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# Building the *New* New Orleans: Foundation and NGO Power

**Darwin BondGraham**



**Abstract** Most accounts of organized philanthropy's response to the Katrina disaster portray foundations as either providing critical resources in the absence of federal, state, and municipal leadership, or as mildly ineffective and uncommitted grantmakers with little understanding of local nonprofit and community needs. Through an in-depth case study of the three largest regional foundations and two largest foundations established as a direct response to Hurricane Katrina, I examine the overall role of philanthropy in the post-Katrina New Orleans, including the history, leadership, grantmaking practices, and ideology of the largest and most influential foundations. Far from being saviors in the absence of state leadership, nor bumbling and ineffective grantmakers, it is shown that dominant foundations and major NGOs have proven very effective in leading the local growth coalition's opportunistic response to the disaster.

**Keywords** Hurricane Katrina · New Orleans · Foundations · NGOs · Civil Socieity · Neoliberalism · Urban growth machine

## Introduction

The immense outpouring of donations following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 generated much praise for the role of foundations and non-governmental organizations in response and recovery efforts. According to some, privately initiated and controlled streams of resources made up for much of the government's "failure," especially at the federal level, to provide leadership and resources in the disaster's aftermath (Chamlee-Wright, c.2006). Others lamented this situation, calling the billion dollar commitment a relatively small sum of money for the

D. BondGraham (✉)
2446 Quail Hollow Dr., Santa Rosa, CA 95403, USA
e-mail: darwin@umail.ucsb.edu

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hyper-wealthy US philanthropic sector, and a poor, ineffective substitute for state-led reconstruction (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 2008).

One commentary in the Chronicle of Philanthropy, 6 months after Katrina, noted that "just a trickle of foundation money has gone to grass-roots, advocacy, organizing, or other activists causes." The author explained that the situation was unlikely to improve as donations were distributed to a relatively small number of community foundations by big national funds, and that these regional foundations, "have a poor record of supporting such causes." Based on these observations the commentary concluded that: "foundations have failed to understand the level of devastation wrought by the hurricanes on needy families and African-Americans and other minorities in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi" (Eisenberg 2006).

A different essay appearing almost a year later called the foundation response a "catastrophic failure," raising significant questions about whether the reliance of grassroots activists on foundations is a sustainable model for social movements (Flaherty 2006). Both essays suggest that foundation staff simply didn't understand the degree of need, nor have respect for grassroots organizations. Both interpretations of organized philanthropy's response to Katrina pay little attention to the specific effects foundations and NGOs have actually had in the Gulf South, however.

Far from being benevolent providers of resources and facilitators of a value neutral recovery, foundations and the largest nonprofit organizations, often with the full cooperation of local, state and federal government, have played central roles in political struggles over the nature and meaning of the recovery process. This contradicts the two dominant narratives about civil society after Katrina. Foundations and NGOs were not saviors, as the first account puts it, nor have they been bumbling responders, ill-equipped to empower local recovery efforts as others have expected. Rather, foundations have specifically served as institutional traps to capture resources, mostly financial contributions made during the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes. National foundations have channeled funds through a relatively small number of favored regional foundations controlled by local elites who in turn have granted out tens of millions to specific political and economic projects serving the interests of particular parties, harming others. Foundation directors, executives, and staff have exercised power as key social change-managers in concert with elite allies across multiple levels of government and industry. Acknowledging that the post-Katrina Gulf South would see both a need and opportunity to rebuild not just the physical environment, but to rebuild the political-economy itself, foundations have intervened, very successfully, to manage the kind of reconstruction that has taken place.

The role of organized philanthropy as a private-parallel government has been actively encouraged by federal, state, and city officials, many of whom have complex affiliations with large funds and non-profit organizations, as well as the business community. This all highlights shortcomings with scholarly analyses and popular narratives of the disaster that emphasize the "failures" of government alongside the seemingly independent role of civil society organizations. More so, it calls into questions theories of institutional autonomy and pluralist conceptions of power (Evans 1995; Nordlinger 1981; Skocpol 1979). Instead it points to an interdependent and often cooperative relationship between elites in government and foundations, steered by business leaders, all to carry out a commonly understood reconstruction project. The project is to create new opportunities for capitalist accumulation in previously public sectors of the regions political economy.

A complementary way to understand the totality of foundation and NGO behavior in post-Katrina New Orleans is that they have taken the lead in the region's growth coalition (Logan and Molotch 1987). Katrina provided an especially momentous set of opportunities and sum of resources for the city's growth coalition to accelerate and even expand their longstanding plans for transforming real estate use values in working class, predominantly black neighborhoods into exchange values for private developers, corporate capital and large institutions like LSU, all in line with the desire to attract new desirable industries and affluent residents. That this reinvigorated growth machine bases its new urban fortunes on the overall shrinkage of the city after a disaster is no small irony. Displacement of the city's working class African American majority, and significant transfers of land in their historic neighborhoods, especially around the Canal/Basin Street Corridor, lower Mid-City, and the "Big Four" public housing developments is the lynchpin of the growth coalitions post-Katrina platform.

This paper analyzes the organization, grantmaking practices, function, ideology, and leadership of the largest and most influential national and regional foundations in post-Katrina New Orleans. By describing the three largest regional foundations, the two largest foundations established as a direct response to the Hurricane Katrina, and the most closely associated and well funded NGOs to these funds, I describe the overall role of philanthropy in the post-Katrina Gulf Coast.

## Giving in the wake of Katrina, an overview

As of 2007, philanthropic commitments to the post-Katrina Gulf Coast through foundation and corporate controlled funds totaled approximately one billion dollars. This figure is roughly one-sixth of all donations made—including by private citizens, corporations, and church organizations—in response to the hurricanes of 2005 (Lawrence et al. 2007).

According to a 2007 study of philanthropy after Katrina conducted by the Foundation Center, corporate donations were the single largest source. Corporate "gifts" tended to focus on immediate needs such as emergency shelter, clothing, food and transportation. Examples include five-million dollar contributions from Verizon and Chevron, and a $7 million donation from ExxonMobil to the Red Cross. Much of this half-billion in corporate dollars was spent by mid 2006.

While useful in addressing immediate human needs, and also the public relations goals of large corporations (Ermann 1978), this spending has been less important to the long-term reconstruction of the Gulf Coast. By far the most important pool of philanthropic money and resources over the long run has been provided by foundations. Foundation spending has strategically targeted policy decisions around multi-year reconstruction efforts. The Foundation Center's report states that foundations have, "focused more on recovery and rebuilding," than any other source of funds and that among those involved in this more politically charged field, "a few large foundations dominated foundation giving." By funding initiatives that aim at shaping state policy and state capital investments, foundations have played instrumental roles as instigators of drastic social experimentation and restructuring across many sectors of society. Simultaneously, they have prevented other types of changes from occurring, entirely due to their commanding position in civil society. By their design and implementation, foundation commitments have been about shaping state policies and facilitating new forms of capitalist accumulation around newly enclosed land, both by generating higher rents and drawing in desired industries (the growth coalition's attempt to create a biotech industrial district around their planned LSU hospital, for example); by privatizing housing, and previously public spheres such as education; and creating private-parallel governance methods to serve business interests.

The Foundation Center points out that most private sector donations were channeled through "intermediary organizations outside of Louisiana and Mississippi." Among the major national foundations that have dominated the private sector response and served this channeling function are the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, W.K Kellog, the Lily Endowment, the Ford Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation. The most important broker of nationally captured funds by far is the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund.

Several regionally-based foundations have also received and distributed significant amounts of grant money intended for long-term recovery and planning. They have served as regional brokers or gatekeepers of major dollars available to nonprofits. Many of them have received large grants from the national broker foundations mentioned above. The most important of these regional funds include: the Foundation for the Mid South, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Greater New Orleans Foundation, Community Foundation in Louisiana, Community Foundation of Southern Alabama, the Gulf Port Community Foundation, and others. Together, these national and regional foundations have controlled a major pool of Katrina donations. Most importantly, they have dominated the flow of funds into NGO and para-statal initiatives explicitly aiming to reconstruct the political-economy of the Gulf South. No equivalent source of government or private sector funds compare to this concentrated and inter-related body of foundation spending.

Concretely, foundations have instigated and led in the dismantlement and demolition of public goods, and their privatization to the fullest extent possible, replacing these spaces or services with new uses and providers that allow for enormous corporate profits and stimulate the overall rise in rents (Molotch 1976; 1979). As one influential Urban Institute report summarized it, the "shared principles" of this program achieved with the instrumental intervention of foundations and NGOs has been to emphasize abstract concepts like "choice," "information," "flexibility," "quality," "asset building," and above all the leitmotifs of "opportunity and equity," across the board for the Gulf South's social and economic institutions (Turner 2006). While these sound all right and good in the abstract, the actual reconstituted political-economy and the policies guiding it so far have created very real results with winners and losers. Although not the subject of this paper, measurements of who has benefited and who has lost out in the Katrina aftermath can, and has been measured extensively. For just a sampling of the many good overviews of race, class and gender inequalities during and after Katrina see, (Sharkey 2007; Belkhir and Charlemaine 2007; Elliott and Pais 2006; Barnshaw 2007).

## Capturing and channeling resources, managing change

The history of foundations is rooted in elite attempts at charity, reform, and perhaps most importantly, social control. Joan Roelofs has shown through detailed historical research how and why the largest US foundations formed during the era of robber baron capitalism and how they changed over time to address contemporary crises of elite power. According to Roelofs (2003), foundations are principally legitimators of elite rule, providing a "mask of pluralism" in a reality of oligarchy and plutocracy. Slaughter et al. (1980) have added to this analysis of legitimation by detailing the work of foundations during the progressive period to formulate ideology for the ruling class. Similarly, Arnove (1982) has examined foundations as instruments of cultural imperialism, both domestically and internationally. Foundations create ideology and legitimate social practices that benefit the ruling classes. They are instruments of stabilization for an otherwise highly unstable economic and social order.

G. William Domhoff's (2002) analysis of the US ruling class highlights the role of foundations and NGOs such as Ford Foundation and the US Chamber of Commerce as major components of the larger institutional network of elite rule. Although his examination of the ruling class is largely on the national level, the structures and networks he illuminates are telescoped on regional and local political settings, with some important differences (Hunter 1953, 1980).

The literature on foundation and corporate power and subversion of urban social movements is extensive. Decades of research into urban renewal, metropolitan politics, housing, employment, policing and more shows clear elite-led efforts across the United States to achieve their goals has more often than not required foundation and NGO work to co-opt and undermine grassroots democracy and to legitimate predestined decisions made by powerful developers, bankers, and politicians (Fish 1973). Gutherie and McQuarrie (1986) show that privatization of housing in the United States and nearly all large scale urban redevelopment projects since the mid-1980s have been instigated and guided by large foundations like Ford and Rockefeller. Much of the planning, redevelopment, and management is carried out by nonprofit organizations, or else by private companies using tax credits and other subsidies pioneered by the Ford Foundation and its local partners like the Cleveland Housing Network and Enterprise Foundation (Tittle 1992). Beyond just housing, Marwell (2004) has examined the overall privatization of the welfare state through nonprofit and community-based organizations. Magat (1979) has traced the emergence of private-parallel forms of government back to the Ford Foundation's Grey Areas program, calling it a "proxy for local government" (cited in Domhoff 2005). The creation of Community Development Corporations in the early 1970s has also been examined in detail as an example of private-parallel government, insulated from democratic influences, lavishly funded, and long-term in outlook (Berndt 1977; Stoecker 1997; Yin 2001).

Domhoff (2009) recent synthesis of much of this literature concludes that "there are limits to what challengers can achieve in terms of greater democratic participation and individual opportunity when they are beholden to a corporate-financed network of nonprofit organizations concerned with maintaining the current class structure and huge privilege it delivers to the wealthy few."

## Capturing resources—an especially southern foundation practice

In 1965 Mississippi Governor Paul Johnson is reported to have phoned Sargent Shriver, head of the Office of Economic Opportunity exclaiming, "You have funded mah political enemies!" Shriver's Office of Economic Opportunity had just made its first grants to a number of grassroots groups in Mississippi, many run by Civil Rights Movement organizers. One mission was to establish Head Start programs for early child development, but the implications were much wider and had the potential to strike at the roots of southern class and race hierarchies. "Blood will flow all over the steps of the Mississippi State Capitol...," Johnson told his federal antagonists (Greenberg 1990 p. 35).

Head Start under these auspices was understood by the southern plantocracy as a major threat to the racial and class regimes of the South. It meant millions of dollars injected locally, some of it controlled by grassroots NGOs and churches, many of them run by blacks or white radicals. In some cases it meant high wages and economic security for many black women and men, many of them already organizers in the freedom movement.

The planters quickly organized to capture the majority of these federal funds, diverting them into their own non-profits so as to neutralize the movement's federal sources of power. At the same time they exerted maximum influence upon federal policy makers and foundation leadership who had provided these early, less-restricted grants. Things began to change. Outside sources of funding, from federal antipoverty programs to foundation grants let by liberal northeastern funds went from being a threat to the plantocracy to a new source of power and social control over social movements. In this respect, foundations have served much like outside corporate investments in the South; it tends to re-create and reinforce local inequalities and power relations (Tomaskovic-Devey et al. 1997).

The planters' goal in the early 1960s, largely successful, was to soak up the influx federal dollars, use them to reward the most moderate NGOs, starve radical groups of funding and prestige, co-opt as many organizers as possible, and contain change from spreading systematically (For a detailed account of this process across the Mississippi Delta through the Civil Rights Movement era see, Woods 1998). Polly Greenberg, an OEO worker recalls how Senator William Eastland of Mississippi saw the matter; "[he] understood that social change was coming. He wanted it kept under the establishment's control, of course, but he realized that the lid could not be kept on the boiling over black situation much longer. 'We'll give the niggers half, but not the top half,'" Eastland is reported as having once explained (Greenberg 1990).

It was here that the origins of a new strategy for maintaining power over the political, economic, and social conditions of the South emerged. By the end of World War II the old ways—using state violence and extralegal terrorism to suppress working class, particularly black mobilizations—had become an untenable means of maintaining the highly polarized racial and class divisions of the South. The reasons were many. The influx of federal money and resources first to redevelop agriculture and build up industries and later to support moderate Civil Rights workers, along with scores of outsiders penetrating the cotton curtain, many of them students and organizers from the Northeast and West, had helped to change the power dynamics of the South forever. This is to say nothing of the post-WWII eruption of black protest against apartheid American realities (Kelley 1996).

Largely in cooperation with then subordinate segments of the southern elite, planters eventually moved to set up their own foundations and NGOs, even adopting much of the language of the Civil Rights Movement and adapting it to their pro-capitalist/developmentalist paradigm in order to slow change in some areas, and speed up changes in others. Modernization of agriculture was one area where foundation, academic and federal interventions primarily in support of planter capital brought on drastic changes in the economies and social order of the US South (Daniel 1986, 2000; Lester 2002). Racial liberals, apologists, and even progressives were convened together creating a philanthropic sector that sought acceptable solutions to the problems of chronic poverty, environmental destruction, illiteracy, and other ills rooted in the plantation past and neoplantation present. By no means a monolithic structure, southern philanthropy has become diverse and varied in its approaches. However, the largest foundations and NGOs tend to be controlled by either conservative elites with their basis of power in the neoplantations, or else by neoliberal, New South elites, with their basis of power in the urban areas, service industries, manufacturing and energy.

## Managing change

Change was coming, surely, but it could be managed, especially if the ruling class could get a handle on the social movements that had done so much to end Jim Crow segregation and challenge the wider power structure. A full analysis of this new strategy is impossible to cover here, but one aspect of it is central to the role of foundations and NGOs in the post-Katrina Gulf Coast.

Since the 1960s, southern elites—especially reform minded leaders working to accommodate the planters but also to forge a “new South” economy—have repeatedly set up non-governmental organizational traps to capture outside resources flowing into their territories. These traps allow them to do a number of things including; (1) rewarding political supporters, (2) funding ideologically favorite causes and campaigns, (3) starving and penalizing political opponents, (4) starving causes and campaigns antithetical to their interests, (5) controlling the overall flow of outside resources, (6) building an image of goodwill and progressivism within the larger US, and (7) using it as an opportunity to rebuild the political-economy around new neoplantation forms of capitalist development.

This last function has been particularly important during times of economic crisis and “opportunity” in specific regionally based agricultural-industrial formations. Since the 1960s southern philanthropy has attempted to address wider ranges of accumulation crises in the South due to urbanization and industrialization of major metro areas. Impediments to expansion and continuing hegemony of the ruling classes in the South is increasingly linked to urban land values, corporate investment, labor regimes, “race relations,” suburbanization, and other issues more akin to the industrial-urban North than the agricultural-rural South. These change-management functions of southern foundations are almost identical to foundation methods more extensively researched in northern urban settings, such as the role of the Ford Foundation in Cleveland, New York, Detroit and Oakland (Tittle 1992).

All of these functions of the capture mechanism used by major southern foundations post-Katrina have had the effect of preventing the emergence of a horizontally financed, decentralized social mobilization of the poor with assistance of outside resources. If not explicitly stated as a goal (it rarely ever has been, especially in public communications by elite southern foundations) this strategy has so far proven very effective at under-developing southern civil society and creating a highly stratified NGO food chain not dissimilar to what exists in much of the "developing" world.

The post-Katrina situation has been seized through this strategy in a way that has proven far more favorable to local elites and far more destructive to working class communities. New economies and privatized governing structures are taking shape along with experimentally new formations of housing, education, transportation, and more. The detrimental effect of foundation power on social movements has been less about co-optation, steering, or underfunding, and more the case that dominant civil society organizations have been serious opponents and antagonists of many grassroots activists.

Finally, while forging stable local political regimes and executing neoliberal developmental schemes on city to regional levels previously was possible through apartheid means whereby white capitalists would work hand in glove with white politicians to impose underdevelopment on black communities, the post-Civil Rights Movement era has required the enlistment of black elites. Black power in this setting, usually political, but sometimes as petit capitalists partners, has served to legitimate and negotiate the terms of exploitation of black working class labor or urban ghettos at the hands of white capital. Because of its unique history, this more graduated and nuanced racial system of power, sometimes called "comprador rule," has existed in New Orleans since at least the early 1800s (Hirsch and Logsdon 1992; Hanger et al. 1996). New Orleans creole elite, demarcated from the black working class majority by their family lineages, lighter skin tones (Keith and Herring 1991), and advanced degrees or backgrounds as business executives, have controlled the state apparatus of the city since the late 1970s when Ernest Morial became the first black mayor. Until Katrina black elites only further entrenched their hold on city government. White business owners and investors were therefore forced to work with the city's black political establishment, a situation that did little to alleviate the exploitation of the poor, but was different in the sense that it built a considerably large and powerful black middle and upper class who served as the managerial and political agents of the white owned and run financial, shipping, tourism, and military sectors, taking their management fee from the profits of these firms (Arena 2004; Whelan et al. 1994). After Katrina, however, the city's political apparatus has been taken back by a white majority City Council and now a white Mayor, and the state's 2nd congressional district is now occupied by a Vietnamese Republican Party member.

Even so, the post-Katrina neoliberal redevelopment of the Gulf Coast has employed numerous black political elites, and even a handful of black capitalists, who have served alongside white business leaders and elected representatives to support and execute various privatizations of the public sector, all of which has been made possible by the chronic displacement of New Orleans' black poor. Thus even before losing its black majority in late 2007 (Nossiter 2007), the City Council's black representatives voted in favor of many of the neoliberal economic and planning policies promoted by the region's economic elite (Reed 2006).

The fact that black political and economic elites facilitate and even profit off racist forms of accumulation by dispossession, and that they serve in leadership positions among the powerful foundations that have served as the proverbial tip of the spear of privatization, should be taken as evidence of how complex the contemporary racial regime is. It cannot function on baldly white supremacist notions of rule and must seek forms of ideological legitimation which obscure and deny the racist outcomes of redevelopment. While the vast majority of dispossessed citizens in post-Katrina New Orleans have been black —a clear proof of the racist effects of these policies— the beneficiaries have included a handful of African Americans who embraced their identities as neoliberal politicians or members of the bourgeoisie over that of their blackness. This phenomenon of course reaches back to the very roots of the colonial project and racial formation itself (Winant 2002), and its nature is far beyond the theoretical or historical scope of this paper.

## Private-parallel state agents and facilitators of capital—case studies of the largest foundations in the post-Katrina Gulf South

In the two decades prior to Katrina a set of regional foundations were established in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Among the biggest and most influential are the Greater New Orleans Foundation, Foundation for the Mid South, Enterprise Delta Corporation, and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Their boards of directors have tended to represent prominent bankers, lawyers, and industrialists alongside handfuls of activists and academics from their respective regions. Their grants have tended to favor charities, or else social services framed as providing “opportunities” or “building equity” for disadvantaged populations. Much of their programmatic work has aimed at creating quasi-governmental programs for job training, education, and industrial development for the remaining poor peoples in regions of the south previously decimated by the automation of agriculture, mass emigration, and further enclosures of land (Kirby 1987).

Urban priorities of these foundations emphasize job training and placement for black youths whose “opportunities” have been limited by deindustrialization, suburbanization, and capital flight since the 1960s. The forces still at work leading to further disinvestments of capital and ghettoization tend not to be addressed directly, if at all. These same foundations have also focused on promoting urban redevelopment in cities like New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Biloxi, Gulfport, Mobile, and Jackson in order to spur land speculation around state funded redevelopments, attract industry, and gentrify targeted neighborhoods. Their grant making has always been relatively conservative compared to community foundations outside of the South, which is to say very conservative in general.

Below are profiles of several major foundations, their origins, ideologies, leadership, and pre-Katrina priorities, along with examples of their major initiatives after the storm to re-enforce existing power relations, but more so to carry out the privatization of public goods. Linking each is a common origin in the efforts of regional and local elites to solve crises stemming from the highly unequal, racist, and capitalist political-economy, be it that of the neoplantation system in the

Mississippi Delta, or the casino-capitalism of the Gulf shore regions, or the de-industrialized urban service economy of New Orleans.

## Greater New Orleans Foundation

The Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) was established in 1983 with $5 million in assets. It reportedly controls $134 million in total assets as of 2009. The Foundation grew out of a prior philanthropic organization established by New Orleans' old money called the Community Chest.

In addition to its general fund, the GNOF sponsors a large number of "donor advised funds," simple vehicles for wealthy individuals to set up their own mini-foundations, guided by their own principles, but administered by GNOF staff. This facilitates political-philanthropic interventions into society by the wealthy elite of New Orleans. Many are policy oriented in their work, therefore fulfilling the private-parallel mission of creating state policy. One of the GNOF's main goals is transferring the immense private wealth of New Orleans' into a social change making agent beyond the control of the city and state taxation. Since the rise of black electoral majorities in many southern cities, philanthropy as a sector has grown enormously, a process that may be causally linked to white capital flight from the integrated public sector.

Like other large community foundations, GNOF was grown and tutored early on by several Ford Foundation grants (Fisher 1994; O'Connor 1999). Ford grants went to predictably safe programs with names like "youth opportunities in the community." Other Ford grants were for programs like "the Ford Foundation Leadership Program address[ing] teen pregnancy [and] the Ford Diversity Initiative produc[ing] the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative." (GNOF 2009). Narrowly defined issues like "teen pregnancy," and job training—all of which stem directly from concerns the city's elite have in addressing the city's hyper-inequality—have remained standards of the GNOF over many years.

The GNOF also transfers cash to other major regional foundations—Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Foundation for the Mid South—that fulfill the same capture and management functions. Since Katrina the GNOF has continued to practice its basic capture and management function over outside philanthropic funds by using its embedded presence and conspicuousness to serve a gatekeeping function for larger national foundations that might express an interest in financing non-profits in New Orleans. According to the foundation's own web site, "Since the storms, GNOF has played a key role in the recovery, coordinating the local efforts of the Rockefeller Foundation, the State of Louisiana, the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund and others to support the United New Orleans Plan."

GNOF's leadership represents the most elite and conservative networks of New Orleans: two dozen bankers, lawyers, developers and landowners, Entergy executives, tourism and entertainment industry executives, and private school boosters. Directors include Phyllis M. Taylor, widow of Patrick F. Taylor, Louisiana's only billionaire who made a fortune drilling for oil and gas in the Gulf (Times-Picayune 2004). GNOF's offices are located opposite Lee Circle from the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, an educational advocacy fund that promotes a Horatio Alger-like approach to educational reforms, emphasizing responsibility for success or failure on the individual and promoting meritocratic solutions to educational inequalities. The past chair of the GNOF, M. Cleland Powell III, is a vice president of the Whitney Bank (which also handles the GNOF's deposits). Board member David Francis is a vice president of the Times-Picayune newspaper, the region's largest and only daily and an instrumental part of the city growth machine (Molotch 2008). Directors Henry M. Lambert and William H. Shane Jr. are both major real estate developers in the New Orleans metro region. Another GNOF board member, Anthony Recasner is a "charter school guru," according to multiple friendly Times-Picayune profiles on him; he is "the man to whom many look for leadership," in privatizing New Orleans Schools (Pope 2006). Recasner is president of the Louisiana Charter School Association and a major force in the charter movement.

The Whitney Bank, which handles finances for the GNOF, and from which the past chair of the GNOF hails, is deeply enmeshed with the foundation. Whitney Bank's leadership also serves as a bridge between the GNOF and various other elite led foundations which serve the capture and management functions of southern philanthropy. Among Whitney Bank's board members are top level administrators of the LSU Health Sciences Center and the LSU system, charter school directors, and board members of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (more about this fund below).

The GNOF responded to Katrina as a major opportunity to remake the region's political-economy more along privatized lines. From their temporary offices provided by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the GNOF staff and board stepped up their efforts to capture incoming philanthropic dollars while simultaneously using their pre-existing position to broker many grants and influence public policy. In their 2005–06 annual report, the foundation's leadership thanked their base's history of support, pointing to, "more than $25 million in new gifts and pledges from organizations and individuals," since Katrina. According to the GNOF, "the way political, business and nonprofit leaders turned to the Foundation for leadership, the Greater New Orleans Foundation is poised to lead in the years ahead" (GNOF 2006). Describing their work to capture incoming funds and "lead" the city's reconstruction, the Foundation explains;

> In the short term, GNOF focused the nation's generosity through the Rebuild New Orleans Fund. Through it and other efforts, the Foundation received gifts and pledges totaling more than $25 million, and directed 1,200-plus grants to organizations responding to storm victims' needs [....] In its grantmaking process, the Greater New Orleans Foundation is balancing immediate-response projects with strategic grants that will take years to show tangible results [....] Through the Louisiana Disaster Family Recovery Foundation, GNOF has directed needed resources to nonprofits such as the Neighborhood Development Foundation, Neighborhood Housing Services, St. Bernard Parish Unified Schools and many others, to help care for people in need, and help returning residents find homes and schools.

Among the GNOF's biggest projects was its attempt to entirely redesign the city of New Orleans and establish a post-Katrina master plan. This priority resonated with the foundation's directors, many who represent the region's largest banks and developers. It received support from a major national foundation that has historically led urban redevelopment, the Rockefeller Foundation, as well as the largest capture foundation set up after Katrina to secure philanthropic inflows to the Gulf South, the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. The United New Orleans Plan (eventually renamed the Unified New Orleans Plan, or UNOP) was created by the GNOF with $1 million out of their own endowment. Rockefeller produced $3.5 million while the BCKF put in another $1 million. The state of Louisiana provided additional support and acknowledged the private funded effort as its favored redesign of New Orleans.

GNOF paid multiple urban planning firms to draft a new master plan for the city. A subsidiary fund named the New Orleans Community Support Foundation was chartered to handle the process of creating various neighborhood groups to participate in the process. Citizens present in New Orleans at this time were invited to "charrettes" eventually to legitimate the new, New Orleans as a democratically crafted plan. As it was the summer of 2006, more than half the city's population remained displaced. Most of these dispossessed community members were African-Americans, many of whom lived in the neighborhoods being most radically re-imagined. Their participation was effectively precluded.

Although the United New Orleans Plan ultimately did not succeed as the master document for the city's future—mostly due to conflicts among competing elite blocs—the City Planning Commission has communicated that the GNOF/Rockefeller/State/BCKF plan will serve as the foundation to the final city Master Plan which will have the force of law (New Orleans City Council 2008). In the Spring of 2009 the city's new Master Plan was made public in draft form. Entitled "Plan for the 21st Century: New Orleans 2030," the Master Plan is a 500 page document including a Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance that will determine which areas of the city receive business and residential subsidization. Approved by the City Council in August of 2010, the Master Plan has been criticized for a multitude of reasons including its origins in the highly exclusionary planning schemes that were conducted at the height of black working class displacement in 2006. The plan was also opposed by activists who noted that while it claimed to be a city-wide comprehensive effort, it entirely ignored and excluded the single largest economic and urban redevelopment project—the controversial LSU/VA medical centers to be built atop an existing neighborhood in Mid City (Eggler 2010a, b).

In 2007 the GNOF created the Community Revitalization Fund (CRF) with $25 million in capital contributed by 11 national and nine local foundations. CRF's mission will be to "direct these dollars to local nonprofits, national intermediaries, government, and advocacy organizations that are working to promote equitable and effective housing development." According to the GNOF, "the vision is a stronger New Orleans of mixed-income and mixed-race neighborhoods, each anchored by community facilities, schools, hospitals, pedestrian-friendly streets, and dynamic public open spaces." These "mixed-income and mixed-race neighborhoods" are almost entirely being rebuilt on the ruins of decimated black neighborhoods, including in and around the major public housing developments that were closed down and demolished by the federal Housing Authority (BondGraham 2007). Nearly all of these redevelopments involve the construction of far fewer affordable units among many market rate apartments and homes. Grants made by the GNOF are to both non-profit and for-profit developments of these "smart-growth" projects (GNOF 2007–08).

One of the larger CRF facilitated projects is the Bayou District Foundation's "new New Orleans community, charter school, and City Park recreational facility," a massive redevelopment replacing the St. Bernard public housing apartments with "mixed-income" housing and a PGA-level golf course (Bayou Dist. Foundation 2009). This "new, New Orleans" project is the joint work of Columbia Residential, a major Atlanta-based developer involved in public housing privatization across the US. Columbia Residential refined its public housing privatization business model in Atlanta where it worked with the pliant Atlanta Housing Authority to demolish black occupied neighborhoods such as the Perry Homes, replacing it with what company marketers dubbed the "West Highlands," a mixed-income development that reduced public housing stocks from 900 apartments to 353, while also using acquired land to build market rate houses, retail, and a golf course (Johnson 2004). As a result of initiatives like this, Atlanta's public housing stock has been drastically reduced since the mid-1990s, working families have been dispersed throughout the city using vouchers, and former land and housing subsidized for low-income renters has been incorporated into the speculative real estate development market.

The now demolished St. Bernard Development was made to follow a nearly identical model as many Atlanta public housing complexes. St. Bernard consisted of more than 1,400 public housing apartments before Katrina. After locking out the residents in late 2005, HUD, the Housing Authority of New Orleans and the City Council moved forward with full demolition of the 52-acre site. Columbia residential plans to rebuild 900 units of housing in the area, less than half qualifying as "affordable," and all privately owned and managed by Columbia instead of the public housing authority. The contract with Columbia residential was awarded by HANO, itself in federal receivership and under the control of the Bush administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development. In October of 2007 it was reported that HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson was owed more than a quarter of a million by the firm. The post-Katrina New Orleans project to replace St. Bernard is worth more than $127 million (Pound 2007). The golf course will be built into City Park and managed by the Fore!Kids Foundation, an organization that has received funds also from the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. A PGA-level golf course appeals to many members of the local growth coalition. Since demolition, and the construction of the first phases of "Columbia Citi," the Bayou District has attracted the attention of elite neoliberal philanthropists such as Warren Buffet, Tom Cousins, and Julian Robertson, who have toured the area and touted it as a model to be reproduced nationwide (Dantas 2010; BondGraham 2010).

Like other black neighborhoods redeveloped in this manner, the area's history and sense of collective identity has been wiped out by the sheer displacement of families and the subsequent re-naming of neighborhoods. For example, the "Bayou District" is an arbitrary invention having no historic or cultural meaning in New Orleans. Many former residents of the St. Bernard refuse to refer to the redeveloped site as "Columbia Citi," or the "Bayou District." These new marketing labels dot New Orleans, especially the privatized public housing sites which have lost their traditional names like CJ Peete (Magnolia), St. Thomas, Desire and Florida, having been replaced with quaint-sounding monikers like Harmony Oaks, River Garden, and Abundance Square, respectively. This re-naming of formerly low-income neighborhoods is evident in areas gentrifying under less organized processes such as the so-called "Bywater," until recently simply part of the 9th Ward, or the "New Marigny," around St. Roch Ave. across Claiborne in Downtown New Orleans.

Another CRF grant has facilitated the hiring of extra staff in the City's Office of Recovery and Development Administration. Let to the Orleans Recovery Foundation, LLC, the grant pays the salaries of three city employees overseeing real estate developments similar to the Bayou District Foundation's replacement of thousands of public housing apartments with a privatized mixture of market rate homes and "affordable" units. In yet another foray into running government with private foundation money—so as to better support of private foundation initiatives—the GNOF has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on the City's Redevelopment Authority. According to one of GNOF's own reports;

> About a year into the recovery, a nearly dormant New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA) was revived by mayor C. Ray Nagin to serve as Orleans Parish's principal redevelopment engine. A state-chartered entity with bonding, borrowing, and expropriation powers, NORA was a natural choice to lead the redevelopment of an estimated 100,000 blighted and abandoned properties. With its Community Revitalization grant of $275,000, NORA developed a property database and GIS mapping system that allows it to identify and catalog properties, pinpoint blighted areas, and cluster properties for redevelopment (GNOF 2007–08).

Tools like this GIS system have been used to transfer hundreds of blighted and abandoned homes over to for-profit and nonprofit developers.

## Foundation for the Mid South

Established in 1990, the Foundation for the Mid South (FMS) oversees the tri-state region of Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas. The core geographic feature here is the Mississippi Delta, the greatest concentration of rural poverty in the United States, a region decimated more than any other by the elite-orchestrated mechanization of agriculture in the 1950s and 60s. Seeking an economic future beyond highly mechanized neoplantation agribusiness and to alleviate some of the suffering caused by this hyper-dominant economic sector, "the Foundation for the Mid South was created in 1990 by former Mississippi Governor William Winter, former CEO of Entergy Corporation Edwin Lupberger from Louisiana, and Bob Nash from Arkansas..." (FMS 2009).

Both William Winter and Bob Nash are close associates of the Mississippi Delta's most powerful politician in recent history, William Jefferson Clinton. Winter served on Clinton's Advisory Board on Race. Nash ran the Arkansas Development Finance Authority in the 1980s and was a deputy in the department of agriculture and later an aide to Clinton in the White House, and generally served as a high level African American adviser to Clinton throughout his political career.

Entergy's Lupberger provided the FMS with its greatest connections to the leading businessmen of the South through his position as CEO of Entergy Corporation and various other directorships with investment companies, shipping firms, and banks. Entergy exemplifies the regional scale and economic goals of the Foundation for the Mid South. The energy corporation has built its capital base in the exact region targeted by the FMS. According to one biography of Entergy CEO

Lupberger, in the 1980s the energy corporation was even called “Middle South Utilities Inc., and it supplied electricity to businesses and residences in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi” (Holzinger 1996).

Already deeply concerned with managing economic transformation, Lupberger became a major philanthropist and foundation leader largely through his efforts to bring Entergy fully into the post-Civil Rights Movement era “by implementing the first so-called Fair Share agreement between an electric utility holding company and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)” (Holzinger 1996).

In its own words FMS exists to “attract resources (human and financial) from all over the world to improve social and economic conditions in the region” (FMS 2009). Attraction, e.g. capturing philanthropic funds that might otherwise find lower-levels of grassroots activists in the absence of an elite dominated field of NGOs, was an FMS mission at inception. This capture strategy relates also to the FMS goals of diversifying the economic-base of the south. Instead of trying to prop up the faltering plantation regime, FMS leadership has promoted a “new South” vision of industrialization, home ownership, reinvigorated citizenship, educational reform and more. Underlying all of this is an emphasis on making capitalism work for everyone, but especially for the monopolistic sectors which have hit recurring and increasingly severe accumulation crises in recent years. Mantras like “wealth building” and “equity” pepper the pages of FMS reports. FMS does not seek abolition of the neoplantation-based economy of the South. Rather, FMS’ leadership (through the foundation but especially through their other roles as corporate executives and politicians) promotes diversification of the South’s economy into manufacturing, services, energy, etc. The foundation’s directors and executives style themselves as leaders of the new South who will make the region competitive in the era of globalization (FMS 2004).

FMS is the philanthropic successor to the ill-fated Lower-Mississippi Delta Development Commission (LMDDC, or “Delta Commission”). The Delta Commission was founded by Congress and President Ronald Reagan in 1988, and led by then Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton with the support of other “Mid South” leaders. It was a state-sponsored attempt to address the region’s crushing poverty and economic stagnation in all areas. It was not established to challenge the neo-plantation system. The first nine LMDDC panelists, including Clinton, were all white men. Then aide to Gov. Clinton, Bob Nash, an African-American, served as his alternate on the LMDDC and was involved in its operations (New York Times 1988). According to the scholar Clyde Woods who has studied the LMDDC in-depth, “[f]rom its inception in 1988 to its demise in 1991, the LMDDC was continually attacked, both externally and internally, by regional leaders representing the plantation bloc who felt threatened by any discussion of their role in intensifying economic monopoly, ethnic conflict, and poverty.”

Nevertheless, the LMDDC’s leadership was principally concerned with the economic and social crises facing the Delta region caused by the plantation system’s over-exploitation of the working class, especially blacks. As Woods explains, the LMDDC’s organizers were “preoccupied with industrial recruitment and new infrastructure....” They tried in vain to find a solution to their region’s instability bred through racism and impoverishment; “the New South bloc assisted the plantation powers in hundreds of ways, including objecting to any full exploration of the past as being too divisive" (Woods 1998). As heir to the LMDDC, the Foundation for the Mid South's rhetoric and programs tend to be mild restatements of the region's problems and a laundry list of ways to "convene partners" and "bring people together in the region across the barriers that divide them." This prevailed easily in the LMDDC's short life. It would carry over in the form of a communitarian ethic in the FMS' grant making practices and issue framing.

FMS' biggest project to date was creation of the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta (ECD). The ECD is one example of the FMS' obsession with "building equity." Spun off from the FMS in 1995, the ECD exists to provide commercial and mortgage lending services "to people who are traditionally underserved and need them most" (ECD 2009) The FMS approaches social change entirely from a capitalist-entrepreneur's perspective, going so far as to state that "philanthropic dollars represent a community's stock of flexible, higher-risk capital" (FMS 2004). Social problems—and solutions to them—are framed as existing within the victim, their culture, their existing assets, educational level, skills, and their unfortunate states of supposed backwardness in the face of modernity. One official FMS report explains that the fund's focus on building equity works "to promote self-sustainability and entrepreneurship," as though the poor's own inability to sustain themselves or be entrepreneurial is the root of the problem. In an interesting phrasing, FMS calls on foundations across the region to "invest in people, communities, and organizations committed to building on the capacities and strengths of people, *rather than on their limitations* [emphasis added]" (FMS 2004). Again, the call to avoid focusing on the things that limit and constrain a peoples' ability to grow—e.g. the still hegemonic power of the neoplantations in the Mississippi Delta, the mass exploitation of renters by rentiers in New Orleans, the attempts to pit displaced black workers against new migrant Latino workers across the Gulf South by major industries—is devoid of any political meaning for those at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Prior to Katrina the Foundation for the Mid South and its spin off Enterprise Corporation of the Delta set themselves up well to play a capture role for philanthropic funds raised in the disaster's wake. The Mid South Commission to Build Philanthropy, convened in 2004 by the FMS, stated in their final report that foundations should "invest a portion of their resources in organizations and people working on public policy" so as to directly influence reform of the political-economy. This official FMS report goes on to quote Ford Foundation president Susan Berresford on the role of foundations in conducting radical experiments on society; "foundations are society's R&D arm, helping test models for urgently needed social innovations before they are ready for prime time in public policy debate." (Ford Foundation has provided much financial and technical support for the FMS). This willingness to move the foundation "beyond the charity model of philanthropy," combined with a sense of the foundation and its NGO grantees as "R&D arms," primed the FMS and Enterprise Corporation to be hegemonic organizations in the post-Katrina philanthropic landscape.

One of the Foundation for the Mid South's goals demonstrated during the Katrina crisis has been to further enclose the ideology and grant making activities of southern foundations within the neoliberal scope of the FMS—or in their own words, to create a unified agenda; "We encourage leaders of the region's philanthropic organizations to identify a small group of leaders from across the region who can work together to consider what it would take to establish a vibrant philanthropic network that could help promote a unified agenda for the Mid South over the next decade."

This desire to gain control over the entirety of philanthropy was expressed by the FMS president shortly after Katrina in his commentary appearing in the Chronicle of Philanthropy. George Penick, a career foundation leader in various southern institutions wrote in late 2005 that he believed, "one of the worst situations imaginable would be for local organizations to have to contend with a hundred grant making efforts financed by different donors who have made no effort to communicate and collaborate with one another." In other words, the possibility of a decentralized field of organizational resources, not under the control of the South's regional elites, is one of the "worst situations imaginable." In addition to his role as a foundation administrator, Penick was also a board member of the massive Mississippi Chemical Corporation, a central pillar of the neoplantation power structure (more on Mississippi Chemical below).

According to a Rutgers University report, the Foundation for the Mid South and Enterprise Corporation of the Delta were able to scoop up more dollars than any other regional funds in the immediate aftermath of Katrina (Littles 2010). Since Katrina the Foundation for the Mid South has disbursed over $11 million in grants to nonprofits working in affected areas. The vast majority of these funds have gone to charity organizations, many of them "faith based" groups. Another significant sum have been doled out to local economic development organizations like the East Arkansas Enterprise Community which has established an "empowerment zone" in parts of that state by providing tax breaks and other incentives to attract new industries (EAEC 2001).

If its primary role has been to capture philanthropic funds in the Delta region, the FMS's secondary role has been to manage change. In recent years this has meant not only steering political movements into more agreeable reformist ruts, but in fact assisting civil society groups with neoliberal and neoconservative agendas. One of these aggressive change management operations after Katrina funded by FMS was the charter school movement along the Gulf Coast. FMS bankrolled rapid expansions of charter authority in multiple school districts. For example FMS granted New Schools for New Orleans $20,000 for its main program of "invest[ing] heavily in the development of new open enrollment charter schools" (NSNO 2009a). FMS gave an equally large grant to Parents for Public Schools of Jackson, Mississippi, but in line with the neoliberal biases of the foundation the executive director of PFPS has proclaimed "Parents for Public Schools is not against charter schools in general, but is more in favor of providing all children with a quality education" (Brown 2009).

Other key players in the charter movement's nearly complete takeover of Orleans Parish public schools include the previously mentioned Greater New Orleans Foundation and Whitney Bank, but also the Capital One Bank which granted $1 million to academic entrepreneurs at UNO. Together they have established the Capital One-University of New Orleans Charter Network, a "seamless" pre-kindergarten through college "learning network" (Capital One

2009). Other banks with links through foundations and NGOs to the charter school movement include First Commerce Bank and Fidelity Home Savings. As one knowledgeable observer put it in 2007, “Many foundations are contributing large sums of money to the experiment” including the Laura Bush Foundation which dished out millions to charter and private schools along the Gulf Coast. In addition to the University of New Orleans, Tulane has also generously funded and supported charters like Lusher Academy (Quigley 2007). Cathy Pierson, another New Schools for New Orleans board member is a director of the Tulane Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, an academic organization at the center of the charter movement (NSNO 2009b). This web of lavishly funded foundations, NGOs, and university centers has managed to carry out the most complete privatization of a school system in US history. As of March 31, 2009 there are only five Orleans Parish Public Schools in New Orleans. There are 33 state run schools under the Recovery Schools District’s supervision and 49 charter schools (GNODC 2009).

## Baton Rouge Area Foundation

With over a half billion in assets the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAF) is the 25th largest community foundation in the United States and a monster southern fund (Foundation Center 2009). It has played a central role in capturing tens of millions in Katrina donations and managing social change by funding and influencing NGOs and even state agencies across southern Louisiana. According to the BRAF’s 2006 annual report the foundation issued more than $34 million in Katrina related grants while raising $44.8 million in funds (BRAF 2006). The BRAF also assisted the GNOF after Katrina by providing interim offices during a critical period, when a flood of donations was being made.

BRAF was very successful at capturing donations intended for hurricane victims. According to the foundation;

> Immediately following Katrina, the Foundation formed the Hurricane Katrina Displaced Residents Fund. Focused on providing basic needs like food, shelter, security, health care, and education, the fund issued 43 grants totaling more than $6 million in 2006. With literally thousands of generous donors from around the country and world making gifts to the fund, the Foundation was able to ensure that critical programs received the emergency funding they needed to provide services (BRAF 2006).

One of the BRAF’s specialties is funding NGO efforts and government programs for urban renewal. The foundation is an agent for real estate capital including developers, planners, architects and banks. Before Katrina the foundation had completed a remaking of downtown Baton Rouge through its subsidiary non-profit, the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX). According to (CPEX);

> In 2005, in partnership with a new Hope VI development, Plan Baton Rouge completed a neighborhood plan for Old South Baton Rouge, a historic but disinvested community located between downtown and Louisiana State University. The plan focuses on revitalizing existing housing and businesses and integrating mixed-income housing and multi-use development to the area (CPEX 2009).

The Old South Baton Rouge boom, "was created by a team of experts hired by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation." Using seed money the BRAF was able to leverage federal HUD dollars, $18.6 million in all, to demolish much of the area and build privatized housing between the capitol city's downtown and LSU's flagship campus. The role of BRAF, LSU, and various other organizations and corporations in this enterprise compares with classic urban renewal projects around other universities (Perry 2005). The BRAF concluded that "private developers have built hundreds of new apartments and condos in the community. Additionally, efforts to improve existing housing and reduce crime are blossoming" (BRAF 2006).

Since Katrina the BRAF has funded many urban demolition and reconstruction initiatives in south Louisiana. A 2006 report in the Washington Post summarized some of the foundation's novel post-Katrina work;

> The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has hired planners and other consultants at a cost of $15 million to devise a blueprint for development in southern Louisiana, a task normally taken on by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It also is spending $1.2 million on consultants to map out a regional health care system (Salmon and Smith 2006).

The main vehicle for this reshaping of urban and rural geographies in Katrina-impacted regions is an initiative called Louisiana Speaks. Funded and forged by CPEX, Louisiana Speaks is a private-parallel state agency attached to the Louisiana Recovery Authority. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation successfully exerted policy control over the LRA's long-term coastal rebuilding plans by setting up the LRA Support Foundation and funneling captured monies into this vessel. The LRA Support Foundation has been able to leverage its product as the accepted "smart growth" plan for southern Louisiana.

The BRAF's board includes a list or corporations with interests in land values such as Whitney Bank, Bank One (now Chase Bank), as well as representatives of large transnational corporations with operations in Louisiana like ExxonMobil, Cox Communications, and Lamar Advertising.

The BRAF is deeply enmeshed in healthcare and social services reform initiatives through its own programs as well as its connections to lobby/consulting firms like SSA Consultants. Christel C. Slaughter, past Chair and current board member of the BRAF is a Partner in SSA Consultants. Her husband, William Slaughter, II is President of SSA. (William Slaughter is a former faculty member at LSU and has various other ties to the school's administration). SSA Consultants has been a key mover behind healthcare privatization lobbies such as Blueprint Louisiana. In fact, William Slaughter founded Blueprint Louisiana, and SSA has served as its principle policy workhorse (Glover 2008). Christel Slaughter, William Slaughter and various other SSA Consultants partners work under contract for HMOs to increase profits, reduce expenses, and lobby for the dismantlement of the public Charity Hospital system. SSA has also contracted with the state government to refine the "welfare-to-work" system under TANF. Other SSA Consultants contracts are with large chemical corporations and the timber industry.

In New Orleans the ensemble of organizations working alongside BRAF to privatize the public Charity Hospital health care system has assisted in the state university's bid to permanently shutter the Avery C. Alexander Charity Hospital (the third largest in the nation), and build a new LSU medical center. As previously mentioned this redevelopment project in its sheer physical scope is the largest in post-Katrina New Orleans. It has required eviction of hundreds of homeowners and businesses from the lower-Mid City neighborhood, and was purposefully excluded from the city's highly controversial Master Plan by the City Council for fear that opponents to the new "Taj-Mahospital" as it has been pejoratively named, would stall the multi-billion dollar project. Closure and replacement of Charity is intended to both eliminate the public health care system with a medical services economy paid for by private insurance, and to serve as the anchor for an entire medical and biotechnology industrial district in Downtown and Mid City New Orleans (New Orleans BioInnovation Center 2010; Biodistrict New Orleans 2010). Permanent displacement of upwards of 100,000 impoverished residents was of course seen early on as a profound opportunity to eliminate the public health care system which by the 1970s had come to serve primarily the indigent uninsured.

## Katrina-specific foundations

Projected on national television for weeks, the severity of the Katrina crisis and the obvious need of communities in the Gulf South prompted an outpouring of hundreds of millions of dollars by all kinds of donors. Regionally based foundations were not entirely capable of capturing this unprecedented sum and source of money. To better capture these funds several foundations were immediately established. They took it upon themselves to distribute many millions of dollars to regional foundations and NGOs across the Gulf region.

The single largest was the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. Other important Katrina-specific foundations included state chartered funds in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. These foundations took on missions even more politically defined than the existing community foundations, some of which would in fact receive large sub-grants from the Katrina specific funds.

### Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund

The largest disaster-specific foundation was the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, established by the south's two most powerful politicians of recent years, George Herbert Walker Bush and William Jefferson Clinton. The Bush family's financial and political power is largely rooted in Texas energy corporations. Clinton's is tied mostly to New South neoliberals.

The BCKF captured more than $130 million in donations from approximately 58,000 individual sources. According to the Fund "90% of donations [came] in amounts of less than $1,000." The BCKF web site touts that the government of Kuwait donated $25 million while "one child donated $16.00 raised at a lemonade stand; other children have donated tooth fairy money and bake sale proceeds" (BCKF 2009a) The foundation drew on both former presidents' celebrity status and their connections to global financial and political circuits. Their knowledge of the South, particularly Clinton's, served to connect national and global sources of capital with regionally based foundations and major NGOs with appropriate ideological casts.

The Bush-Clinton fund was established to provide grants for medium and long-term projects in the Gulf South. This differed from most other charities. Red Cross and other major national fundraisers attempted to soak up national donations in order to spend them—ostensibly at least—on immediate relief good and services (Strom 2006). The Bush-Clinton Fund also made it clear to the philanthropic sector that it would attempt to funnel its endowment to "intermediary grantmakers: organizations with experience in grantmaking at the county/parish, state and regional levels" (BCKF 2009b) This prevented the possibility that the large Katrina-specific BCKF foundation would inadvertently facilitate projects outside of the boundaries already established by southern gatekeepers of philanthropy (e.g. GNOF, BRAF, FMS). It was a conservative policy in-line with the existing philanthropic power structure. It also was based on the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund's pre-existing ties with elite-led foundations in the South.

The BCKF split its grantmaking into four categories. "Interfaith" and "Higher Ed. Grants" provide funds to churches and schools, mostly for reconstruction. "State Grants" and "Other Grants" have been made to regional foundations and major NGOs conducting policy work. State Grants were made in large lump sums to the state chartered foundations set up after Katrina by officials of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

The BCKF has also supported the private-parallel state agency LRA Support Foundation created by the BRAF. Another private-parallel agency funded by the BCKF (with the GNOF) is the New Orleans Office of Recovery Management, created to pay for staff in the city's post-disaster planning office. In addition to these two grants which directly finance government offices making post-disaster policy decisions, the Bush Clinton Fund has supported the Rockefeller/GNOF led Unified New Orleans Plan. Large grants in this category have also been made to NGOs involved in school privatization (e.g. New Schools for New Orleans) and public housing demolition and privatization (e.g. Fore!Kids Foundation) (BCKF 2009c).

In order to manage civil society and delimit the boundaries of appropriate political interventions into the post-disaster political-economy, BCKF adopted a policy of funding projects of its "own initiative," in concert with major regional funds and NGOs: "The Fund expects to conduct most of its grantmaking on its own initiative, by supporting projects selected in consultation with other grantmakers and government entities in the Gulf region." Pre-established networks among regional foundations and major NGOs played a big role in determining BCKF grants.

One pre-established channel was a direct link between the BCKF and the Foundation for the Mid South. Bob Nash, co-founder of the FMS was appointed a director of the BCKF by his old boss and longtime political mentor Bill Clinton. Former presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton both picked political operatives to run their foundation precisely because of its mission: capturing funds, managing change, and supporting the projects of regional political and business elites to re-organizing the Gulf South's political economy through "opportunities" provided by Katrina. In addition to Nash there are only four other BCKF directors. Donald Evans and Alexis Herman serve as co-chairs of the board. James Langdon, a senior executive partner at the law firm and lobbyist Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP came aboard through his deep ties to the Bush family, and Thomas F. McLarty, Clinton's former chief of staff, round out the BCKF board of directors.

An oil and gas corporation lawyer, James Langdon's official biography explains that "he is actively involved in the fields of privatization and international project finance...." At Akin Gump, Langdon facilitates the privatization of oil, gas and mineral resources around the world securing corporate control over resources. His work has taken him to Russia, Central Asia, and Latin America. He is an experienced privatizer. In other roles Langdon has sat on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under George W. Bush and worked with vice president Cheney on the controversial Bush administration's energy policies (Weisman 2005).

Thomas McLarty is a lifelong friend of Bill Clinton and a political operative of the Democratic Party. In addition to his own extensive business interests, McLarty has acted as an advisor to corporate and foreign clients much in the way Henry Kissinger has done with his Kissinger and Associates consulting firm. In fact McLarty and Kissinger were partners in this enterprise for a brief period. Like Langdon, McLarty's career began in energy as a director and later CEO of Arkla, Inc., a natural gas company.

Co-chairs Donald Evans and Alexis Herman have been most responsible for guiding the fund. Both are close political operatives of the Bush family and Bill Clinton, respectively. In addition to his numerous other roles in the corporate sector and government, Evans is also primarily an energy industry executive. In 2001 George W. Bush appointed Evans as US Secretary of Commerce, a position he filled until his move back into private industry with TXU Energy, a major Texas-based utility corporation owned by several private equity firms and Goldman Sachs.

Evans is a self described "strong advocate for the free enterprise system, free and fair trade, and responsible corporate stewardship" (EFH 2009). He explained his market fundamentalist philosophy to a friendly business audience in 2003;

> Whenever the hand of government has fallen too heavily on the free marketplace, the economy faltered. The better job we do of keeping government out of the way...the better job American business will do...at home and abroad. And the best way we in government can do that is by removing barriers that prevent or hinder innovation and economic growth. Government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. I'm talking here about getting rid of unnecessary regulations; making sure the conditions are right for the most effective deployment of capital (Evans 2003).

Democratic Party insider Alexis Herman was appointed Secretary of Labor by Bill Clinton in 1997. She worked for Al Gore during the Florida recount in 2000, and has held the position of vice chair of the Democratic National Committee. Like the rest of the BCKF leaders, Herman is a southerner. Born and raised in Mobile, Alabama, her father was a politician and Civil Rights advocate. Herman is by far the most liberal member of the BCKF leadership, but her political philosophy, like the conservatives Evans and Langdon is firmly neoliberal.

Herman was not supported by most labor unions early in her nomination for Labor Secretary. Her general views were widely to be perceived to be anti-union. Pervious to her roles in the Clinton White House she ran a consulting firm advising corporations and local and state governments on labor market issues in the Gulf South. Her work for the Clinton administration in the early 1990s to pass the North American Free Trade Agreement earned her a great deal of suspicion by most unions

(Sands 1996). That she is closer to corporate executives and their interests than labor is symbolized by her positions on various company boards including Coca-Cola, Cummins, Inc., MGM Mirage, Inc., and Entergy.

As an Entergy executive, Herman was another organic link between the BCKF and the Foundation for the Mid South, as well as other elite-led economic development vehicles like the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta. As previously mentioned, Entergy Corp. was key in establishing the FMS. Entergy board members William Percy II, a member of one of the Delta's leading planter dynasties, is chairman of the Enterprise Corporation (Baker 1983). Percy was also a director and major owner of the Mississippi Chemical Corporation until it was sold to a larger agribusiness company in 2004. The FMS president George Penick was also a Mississippi Chemical Corporation director and major stockholder from 1994 until 2004 (Mississippi Chemical Corp. 2004). MCC manufactures petrochemical based fertilizers for domestic and foreign markets and was sold to Terra Industries in 2005.

## Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

In spite of its appearances, the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation is not a state agency. It is a private non-profit foundation with a private governing structure, professional staff, and board of directors. However, given its establishment by Governor Blanco in September of 2005, LDRF blurs the boundaries between the state and civil society sectors making it the best example of a private-parallel state agency created in the Katrina aftermath. Pending approval for federal non-profit status, would-be donors to the fund were even encouraged to give money through the state of Louisiana's official web site. Both Alabama and Mississippi's governors set up identical tax exempt organizations after Katrina to capture their shares of national donations.

The LDRF was able to capture significant contributions in the immediate aftermath of the storm. By October 2005 the LDRF had more than \$6 million in deposits. Shortly afterward the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund announced that it would make large grants to the Louisiana Fund as well as the Mississippi and Alabama foundations (Strom 2005). The BCKF eventually handed over \$24.4 million to the LDRF, ostensibly to target housing and small business initiatives. The LDRF reports having distributed more than \$29 million in grants to approximately 144 organizations.

The legal work to create the LDRF was done by Paul Pastorek, then a lawyer with the law firm Adams and Reese. Adams and Reese is a regional law firm with complex political associations. In addition to litigation and counsel for its mostly corporate clients, the firm is an active state and federal lobbyist. In October of 2005 the firm held what it called a "'Flow of Funds' Seminar" for the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. trade group. Adams and Reese attorneys provided "an overview of the 'Flow of Funds,' where the \$200+ billion is coming from, and where and how it is going to be spent." According to the firm's own promotional notices, the session "include[d] valuable information for contractors and sub-contractors on recent and proposed legislation" (Adams and Reese 2005). One example of Adams and Reese's political connections is its insurance regulation practice. Among the firm's partners are the former State Insurance Commissioners of

Louisiana and Mississippi. An article in the Times Picayune summarized some the firm's current clients; "In Louisiana, it has an impressive roster of insurance clients, including State Farm, Allstate, USAA, Audubon Insurance Co., Balboa Insurance Group, Louisiana Citizens Property Insurance Corp., the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana, Progressive Insurance Co., Louisiana Land Title Association, Humana Inc. and Oschner Health Plan" (Mowbray 2008).

Pastorek worked pro bono to set up the fund. The LDRF's organizational capacity was further boosted with financial, technical, and volunteer labor from already existing organizations, most importantly from the Ohio based KnowledgeWorks Foundation. Other "founders" and directors of the LDRF included charter school "guru" Anthony Recasner, R. King Milling of Whitney Bank, and CEO of Providence Community Housing Jim Kelly.

That Pastorek and KnowledgeWorks were central in setting up the LDRF was an early indication of one of its main missions in the post-Katrina landscape: to facilitate the privatization of schools in New Orleans. Of all the neoliberal projects using Katrina as an opportunity, school privatization has had perhaps the broadest and wealthiest support network of national and regional foundations, local business elites, entrepreneurial academics, and local politicians.

Pastorek was not just any lawyer. Between his early and later career stints at Adams and Reese he became an educational reformer. Beginning in the 1980s Pastorek increasingly used his positions of power in local nonprofits like the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce to advocate for district reforms of a school system that by all accounts was failing. Pastorek favored approaches that would become the bread and butter of the charter school movement, ones that rest upon vague concepts like "accountability," "self-responsibility," "competition," "choice," and "innovation." In the mid-1990s Pastorek was appointed to the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) where he championed high stakes testing among other things.

After his time on the BESE Pastorek went back to Adams and Reese. His plans for New Orleans' schools continued to develop though when he and Phillip Rozeman, a Blueprint Louisiana board member and fellow education reformer created Education's Next Horizon (ENH). ENH's board included Rozeman and of course Pastorek (referred to as "the initial visionary" on the group's web site), and also Phyllis Taylor of the GNOF and Patrick F. Taylor Foundations, Christel Slaughter of SSA Consultants, and Nancy Stich of Capital One Bank (ENH 2009).

After Katrina, and while Pastorek completed the legal work establishing the LDRF, major national foundations were lining up behind the "experiment" targeting New Orleans' public schools. Among the biggest foundations to throw its weight behind the charter explosion has been the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Gates Fund has been the strongest supporter of the charter movement nationwide save for perhaps the Walton Family Foundation (Hassel 2006). In concert with the LDRF's grantmaking priorities to encourage charter formation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has spent tens of millions on charters in New Orleans (AP 2007). These funds went to Anthony Recasner's New Schools for New Orleans (~$10 million) and New Leaders for New Schools (~$1 million), an organization with very close ties to the Gates Foundation. The LDRF has also made major grants to the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School, and Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools.

Upon State Superintendent Cecil Picard's death in 2007 Pastorek was elevated by Gov. Blanco to the most powerful post over education. Pastorek was a reluctant choice who stuck around beyond the initial appointment by Blanco. According to one report;

> He agreed to finish the 10-month term, knowing he could get someone like noted reformer Paul Vallas to take over the New Orleans Recovery School District, and that the Crescent City proffered a great opportunity to experiment with a new governance model for public education. Says Pastorek: 'I felt like I might be able to make an impact at the state level in a way I've never been able to do before.' (Font 2009).

Now wielding state power, Pastorek made further progress on the privatization of Orleans Parish schools. One of his boldest moves was to appoint Paul Vallas, the CEO of the School District of Philadelphia, as head of the Recovery School District. Under Vallas' leadership the RSD has become evenly split between traditional public schools and charter schools with incentives to reduce the publics and build up the number of charters. Vallas' penchant for charters is demonstrated in Philadelphia: "When he started, there were 38 public high schools in Philadelphia with an average enrollment of 1,700. When he left, there were 62, including charters, with an average enrollment of 800; half have fewer than 500 students. One in particular is a monument to his vision, the spectacular School of the Future, a technologically dazzling building designed with Microsoft that serves one of the poorest areas of the city" (Mezzacappa 2008).

The charter movement is only one area in which the LDRF has put resources. In fact, what makes the LDRF interesting is that it has doled grants out to a wide variety of organizations with different ideologies. Some of the LDRF's smaller grants have gone to supporting organizations like Critical Resistance, a prison abolitionist group, the Louisiana Justice Institute run by civil rights attorney Tracie Washington, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, an anti-racist training organization, the New Orleans Women's Health and Justice Initiative. In this sense, LDRF can be interpreted as an example of how "big business funds the Left" (Poole 1989) It may also be an instance of foundation co-optation of radical grassroots organizations. Another possible interpretation of these LDRF grants is that they achieve a certain need to seek out and purchase legitimacy from grassroots political organizations (Aksartova 2003). It could even be that these grants represent a genuinely pluralistic concern to spread resources among a diversity of organizations (Delfin et al. 2007). More research into the specificity of LDRF's grantmaking practices would be needed to answer these questions.

Regardless, LDRF's funding hierarchy ensures vastly disproportionate allocations of resources. Grants over $100,000 must be approved by the group's board. Nearly all grants matching this description have gone to charities, or else to real estate redevelopers and charter school groups. The majority of LDRF money has been spent on projects completely in-line with the neoliberal program of reconstruction in the Gulf South. Smaller amounts have gone to organizations with opposing political programs, ones that do not easily conform to neoliberal principles, some of which no longer exist partly due to small one time grants rather than large, multi-year commitments.

Major priorities for the LDRF include its Neighborhood Organizing and Planning Fund and its Equity and Inclusion Campaign. The NOPF is yet another private-parallel state initiative to provide foundation resources for urban planning and redevelopment. With near matching funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and Ford Foundation, the NOPF has been established to "[enable] neighborhood groups throughout the New Orleans area to effectively organize, collaborate, and advocate for a shared recovery agenda. The recent grants to LDRF will support the next critical phase of this work, during which neighborhood groups will refine and present organic visions for the future of their communities in New Orleans' Master Planning process" (LDRF 2009a).

The Equity and Inclusion Campaign is one of the LDRF's attempts to influence federal policies affecting the entire Gulf Region. The campaign's staff, much more liberal than the LDRF board, travelled across the Gulf Region seeking input from NGOs on issues across the board, from housing to education and disaster aid. Drafting a final set of policy recommendations, the Campaign brought Gulf Coast advocates to D.C. to lobby. At the top of the lobby list were appeals for legislation and executive action to expand market-based approaches to reconstruction using extended tax credits, lengthened housing vouchers, new rounds of subsidies for homeowners with storm damaged property, and a revamping the Stafford Act among other bureaucratic reforms. Of all policy papers produced by major foundations, the Equity and Inclusion Campaign's final "Policy Brief" is unique in advocating for slightly more progressive policies than more staunchly neoliberal organizations like the American Enterprise Institute, Urban Institute, and even the liberal Brookings (LDRF 2009b) For example, the "Policy Brief" mentions 1-for-1 replacement of public housing in New Orleans as a priority. However, it simultaneously undercuts this recommendation by calling for the allocation of "additional HOPE VI resources," federal funds for demolition and redevelopment that have so far been used on projects like the Bayou District Foundation's "new New Orleans" or Providence Community Housing's demolition of the Lafitte public apartments (Jackson and Mingo 2009).

Like the BCKF, LDRF's board of directors is composed of political appointees, each representing a powerful faction of the Gulf South elite. LDRF Chairman, Ambassador James A. Joseph is a "Professor of the Practice of Public Policy Studies" at Duke University. Joseph was an undersecretary of the Interior Department in the Carter administration and a director of the Corporation for National Service, appointed by president Clinton until his elevation to the post of Ambassador to South Africa. Other appointments include his board positions on the National Endowment for Democracy, the Points of Light Foundation, Overseas Development Council, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Joseph's academic output concerns philanthropy. He has written multiple books extolling the importance of corporate and foundation giving and forms of volunteerism. He is a respected scholar of philanthropy among the elite. One of his more famous books, Remaking America, argues for the benevolent traditions of America's multicultural communities. Born and raised in southern Louisiana, Joseph may well be the most liberal foundation leader among the big institutions that have dominated post-Katrina reconstruction of the Gulf South's political economy and society. The single over-arching theme running throughout Joseph's work is a commitment to communitarianism and avoidance of political conflict. His academic work tells narratives of American history and contemporary life as a search for common ground, which he ultimately believes can be achieved through benevolent philanthropy:

> For some time we thought we could find common ground in our political culture, in citizen participation, and in our commitment to democratic ideals. More recently, we have sought common ground in our economic culture, emphasizing the need of all groups for jobs, the increasing urban/rural connection, and our common commitment to a market economy. It may be, however, that, given the way in which society is changing, we find common ground in the emerging civic culture with its emphasis on both a benevolent government and a benevolent people (Joseph 1995).

This affirmation of civil society over politics and economics, almost to the extent of avoiding recognition of the political and economic spheres of power, is perhaps the most cogent articulation of pan-elite ideology in the post-Katrina environment. In many ways it ignores already existing conflicts. For example, in one of its reports the LDRF states that it "brings together homeowners, renters, builders, developers and support agencies that work together to bring everyone home, house by house, block by block" (LDRF 2009c). The notion that these conflictual interests can and should be brought together is a central facet of the LDRF's ideology. Finally, this elevation of the philanthropic (private) sector over politics and economy serves to legitimate the ongoing utilization of private-parallel forms of government and the trend of neoliberalization detailed throughout this article.

## Conclusion

To rationalize the private financing of state policy making and state reconstruction initiatives the Louisiana Recovery Authority Foundation explained that: "Unfortunately, official/state funds have not been allocated to finance the development of an informed, equitable strategy for recovering our region's physical, social, and economic infrastructures, meaning that quality planning must be paid for through private contributions" (LRA Support Foundation 2009). This explanation resonates with dominant post-Katrina criticisms of which point to an absentee state, especially at the federal level, as well as mainstream praise that has been given to foundations and NGOs for their supposedly disinterested and benevolent activities. The overall impression is of an absentee state, and a region saved only by the intervention of organized philanthropy. The mainstream criticism of philanthropy has so far been that while it was successful in picking up some slack, it ultimately failed in its role to support grassroots organizations (New Orleans Based Activists 2007).

The reality is quite contrary to all these predominant narratives. Instead of absence or incompetence, federal, state, and municipal authorities have been ever present and actively involved in post-Katrina reconstruction. The private-parallel government, and the state capacities created by or nullified by foundation resources have directed huge transfers of wealth from the commons into the hands of private and nonprofit development corporations, schools, housing, businesses and more. The meshing of state and philanthropic power is seen at every turn, from foundations literally paying state/municipal employee salaries, funding official planning and redevelopment initiatives, creating information technology tools for government use, contracting out an assortment of work to private firms, charting hundreds of schools, and more.

Government officials have openly welcomed foundation and NGO influence and control over state functions. This intensified relationship between foundations, major NGOs, and government at all levels is itself a central component of the growth coalition's response to Hurricane Katrina. In fact, one could say this is the very essence of the "opportunity" so often cited in post-Katrina New Orleans: the opportunity to further mesh state authority and the power of private capital in more intense and profitable, and less democratic ways.



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