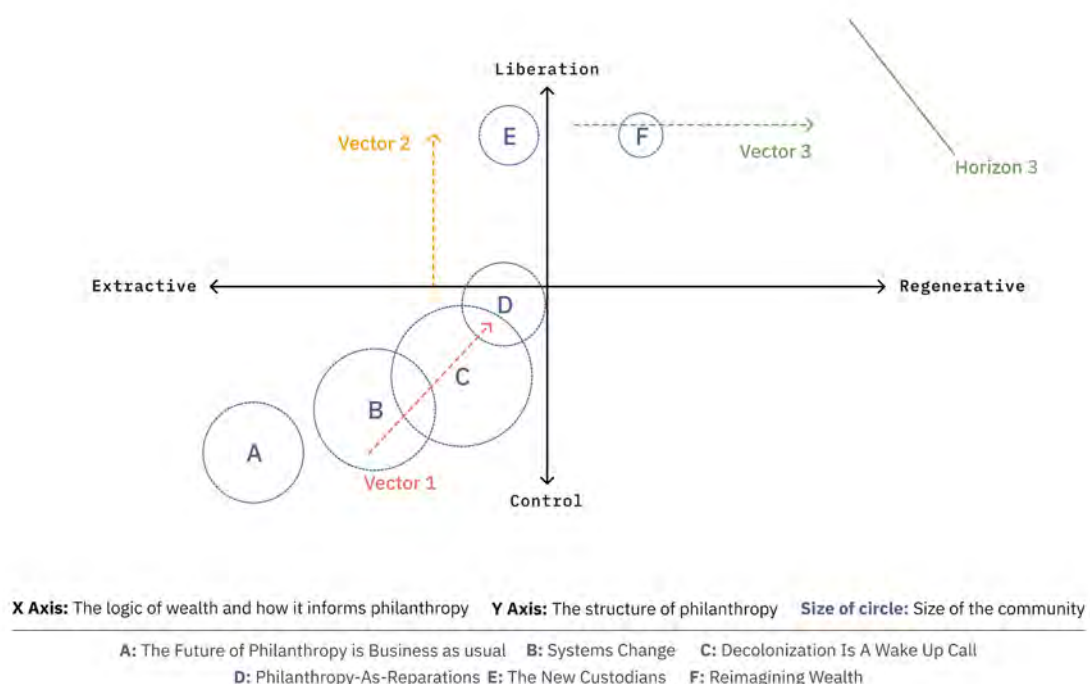
The vertical axis represents the *structure of philanthropy*: from control (centralization of wealth and power) to liberation (decentralize wealth and relations). At the decentralized end of the spectrum (the desired point of evolution), there are no grantors and recipients;

there are partners, co-deciders, co-sharers, co-stewards. Philanthropy moves towards relationally-based giving practices based on trust. Examples of current initiatives that are moving towards liberation of capital: trust-based philanthropy; long term unrestricted grants; participatory grantmaking; spend-in (of endowments); solidarity philanthropy (capital stewardship); giving circles; flow funding, etc.

The horizontal axis represents the *logic of wealth* and how it informs philanthropy (and therefore its structure): from wealth as extractive and ongoing accumulation, to wealth as restorative and regenerative. At the regenerative end of the spectrum (the desired point of evolution), wealth stops being defined by the market based values. Instead it is defined by its capacity to restore and support life (human and more than human world). Post capitalist values like altruism, solidarity, reciprocity, interbeing and animism are at the center. Non-monetary resources are also considered forms of wealth such as connection to earth, seeds, clean water, ancestral knowledge, etc.

With true regeneration, philanthropy stops being defined by the market, and instead it is defined by its capacity to support multiple webs of relation among living species: humans, nature or the more than human world. Giving is at the center of these relations, as opposed to the quality or nature of what is being given. Giving is wealth. Defined by its relationality, wealth becomes abundant. Philanthropy informed by this paradigm becomes philanthropy at the service of relations among living beings. Philanthropy uses its extractive wealth to create relational wealth.

Plotting the narrative communities on the map enabled us to see patterns and consider the evolutionary capacity of each narrative community towards liberation and regeneration. The following graph plots the current pathways of evolution of the narrative communities in the narrative space. We call these pathways narrative vectors.

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   **Y Axis:** The structure of philanthropy   **Size of circle:** Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   B: Systems Change   C: Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations E: The New Custodians   F: Reimagining Wealth

The empirical evidence shows there are three main vectors in the narrative space:

- **Vector 1:** The large and established Systems Change community (B) is starting to move towards Communities C (Decolonization) and D (Reparations). This is likely because the Systems Change rhetoric and a focus on root causes inevitably leads to histories of colonization, then considerations around how philanthropic structure replicates systems (Control vs Liberation axes). This may lead to rethinking the logic of wealth towards sharing and solidarity, rather than a charity-based model of giving (Extractive vs Regenerative axes).

- **Vector 2:** Communities are naturally moving upwards along the Control vs Liberation axes. As philanthropy shifts away from control and centralisation of wealth towards structures that decentralizes wealth, we see shifts in communities C (Decolonization) and D (Reparation) towards E (the New Custodians).

- **Vector 3:** At the more radical fringe of community E (the New Custodians), wealth is reimagined - moving along the Extractive vs Regenerative axes. Here, the logic of wealth that underlies philanthropy (and therefore its structure) and the logic of capitalism more broadly, moves from wealth as extractive to wealth as regenerative (towards the Reimagining Wealth community, which offers initial inspiration for reimagining what post capitalist philanthropy in Horizon 3 might look like).

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   **Y Axis:** The structure of philanthropy   **Size of circle:** Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   B: Systems Change   C: Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations E: The New Custodians   F: Reimagining Wealth
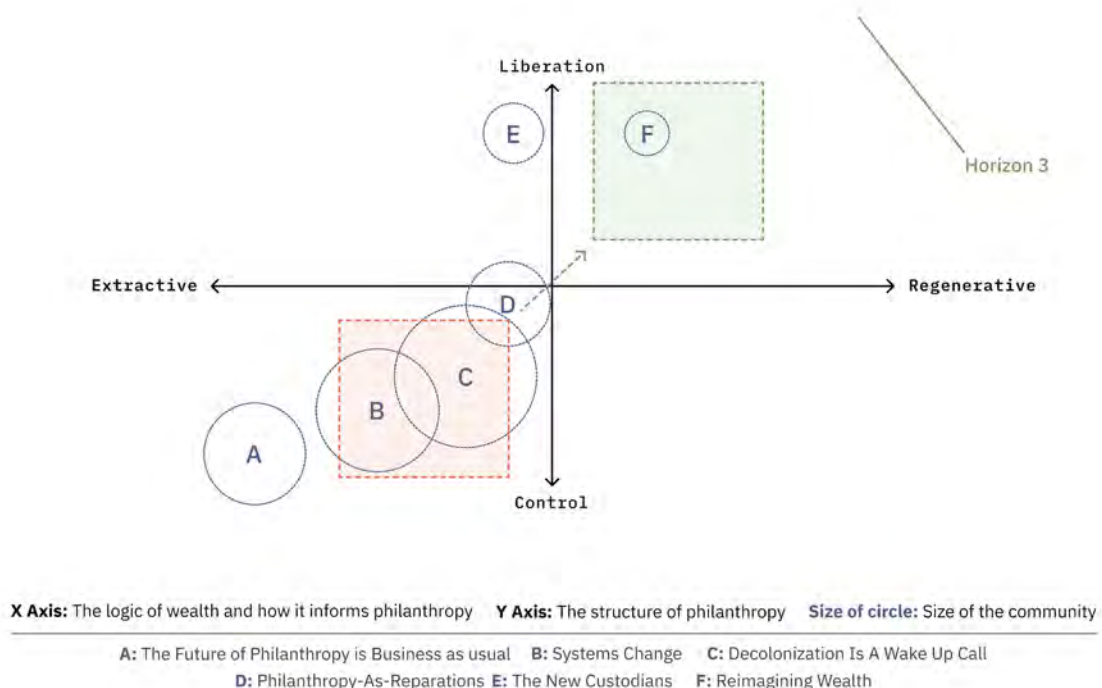
Narrative evolution

We examined the various narrative communities through the Window of Discourse Framework. The Window of Discourse describes the range of political ideas deemed acceptable to the public. Within the narrative space, the "Decolonization is Philanthropy's Wake-Up call" (community C) has become more vocal, powerful and central. It has entered the Window of Discourse[46] 6 (see the red window on the bottom left quadrant on the map above). This community has shifted the boundaries of what is deemed reasonable public discourse around philanthropy. Now terms such as Black oppression, white privilege, colonization and reparations are in the mainstream.

However, even within this narrative community, philanthropy remains wedded to wealth as extractive, even if this narrative calls for the decentralization of power and decision making. Communities D (Philanthropy-as-Reparations) and E (New Custodians) are offshoots of the Decolonization community - they are at the more radical fringes of the philanthropy debate and have the greatest evolutionary potential.

We want to further shift the Window of Discourse by strategically pushing the far edge of what is considered acceptable - towards the top right hand quadrant (Liberation/Regeneration) - i.e. the desired point of evolution (see the green window shift in the map above). This quadrant represents relational worldviews that challenge the logic behind wealth and, as a result, the structures of philanthropy. Such post capitalist philanthropy operates in solidarity and stewardship; it uses capital to build post capitalist infrastructure (e.g. bioregional food, water, energy, education, medicine, and cultural sovereignty.

The transition pathway we advocate for is "Justice Plus Onto-Shifts". Justice without an ontological shift is limited: As Philosopher Bayo Akomolafe has argued, "demands for social justice may get us a seat at the table, but they will never let us leave the house of modernity". To leave the house of modernity[47], we need new ontologies. Onto-shifts without justice are also limited: attempts at changing culture without justice are not sustainable, the same way that peace cannot stick without justice.

Justice plus onto-shift here is a strategy that marries the important decolonial and justice oriented narrative communities (C: Decolonization is philanthropy's wake up call; D: Philanthropy-is-Reparation and E: The New Custodians) to a concurrent shift in ontology (ways of seeing, knowing, sensing and being in this world) which is needed to achieve true justice - which is already underway by community F (Reimagining Wealth).

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46   *The idea of the "Window of Discourse" is a descriptive model for understanding how ideas in society change over time and influence politics - and helps us visualize the mapping and evolution of the narrative space towards the desired point of evolution.*
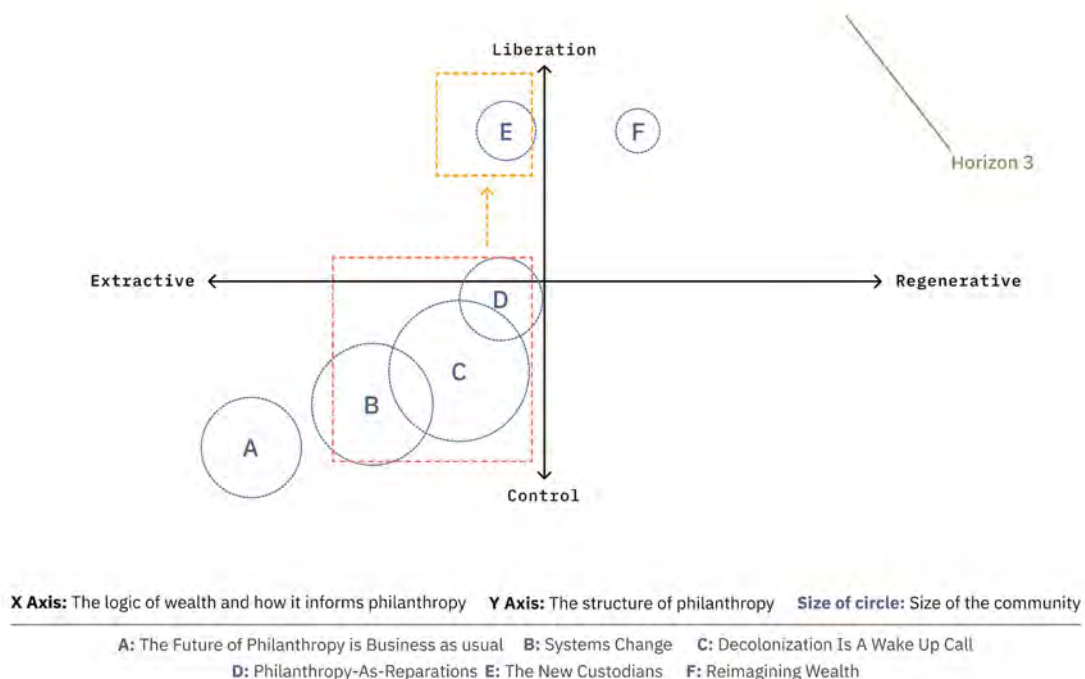47   *Ladha, Alnoor, and Lynn Murphy. "Post Capitalist Philanthropy: Healing Wealth in the Time of Collapse." (2022)*
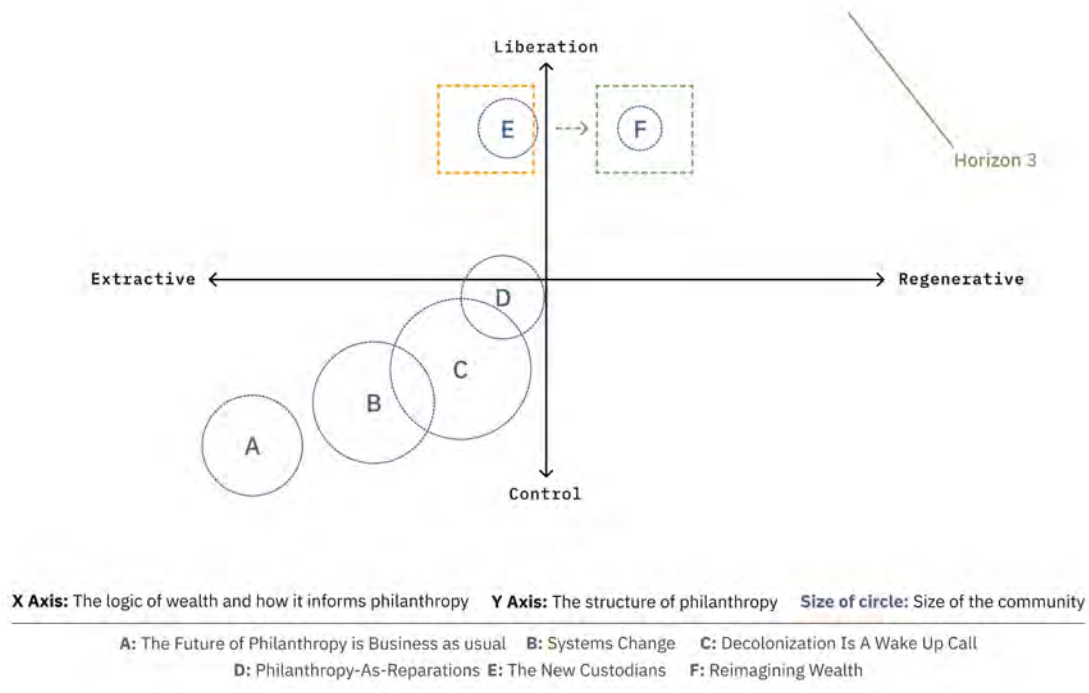
Narrative objectives

Narrative objectives enable us to develop a strategic narrative approach to support each community's evolutionary potential. The overarching narrative objective is to shift the Window of Discourse towards the liberation and regeneration axes. In other words, how can we transition philanthropy from a structure that controls wealth to one that liberates? And how can we guide the transition of wealth from a logic/ontology of extraction to one that regenerates? There are specific objectives for each narrative community, or cluster of narrative communities to guide us in this direction:

Considering the vectors in the narrative space, this broader shift toward the Liberation and Regeneration sides of each axis might entail two steps:

1. The Decolonization is philanthropy's wake up call (C) and Philanthropy-as-Reparations (D) and Systems Change (B) evolve towards The New Custodians (E).

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   Y Axis: The structure of philanthropy   Size of circle: Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   B: Systems Change   C: Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations E: The New Custodians   F: Reimagining Wealth

2. The New Custodians (E) community evolves toward the Reimagining Wealth community (F). This represents the greatest evolutionary potential. As this community advances narratives, approaches to philanthropy, and conceptions of wealth that are more liberatory and regenerative, it will support other communities, and the wider field of philanthropy, to move in this direction.

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   Y Axis: The structure of philanthropy   Size of circle: Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   B: Systems Change   C: Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations E: The New Custodians   F: Reimagining Wealth

For this to be possible, it is essential that we create and collectively popularize more narratives (and ways of being) that showcase what Liberation and Regeneration mean. In other words, we need to populate the top right hand quadrant with new narratives to ensure a shift of the Window of Discourse. Right now, this quadrant is limited in power.

We need narratives to support the ideation and practice of post capitalist philanthropy, and post capitalism more broadly.

Part II: Reframe Strategy

The narrative objectives provide a coherent direction for narrative intervention, setting the stage for the next part of the project: the *Narrative Reframe.* This stage aims to transform the frames within the identified narrative communities to align with these objectives, thus facilitating the envisioned cultural and systemic shift in philanthropy.

Transition pathways

Before outlining the proposed reframe, we will situate this reframe strategy in the broader *Transition Pathway* it aims to contribute to. *Transition pathways* act as both descriptive and prescriptive tools to diagnose our current predicament and chart out where we go. They represent the core "theory-of-change" of our narrative work. We can use them to measure our process.

> **Transition pathways** are archetypical three-stage processes of cultural evolution, guiding society from a state of fragility and systemic inadequacy, through a phase of critical reassessment driven by heightened awareness and justice demands, culminating in a transformative ontological reimagining.

In more detail, transition pathways, as we are defining them here, follow the logic of the premises below:

1. **The existing system is fragile and is breaking down:** Recognizing the unsustainable and unjust nature of current systems that perpetuate inequality and ecological degradation.

2. **Greater awareness of these breakdowns demands a reassessment of the existing system - Justice is necessary:** Acknowledging the need for systemic change and the redistribution of power and resources as a foundational step toward rectifying historical and ongoing injustices.

3. **We must reimagine the whole system to create new capacities for narrative evolution through onto-shifts:** Envisioning and implementing radical systemic changes that redefine wealth, power, and community interdependence, leading to a society where wealth serves as a conduit for fostering deep relational ties, ecological sustainability, and equitable distribution of resources. This includes human relationality and embeddedness in the living world.

The transition pathway for post capitalist philanthropy articulates a process where justice-oriented narrative communities (Decolonization; Philanthropy-as-Reparations; The New Custodians) are intertwined with concurrent shifts in ontology. These shifts are essential for achieving true justice, as it moves beyond mere demands for social justice to a fundamental transformation in our ways of knowing, being, and interacting with the world,

thereby facilitating a shift toward post capitalist realities defined by solidarity, mutual care, and a regenerative approach to wealth and resources.

Overarching reframe

This section first sketches out the overarching, guiding reframe that we ultimately want to reach. It then outlines specific reframes for each narrative community. An overarching umbrella is needed to harmonize and guide actors in their communications, in order to collectively propel the desired logics forward, while bespoke frames are needed for each community to enable them to "start where they are" and guide them through a step by step journey towards the overarching reframe.

This guiding reframe is "Wealth as a Transition Pathway" which emerges as a beacon for reimagining the future of philanthropy. We will break this apart into the semantic frame, the underlying logic, and vivid conceptual metaphors that bring the frame to life. Together, the elements form a cohesive and compelling narrative to shape the future of philanthropy.

Overarching reframe	
Semantic Frame	Wealth as a Transition Pathway
Logic	Transforming the essence and function of wealth to build post capitalist infrastructure
Metaphors	Wealth as Mycelium Composting Hierarchies into Rhizomes Philanthropy as Ecosystem Cultivation

Semantic Frame: "Wealth as a Transition Pathway"

> A **semantic frame** is a cognitive structure that organizes our understanding of a concept or situation by capturing the various elements and their relationships within that context, guiding how we perceive, interpret, and communicate about it.

In the overarching semantic frame of "Wealth as a Transition Pathway", wealth is understood as a transformative and evolutionary agent, guiding us towards post capitalist worlds. Wealth as a *transition pathway* means wealth can be an agent that is driving the transition from fragile, extractive systems to resilient, regenerative ones. This includes utilizing and alchemizing wealth, in the short period of time it is still valuable, to build post capitalist infrastructure.

This transformative redefinition of wealth unfolds on two levels. Firstly, the function of wealth undergoes a radical shift: instead of perpetuating cycles of extraction and accumulation,

often veiled by philanthropic gestures, it is redirected towards creating the infrastructure necessary for a post capitalist society.

Secondly, the essence of wealth is expanded beyond its conventional market-based definition to embrace non-monetary assets like ancestral knowledge, quality of relations and access to essential natural resources such as land, food, medicine and water. This expansion of the concept of wealth changes the paradigms of its creation, ownership, and distribution.

This semantic frame helps organize and interpret the idea that wealth, if reconceptualized and redirected, can be foundational to societies and cultures that transcends capitalist and anthropocentric limitations. Emphasizing interconnectedness over division, collaboration over competition, and the collective well-being over individual accumulation, this frame not only challenges us to rethink our relationship with wealth but also to reassess our collective values and the envisioned future world we wish to create.

By acknowledging the latent potential energy within wealth for profound societal change, we are called to harness this power responsibly and imaginatively towards achieving a regenerative and equitable global community.

Semantic frames can be thought of as a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning. The storyline that is evoked through the frame of "Wealth as a Transition Pathway," is envisioning a future where wealth serves as the backbone of an attainable post capitalist, post-anthropocentric society that values interconnectedness over separation, collaboration over competition, and the well-being of the whole over the accumulation of parts. This semantic frame not only challenges us to rethink our relationship with wealth but also calls for a reevaluation of our collective priorities and values, and the world we want to transition to.

Logic: Transforming the essence and function of wealth.

> The **logic** of a narrative refers to the underlying coherence that holds the component parts of the narrative together (e.g. a diagnosis of a situation, causes and solutions). In our work, we must identify the existing logics underlying dominant narratives and indicate how these logics will be changed in the reframe.

The logic underpinning this frame recognises that philanthropy is a critical part of the machinery of the extractive economic model of late-stage capitalism where philanthropist's ultimate aim is to continue to grow their endowments (e.g. through bonds and hedge funds) so they have a bigger pool of money to give away and "solve" the very social and ecological problems that wealth accumulation creates in the first place. In *Post Capitalist Philanthropy* (2022), this core issue is articulated as such:

"A small group of people have amassed large sums of wealth through an extractive system and then created a sector by which they can decide the agenda for civil society while receiving a multitude of publicly-conferred benefits (from tax breaks to lobbying power to social influence) that further concentrate private financial and social power[48]."

Philanthropy, as it stands, shapes the direction and activities of social movements, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), policy-making bodies, and academic institutions. This influence is primarily due to the financial support that philanthropic entities provide, which comes with attached value systems and implicit power.

These often manifest as specific metrics and desired outcomes that recipient organizations must adopt and follow. However, these value systems remain hidden and unexamined in the everyday functioning of both the recipient organization and the donor.

By redefining the fundamental nature and operational role of wealth, we have the potential to transform a whole range of initiatives that are positioned within the transition to post capitalist realities. To do this we must transform both the essence and function of wealth. Here, "essence" refers to the underlying semantic and meaning framework that defines wealth, while "function" pertains to the ways in which these definitions are put into practice through organizational and systemic behaviors.

Our perception of wealth and philanthropy plays a pivotal role in what could be described as the NGO-industrial complex[49]. Recognizing this centrality, if we are able to shift the foundational concept of wealth from a focus on individual accumulation to a resource for systemic transformation and evolution, we initiate a profound change. This shift entails reimagining wealth not as a measure of personal financial status, but as a vital force for enabling change within social, environmental, and economic systems. By redefining wealth in this way, we aim to redirect its power and influence towards fostering more equitable and regenerative forms of existence. This transformation in understanding and approach could catalyze significant shifts in how philanthropy operates and impacts the broader transition.

Conceptual Metaphors: Enriching the Narrative

A **conceptual metaphor** is a cognitive tool that allows us to understand one idea or conceptual domain in terms of another, facilitating a deeper understanding of the first idea by drawing parallels with the more familiar second one. We employ conceptual metaphors to build the basic semantic foundation of the reframe.

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48   *Ladha, Alnoor, and Lynn Murphy. "Post Capitalist Philanthropy: Healing Wealth in the Time of Collapse." (2022)*
49   *Buffett, P. (26 July 2013). The Charitable-Industrial Complex. New York Times.*

The following conceptual metaphors serve as examples or directions that can be employed in communicating and understanding the above reframe and logic.

"Wealth as Mycelium" vividly illustrates wealth's potential to act as a foundational network, facilitating nourishment and connection across the societal ecosystem, much like mycelium in forests underpins complex ecosystems.

"Composting Hierarchies into Rhizomes" encapsulates the transformative process of breaking down hierarchical, toxic systems to fuel the growth[50] of equitable, decentralized structures. This metaphor suggests a radical reconfiguration of power dynamics, where wealth is redistributed to empower horizontal networks of support and innovation.

"Philanthropy as Ecosystem Cultivation" extends the vision of philanthropy beyond mere financial contributions, envisioning it as the cultivation of vibrant ecosystems. This metaphor emphasizes the role of philanthropic efforts in enriching the societal soil, fostering conditions that allow for diverse forms of life and relationships to thrive.
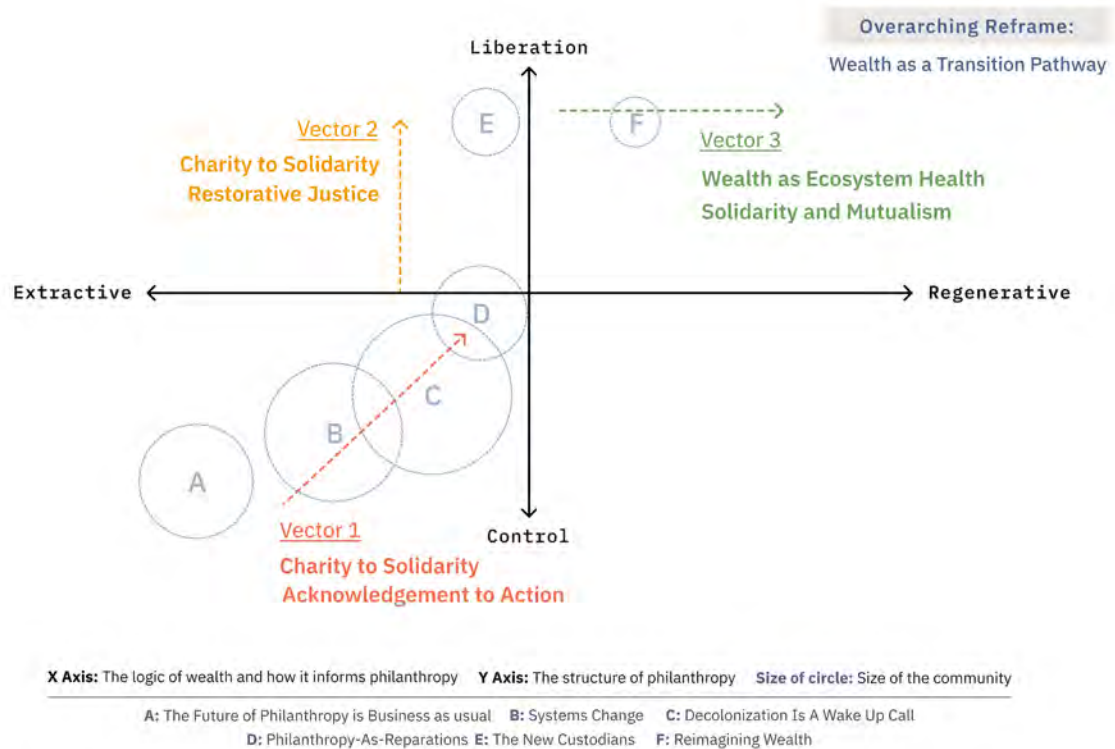
Each of these elements - semantic frame, logic, and metaphors - interlock to form a coherent narrative that guides the transition towards a post capitalist philanthropy.

Specific Reframes:

This section outlines specific reframes for each vector. It cannot be expected that narrative communities situated at the bottom left hand quadrant are able to jump straight to the top right quadrant (the desired point of narrative evolution). Instead, we have devised a step by step guide for narrative communities to gradually evolve their frames and logics towards the overarching, guiding reframe "wealth as a transition pathway".

These narrative vectors are instrumental in charting the course for a transformative shift in the philanthropic narrative landscape. We have therefore identified strategic interventions that can guide narrative communities through a step by step journey of evolution, from current states of control and extraction (bottom left quadrant) towards future states characterized by liberation, regeneration, and a radical reimagination of wealth (top right quadrant).

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50   *The use of the term "composting" characterizes the transition from fragile to regenerative systems: we can't fully rid ourselves of these fragile systems but we can accompany their dismantling, so they become fertile soils to create new ones. This focus on change, renewal and integrating the composted elements of the old system, rather than complete destruction of the old system, relates to the understanding of cycles of systems according to ecological and complexity scientists (e.g. in Panarchy): systems go through phases of growth, accumulation, restructuring, and renewal (https://leanlogic.online/glossary/systems-thinking/). It also relates to the idea of "hospicing": capitalist modernity is beyond reform and in desperate need of "palliative care for a dignified death for the old system and assistance with the gestation and birth of new, potentially wiser systems. TRC, Post Capitalist Philanthropy Webinar 3: Hospicing Modernity. Tiokasin Ghosthorse & Vanessa Andreotti: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E95aXSY2CDo&ab_channel=TransitionResourceCircle*

Overarching Reframe:
Wealth as a Transition Pathway

Liberation

Vector 2 ↑
Charity to Solidarity
Restorative Justice

Vector 3
Wealth as Ecosystem Health
Solidarity and Mutualism

Extractive ←   → Regenerative

Control

Vector 1
Charity to Solidarity
Acknowledgement to Action

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   Y Axis: The structure of philanthropy   Size of circle: Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   B: Systems Change   C: Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations   E: The New Custodians   F: Reimagining Wealth

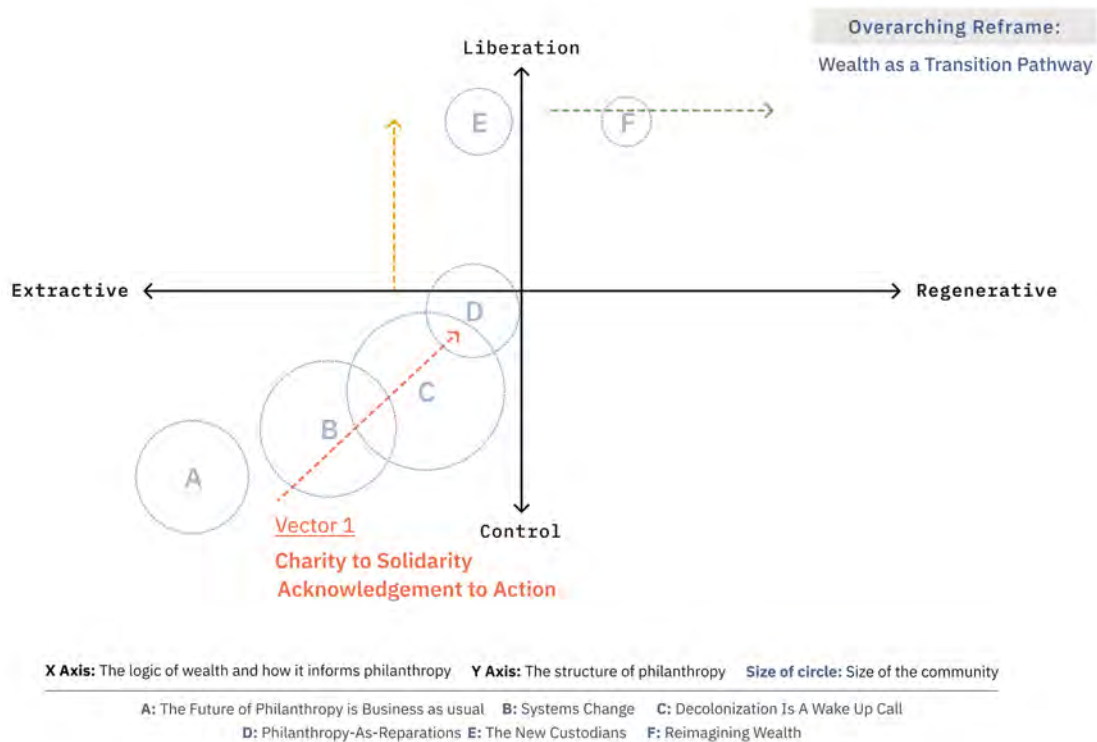| Specific reframes	
Vector 1: Transition from Systems Change to Decolonization and Reparation	
Semantic frame	*From Charity to Solidarity;* *Acknowledgment to Action*
Logic	*Interconnectedness and Mutual Responsibility;* *Wealth as a Means, Not an End*
Example Metaphors	*Wealth as Water;* *Philanthropy as Flow*
Vector 2: Structural Evolution towards Liberation	
Semantic frame	*From Charity to Solidarity;* *Restorative Justice*
Logic	*Wealth as a Collective Resource;* *Collective Stewardship*
Example Metaphors	*Wealth as a Garden;* *Philanthropy as a Circle*
Vector 3: Ontological Shift towards Regenerative Wealth	
Semantic frame	*Wealth as Ecosystem Health;* *Solidarity and Mutualis*
Logic	*Interconnected Prosperity;* *Regeneration as Investment*
Example Metaphors	*Wealth as a Living Forest;* *Philanthropy as Pollination*

Vector 1: Transition from Systems Change to Decolonization and Reparation.

This vector captures the movement of the Systems Change community (B) towards embracing the narratives of Decolonization (C) and Philanthropy-is-Reparation (D). It marks a journey from advocating for systemic interventions to a recognition of the philanthropy sector's complicity in perpetuating colonial legacies. This shift signifies a move from an emphasis on control and wealth centralization to a paradigm that values sharing, solidarity, and a critique of wealth's extractive logic.

Overarching Reframe: Wealth as a Transition Pathway

Vector 1
Charity to Solidarity
Acknowledgement to Action

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   **Y Axis:** The structure of philanthropy   **Size of circle:** Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual   **B:** Systems Change   **C:** Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations   **E:** The New Custodians   **F:** Reimagining Wealth

Strategic Communication Goals:

- *Highlight the Inadequacy of Current Systems:* Utilize the empirical evidence that the rhetoric of systems change, while necessary, is insufficient unless it confronts the legacies of colonization and how philanthropy replicates these structures. Emphasize the need for a structural and ontological shift towards decolonization and reparations.
- *Promote Shifts in Philanthropic Structures:* Advocate for moving away from charity-based models of giving, characterized by control and centralization, towards models that embody sharing, solidarity, and trust. This requires a re-evaluation of wealth's role and the power dynamics within philanthropy.

Frames to Employ:

- *From Charity to Solidarity:* Transition the narrative from philanthropy as an act of charity to an act of solidarity with those affected by historical injustices. This frame challenges the traditional paternalistic approach to philanthropy and promotes a partnership model where power and resources are shared.

- *From Acknowledgment to Action:* Move the conversation from acknowledging systemic issues to taking concrete actions towards decolonization and reparations. Highlight the importance of redistributing power and resources as essential steps in this process.

Logics to Develop:
- *Interconnectedness and Mutual Responsibility:* Emphasize the logic that we are all part of an interconnected system and that addressing historical injustices through decolonization and reparations is not just morally right but essential for the health of the entire system.
- *Wealth as a Means, Not an End:* Challenge the conventional logic that views wealth as an end to be achieved and protected. Instead, promote understanding wealth as a means to achieve justice and systemic change.

Metaphors to Utilize:
- *Wealth as Water:* Just as water flows and nourishes life, wealth should circulate through communities, revitalizing and empowering them rather than being hoarded.
- *Philanthropy as Flow:* Use the metaphor of a flow or even a bridge to illustrate philanthropy's potential role in connecting divided communities, facilitating understanding, and healing wounds of the past.
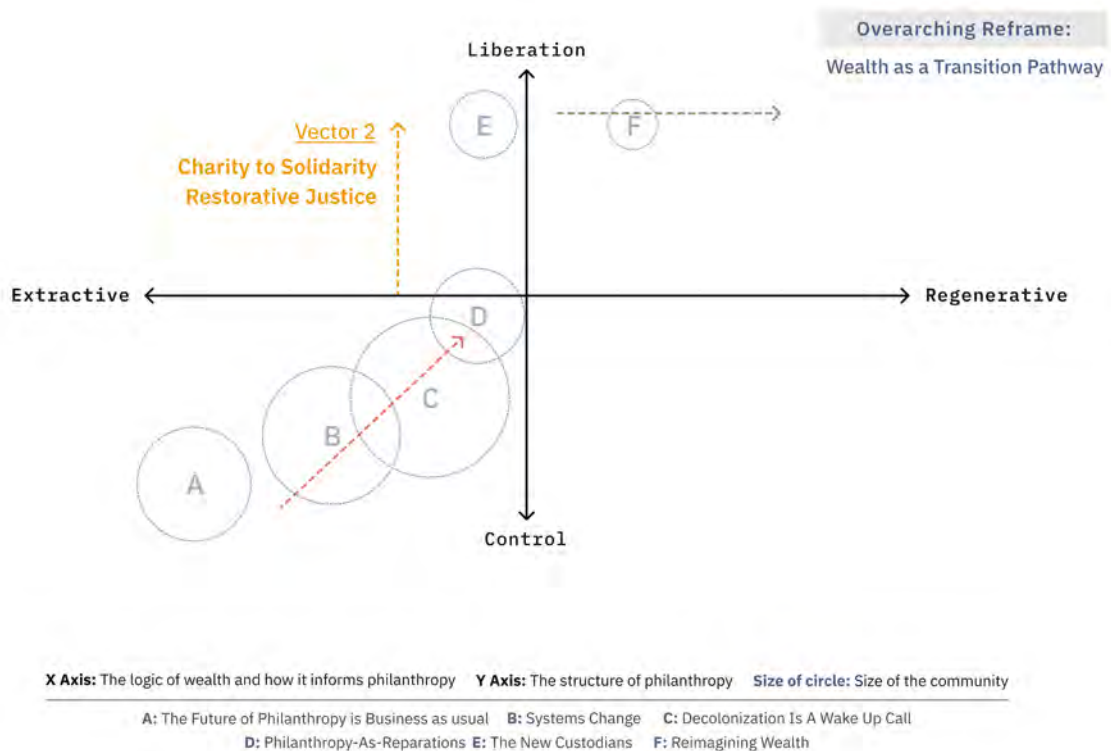
Implementing the Strategy
- *Engage with Systems Change Advocates:* Directly engage with organizations and individuals within the Systems Change community, presenting the evidence and arguments for why a shift towards decolonization and reparations is necessary for true systemic change.
- *Showcase Success Stories:* Highlight examples where organizations have successfully transitioned towards models of decolonization and reparations, showing the tangible benefits of such a shift.
- *Collaborative Campaigns:* Launch campaigns in partnership with Decolonization and Reparation communities to amplify their messages and strategies, using the frames, logics, and metaphors identified to appeal to a broader audience within the philanthropic sector.

This communication strategy is designed not just to shift narratives but to catalyze actual organizational and structural change within philanthropy, aligning it with a transition pathway that recognizes the necessity of justice and ontological shifts for a sustainable and equitable future.

Vector 2: Structural Evolution towards Liberation

The second vector illustrates a progression along the Control vs. Liberation axis, highlighting a structural transformation within philanthropy from a model of centralized control to one that champions liberation and decentralization. This pathway, extending from Decolonization (C) and Reparation (D) to The New Custodians (E), reflects a significant realignment of philanthropy's operational ethos, prioritizing liberation over control.

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy   Y Axis: The structure of philanthropy   Size of circle: Size of the community

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D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations E: The New Custodians   F: Reimagining Wealth

Strategic Communication Goals:
- *Illuminate Historical Dispossession:* Highlight the historical context and current impact of wealth disparities, focusing on the necessity of returning wealth to communities that have been historically dispossessed.
- *Promote Decentralized Wealth Management:* Advocate for a systemic shift towards decentralized, community-led wealth management, emphasizing empowerment and autonomy over traditional charity models.

Frames to Employ
- *Restorative Justice:* Transition the narrative towards restorative justice, underscoring the rectification of historical wealth disparities and the empowerment of communities through the decentralization of wealth.

- *From Charity to Solidarity:* Transition the narrative from philanthropy as an act of charity to an act of solidarity with those affected by historical injustices. This frame challenges the traditional paternalistic approach to philanthropy and promotes a partnership model where power and resources are shared.

Logics to Develop
- *Wealth as a Collective Resource:* Foster a mindset that views wealth not as an individual asset but as a communal resource meant for the collective well-being and sustainability of societies.
- *Collective Stewardship:* Encourage the logic of collective stewardship of resources, emphasizing shared responsibility and mutual benefit in wealth distribution.

Metaphors to Utilize
- *Wealth as a Garden:* Depict wealth as a community garden where resources are cultivated, shared, and managed collectively, ensuring nourishment and growth for the entire community.
- *Philanthropy as a Circle:* Utilize the metaphor of a circle or roundtable to symbolize philanthropy's evolving role into a space of equal voices and shared power, facilitating community-led decisions.

Implementing the Strategy
- *Engage with Historically Dispossessed Communities:* Actively involve communities in the conversation and decision-making processes about wealth redistribution, ensuring their voices lead the narrative and action.
- *Showcase Models of Success:* Highlight real-world examples of decentralized wealth management and community empowerment, demonstrating the tangible benefits and scalability of such models.
- *Collaborative Advocacy:* Partner with organizations and movements that support decolonization, reparation, and the transition towards new custodial practices in philanthropy, amplifying the call for systemic change.
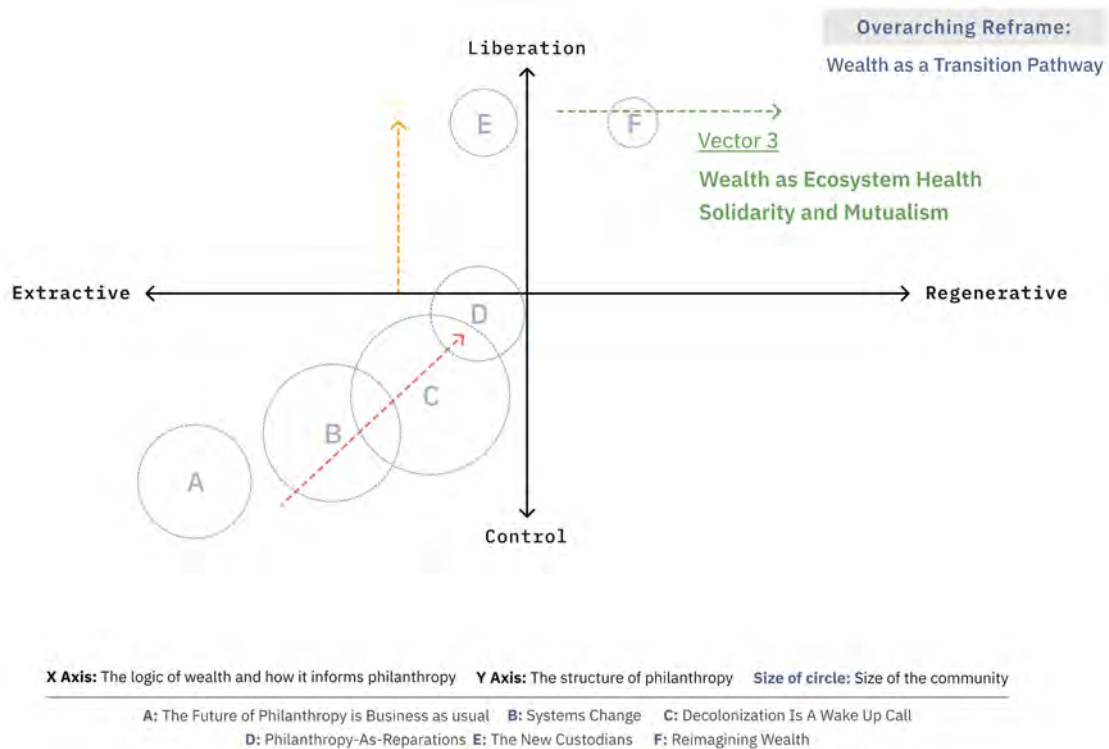
This strategy aims to reshape the philanthropic landscape by centering the voices and needs of The New Custodians, advocating for a transformative approach to wealth distribution that is equitable, just, and community-driven.

Vector 3: Ontological Shift towards Regenerative Wealth

At the vanguard of narrative evolution, this vector addresses the radical redefinition of wealth at the fringes of The New Custodians (E), aiming towards the Reimagining Wealth community (F). It underscores a profound ontological shift from viewing wealth as an extractive resource to understanding it as inherently regenerative.

The Reimagining Wealth community (F) is characterized by its radical approach to wealth, challenging traditional, market-imposed definitions and exploring regenerative wealth beyond the market. This includes in-kind, non-monetary forms of wealth such as ancestral wisdom, emphasizing solidarity, mutual care, and systems defined by relational qualities rather than extractive gains.

This transition signifies a profound rethink of philanthropy's role and the structure of wealth itself, aiming to align philanthropic practices with ecological sustainability and social justice, thereby contributing to the regeneration of communities, ecosystems, and societies at large.

X Axis: The logic of wealth and how it informs philanthropy **Y Axis:** The structure of philanthropy **Size of circle:** Size of the community

A: The Future of Philanthropy is Business as usual **B:** Systems Change **C:** Decolonization Is A Wake Up Call
D: Philanthropy-As-Reparations **E:** The New Custodians **F:** Reimagining Wealth

Strategic Communication Goals
- *Expose Extractive Models:* Highlight the detrimental impact of extractive wealth models on ecosystems and communities, emphasizing the urgency of transitioning towards regenerative practices.
- *Promote Regenerative Wealth Concepts:* Advocate for a holistic understanding of wealth that includes ecological health, social well-being, and communal resilience as key indicators of true prosperity.

Frames to Employ
- *Wealth as Ecosystem Health:* Shift the narrative to view wealth in terms of ecosystem vitality and diversity, framing environmental stewardship as a core component of wealth generation.
- *Solidarity and Mutualism:* Promote the frame of solidarity and mutualism, showcasing how regenerative models of wealth strengthen community bonds and support collective well-being.

Logics to Develop
- *Interconnected Prosperity:* Emphasize the logic that true prosperity arises from the health and well-being of all life forms, advocating for economic models that support this interconnectedness.
- *Regeneration as Investment:* Foster the understanding that investing in regenerative practices is an investment in the long-term viability and resilience of societies and the planet.

Metaphors to Utilize
- *Wealth as a Living Forest:* Use the metaphor of a living forest to illustrate wealth, emphasizing how diverse, interconnected ecosystems thrive, providing a model for regenerative wealth systems.
- *Philanthropy as Pollination:* Depict philanthropy as pollination, a process that supports life and fosters growth, spreading resources in a way that benefits the whole ecosystem.

Implementing the Strategy
- *Engage with Radical Fringes of Community E:* Collaborate with those at the radical fringe of The New Custodians to deepen the understanding and practice of regenerative wealth, drawing on their insights and innovations.
- *Showcase Regenerative Models:* Highlight successful examples of communities and organizations that have embraced regenerative wealth models, demonstrating their practicality and benefits.
- *Policy Advocacy for Systemic Change:* Advocate for policies that support the transition to regenerative economies, such as incentives for sustainable practices and regulations that limit extractive industries.

This strategy aims to redefine the concept of wealth, aligning philanthropic efforts with the principles of ecological sustainability and social equity. It seeks to catalyze a shift from extractive to regenerative systems, where wealth is measured by the health of ecosystems and the well-being of communities, ultimately contributing to a more just and sustainable world.

Conclusion

In this white paper, we explore the narrative landscape to consider the transformative potential of philanthropy. Namely, philanthropy as a transition pathway to post capitalist realities.

Central to this vision are three key metaphors that reimagine the essence and impact of philanthropy. First, "Wealth as Mycelium" illustrates how wealth, like the interconnected networks of fungi beneath the Earth, underpins complex ecosystems and should foster connections, support mutual growth, and distribute resources efficiently and equitably across the societal ecosystem. This frame encourages us to see wealth not as static or something to be hoarded but as a dynamic, life-giving force that can nourish society and the wider web of life.

Second, "Composting Hierarchies into Rhizomes" urges us to break down existing power structures and recycle their elements into more fertile, egalitarian, decentralized forms of organization. Just as composting transforms waste into nutrient-rich soil, we can reconfigure the remnants of outdated systems into the foundation for new, more equitable ways of living and giving. This metaphor suggests a radical reconfiguration of power dynamics, where wealth is redistributed to empower horizontal networks of mutual support and collaboration. This approach invites shedding of traditional roles and relationships within philanthropy, promoting a culture of co-creation.

Third, "Philanthropy as Ecosystem Cultivation" emphasizes the role of philanthropy in nurturing diverse, resilient communities, much like a gardener tends to an ecosystem. It extends the vision of philanthropy beyond mere financial support, envisioning it as a cultivator of vibrant ecosystems. This metaphor emphasizes philanthropy's contribution to the holistic development of ecosystems, fostering conditions that allow diverse forms of life and relationships to thrive.

These metaphors alongside the transition pathway frame affords several directions for our narrative strategy. It allows movements, foundations, individuals, etc to situate themselves within a cognitive-development model for syntropic systems change. Viewing the narrative within a cognitive development model (awareness-breakdown-integration) provides a pathway for change and evolution that is aligned to an evolving set of values and outcomes.

This transforms the agenda setting function of philanthropy towards a function of seeing its role to provide energy, currency, nourishment within a complex, evolving and living system. In this way, the transition pathway functions to develop a new common sense of the essence and function of wealth.

Together, these concepts and metaphors provide the scaffolding for transformative systemic change toward post capitalist realities. By adopting and internalizing these frames, we call on the philanthropic sector to begin the hospicing process of continued practices of extraction and control and move towards regenerative, liberatory narratives and practices. This is what we call Post Capitalist Philanthropy.