Disruptive Philanthropy: Assessing the Challenges of Funding from "Big Tech" for a UK Charity

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester
for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration by

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31st December 2020

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Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another HEI except in minor particulars which are explicitly noted in the body of the thesis. Where research pertaining to the thesis was undertaken collaboratively, the nature and extent of my individual contribution has been made explicit.

Abstract

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by

Nigel Timothy Baker

The immense wealth generated by the technology sector – or Big Tech – since the end of the 20th century has created a new breed of philanthropists, keen to use the business practices of Silicon Valley to ensure their money is employed to optimum social impact. This study considers how a long-established, UK-based journalism charity can understand, and engage with, the new philanthropic practices of the digital economy in to order to fund transformative change, while appreciating, and managing, the associated benefits and risks.

A characteristic of the digital economy is that it has blurred conventional boundaries between commercial and philanthropic practices. Accordingly, this study was conducted through the theoretical framework of "hybrid organizations" – defined here as non-profit entities which adopt business practices to achieve social ends but face the challenge of balancing the competing institutional logics of mission and money.

This study synthesises the literature on the new, more market-oriented philanthropic models - collectively described here as "disruptive philanthropy" – to provide a conceptual model to guide hybrid, non-profits like the journalism charity that wish to engage with the digital economy. The model is then used to inform a qualitative, inductive study of the journalism charity using semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of eight stakeholders from the journalism charity and four "elite" interviewees from the digital economy.

This study makes a number of contributions to theory and practice in terms of understanding the digital economy's business ethics and how non-profit organizations can assess clearly whether the funding support it is seeking from the digital economy is philanthropic or commercial.

The conceptual model serves as a guide to hybrid, non-profit organizations on the factors to assess when seeking engagement with the digital economy. A framework is offered to help non-profits ensure good governance when accepting funds from the digital economy. The study reinforces the need for non-profits to have a clear identity and mission to obtain philanthropic funding. Finally, the study provides an understanding of how organizations from the digital economy assess their funding support through the benefits to their own “ecosystems” – which can be commercial, philanthropic or hybrid in nature.

Acknowledgements

Trustees of the Thomson Foundation, funders of the study.

Professor Paul Manning, teacher and mentor.

Helen Baker, supporter.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the study

> Being digital is different. We are not waiting on any intervention. It is here. It is now. It is almost genetic in its nature, in that each generation will become more digital than the preceding one' (Negroponte 1995, 231).

The purpose of this study is to help a long-standing UK-registered charity, the Thomson Foundation (TF), understand whether it can turn to the wealth of the digital economy for philanthropic, or corporate social responsibility (CSR), funding to support a digital transformation of its work training journalists in low-income countries and emerging economies. First, an understanding will be gained from the literature as to how the business practices of Silicon Valley have influenced models of philanthropic giving over the last quarter of a century. The knowledge will be synthesised into a conceptual model to help TF, and other non-profit organizations, understand the ethical and operational issues likely to arise in connecting with the digital economy. The model will then be tested by an inductive, qualitative study with stakeholders from TF and companies and philanthropic organizations which have derived their wealth from the digital economy – or "Big Tech".

Since the 1990s there has been a pronounced rise in a handful of hi-tech companies who have collectively become known as "Big Tech" (Reich, 2018). The former United States labor secretary, Robert Reich, says it has created a second "Gilded Age" – a reference to the "robber barons" of late-19th century America who used their dominance of railroads, steel production and oil extraction to drive out competition and corrupt politics. Reich's primary targets now are Facebook, Google, Apple and Amazon, claiming their respective sizes stifle innovation and provide them with disproportionate "political clout" which is open to abuse. The origin of this study, however, is adherence to the advice of Nicholas Negroponte, the founding director of MIT's Media Lab, who predicted in 1995 that digital technology would eventually dominate every aspect of our lives. In this context, an organization like the Thomson Foundation needs to clearly understand the challenges of engaging with the digital economy.

1.2. Historical context

TF was set up originally in the UK as a corporate foundation by the Canadian-born publisher and entrepreneur, Lord (Roy) Thomson, in 1963. His stated intention then was to help to train the staffs – predominantly journalists - of newspapers and television stations in what were then termed the "new countries and developing world" (Thomson, 1975) as a way of improving governance by holding governments and businesses to account. At the end of the 20th century, the foundation became wholly independent, without a primary business sponsor, and subsequently functioned like a non-profit business, or social enterprise. It now derives most of its income from implementing media-related training programmes funded by grants or contracts from the British and German governments and the European Union, as well as by working directly for media organizations. TF is run by a senior management team which is overseen by a board of trustees. The researcher is chief executive. To respond to the fragmentation of media, and technology advances in its target countries, TF wished to evolve from providing all its training through on-site workshops in the relevant countries. A potential answer was to seek new funders to invest in creating innovative, online training to meet the needs of the growing number of bloggers and individual journalists in the developing world and emerging economies – an aim which required not just project finance but potentially an ongoing investment in the foundation's core capacity. A possible solution for consideration was offered by Frumkin (2003) who posited that the investment skills of those who made their money in Silicon Valley could help non-profit organizations develop more entrepreneurial approaches by generating income from unrelated business activity to fund their missions and build capacity within their organizations. Wagner (2002) called them the "new donors" – social entrepreneurs, high-tech donors, or "engaged" grant makers or investors, who not only wanted to provide funding, but to be involved in the grantees', or investees', decision making.

This study was conceived before the social network, Facebook, was accused of lapses in personal data privacy during the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Rosenberg, Confessore, & Cadwalladr, 2018). The research, however, was carried out after the subsequent disclosure by the New York Times and The Guardian and Observer newspapers of how the data company, Cambridge Analytica, used Facebook data improperly to build voter profiles, contributing to distrust of Big Tech. By the time this study was concluded, government regulators on both sides of the Atlantic were preparing legal challenges to Big Tech's dominance in controlling online information flows. European Union regulators were threatening fines of up to six per cent of turnover if tech companies did not vet third-party suppliers or provide full disclosure of how they moderated illegal content (Espinoza, 2020). In the United States, the federal government and 48 states and districts were suing Facebook, accusing it of abusing market powers (Gordon & Sisak, 2020). Concerns over the integrity of user data were preceded, by a growing voice of criticism about how Big Tech had applied its disruptive business philosophies to create "Big Philanthropy", implemented not through traditional foundations, but through less conventional financial models (Brakman Reiser, 2017). Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, had set up their Chan Zuckerberg Initiative to distribute 99% of their wealth, in what the author termed "disruptive philanthropy", through a limited liability company, rather than a traditional foundation. Horvath and Powell (2016) earlier questioned whether "disruptive philanthropy" – large philanthropic fortunes in the hands of individuals like Zuckerberg – wielded undue influence and ran the risk of eroding democracy by changing the nature of relationships between philanthropist, state and civil society.

The issue has echoes of the past. A literature review in Chapter 2 compares the rise of tech companies with the dominance of earlier industrial titans like Rockefeller and Carnegie whose legendary philanthropy was, in part, attributed to their response to allegations that their companies had grown too dominant. Further, this study will challenge the consensus of the second half of the 20th century that companies should balance their economic, legal and ethical responsibilities with "discretionary" philanthropic activities (Carroll, 1979; 1991). It is argued that this is an outdated concept for Big Tech companies, with their focus being too finely balanced on their economic missions rather than following Carroll's diktat that ethical concerns should influence all levels of activity.

Ironically, TF was founded by media entrepreneur Roy Thomson who was noted for his parsimony and for solving commercial problems by using other people's money. He was not evidently motivated by charity, or a genuine desire to help, in establishing a foundation to support media organizations in the developing world but did so in pursuit of a peerage (Goldenberg, 1985). One apparent aim was to help the British government maintain influence with the media in "Third World" countries which were receiving their independence (Jenks, 2016), while also giving him an opportunity to extend his commercial empire beyond its original strongholds in Britain and Canada. Thomson announced he would launch his eponymous foundation (Thomson R. H., The Winds of Change in New Nations, 1963) only months after the economist, Milton Friedman, chided corporate philanthropists in his 1962 book, "Capitalism and Freedom". Friedman posited there was "one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits…" (Friedman, 1962). While having personal motives for establishing a foundation, Roy Thomson has been directly, and indirectly, responsible for the training of thousands of journalists in the past half-century and, in many cases, helping them to establish more open, and plural, news media in their respective countries. His motivations raise central ethical issues when the TF is looking for new corporate funding. How much do the motivations of funders matter, if their money enables the foundation to do more good? Must the mission and culture of funder and grantee be aligned, or is it acceptable for the foundation to accept the money, within the bounds of legality, if it is for the greater good? During this study, these questions will be examined in the context of funding from the digital economy to help to inform the answer to the research question in the concluding chapter.

1.3. The international media development sector

TF's primary role is in a niche sector referred to as "international media development" or "international media assistance" - a model encouraged by western governments in the second half of the 20th century to promote democracy. Their ultimate aim was a media sector free of state editorial or financial control, producing better journalists, better media organizations and better media systems – all contributing to the development of democracy (Higgins, 2014). Lord Thomson was encouraged to establish his corporate foundation in 1963 by Britain's Conservative government to forestall Soviet influence of African media in the post-colonial era (Jenks, 2016). The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 brought a defining moment in media assistance, with western governments funding support to help shift media ownership in many post-Soviet countries from state control to private ownership (Higgins, 2014). In the 21st century, the issue has become more complex with the phenomenon of "media capture" whereby many governments, particularly in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Middle East, theoretically allow independent media but suppress critical journalism by using financial influence, like the allocation of state advertising, to distort markets (Dragomir, 2018). A further challenge is the rise of social media and "fake news" – news intended to deliberately misinform – which are symptomatic of a collapse of the old news order and the "chaos" of contemporary public communication (Waisbord, 2018). Amid this, TF has maintained its position of supporting independent media. Its stated aim is “to deliver positive change in media and communications as a way of improving public engagement and governance” with a vision to “ensure all people have an honest, factual account of what is really happening in the world” (About Thomson Foundation, 2020). A key question prevails as to whether, in the words of Waisboard (2018), journalism has “lost the privilege of the main definer of news as truth”? Or whether independent journalism remains “a public good” to be supported (Dragomir, 2018)? This study will argue that TF’s mission is more relevant than ever to the ethics of journalism, rather than peddling an outdated model?

Money derived from Big Tech has so far been slow to follow the lead of western governments in supporting media in developing countries. According to the Columbia Journalism Review, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, set up with wealth earned from Microsoft, has provided grants of at least $250 million dollars globally to support news media, but to ensure coverage on issues like global health, education and agriculture, shaping the public discourse on its wider charitable aims (Schwab, 2020). The Omidyar Group, a philanthropic enterprise set up by Pierre Omidyar with wealth earned as a founder of eBay, supports a “free and robust press and quality journalism to give citizens the accurate information they need to hold those in power accountable” (Focus Areas, 2020). Notably, in 2017 the Omidyar Group announced it was committing $100 million to support investigative journalism, fight misinformation and counteract hate speech around the world (Sullivan, 2017).

Among Big Tech companies, Google and Facebook have launched grant-funding programmes for news organizations but predominantly in developed markets. Since 2015, Google has announced a series of initiatives internationally, now rolled into a project called the Google News Initiative, which has given hundreds of millions of dollars to projects to support “new models for sustainable journalism, elevate quality journalism and ensure technology allows journalists to do their job even better.” (Building a stronger future for journalism, n.d.). In addition, the Facebook Journalism Project in 2020 announced it was giving grants of $300 million globally to support news organization and on partnerships with organizations connected to the news media. (Grants for news organizations, n.d.). The programmes are positioned as encouraging innovation in a “legacy” industry which has seen an increasing decline in revenues over the past 20 years. However, this is balanced against a claim by the News Media Alliance (NMA), a North American trade association representing 2,000 newspapers, that Google and Facebook between them, take up to 70% of all online advertising revenue related to their businesses (Big Tech says publishers keep majority of ad revenue, but experience suggests otherwise, 2020). The NMA says the motivation of Big Tech companies is to make money and keep news organizations in their ecosystems.

These examples of wealth derived from Big Tech going to support a struggling news media are not exhaustive but raise fundamental ethical and strategic questions for TF. In seeking a potential link with funding from the digital economy, should it target philanthropic organizations, like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation or Omidyar Network, which have stated charitable aims, or Big Tech companies with commercial reasons for wanting to keep close to the news industry with funding models which appear more akin to traditional CSR? As with the initial approach of billionaire publisher Roy Thomson, this study will assess whether moral motivation of the funder matters, if the result is impactful in terms of TF's core mission.

A further area for scrutiny is how Big Tech companies perceive the role of CSR: frequently expressed whether as a "desire to do good" (the normative case), "enlightened self-interest" (the business case) (Smith, 2003) or whether they are closer to Friedman's view that their only social responsibility is to increase profits.

1.4. Research approach

Wealth generated from the digital economy might come through several different financial pathways. Therefore, a first step in the research approach was to understand the kinds of funding models and practices used by the "new donors". Accordingly, this study reviews inter-related literatures on the market-oriented paradigms they employ: venture philanthropy, impact investing, shared value, data philanthropy, and hybrid organizations (all of which are elaborated further below). The aim of the study is to enable TF to analyse, and understand, how – and whether - to engage with new philanthropic funders who have emerged from the digital economy since the 1990s, particularly those who could enable TF to increase its core capacity and add business insights.

The literature review will inform an inductive, qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews, with key stakeholders from the Thomson Foundation and with four "elite interviewees" from different organizations in the digital economy to understand whether their values align or diverge, and the benefits and risks of any working relationship. Accrodingly, the key objectives of the research are:

i) To identify the features and factors which attract corporate philanthropists and CSR donors from Big Tech in supporting non-profits.

ii) To develop an understanding of "disruptive philanthropy" and the "new donors" who seek engagement with non-profits as well as donating funds.

iii) To understand the mechanisms the "new donors" use, including:

  - *Venture philanthropy*: promoting the use of venture capital practices by philanthropic funders to strengthen core operations of non-profit organizations rather than only funding projects (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1997).
  - *Impact investin*g: investing to achieve a "blended value" of financial returns and measurable social impact (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011)
  - *Shared value:* Reinventing businesses to increase both financial and social value (Porter & Kramer, 2011).
  - *Data philanthropy:* turning privately-held "Big Data" and real-time analytics to public use to support vulnerable populations. (Stempeck, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2013).

iv) To assess the ethical and operational risks involved with direct engagement with disruptive philanthropy and the "new donors".

v) To develop an understanding, and conceptual model, of how to guide hybrid non-profits on the options for philanthropic, or corporate philanthropic funding, and the best way to engage with donors.

vi) To test the model in a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from the Thomson Foundation and with four "elite" interviewees from different organizations in the digital economy.

Accordingly, the research question to be addressed is:

How can a long-established journalism charity understand, and engage with, the philanthropic funding mechanisms of the digital economy in order to fund transformative change, while appreciating and managing the associated benefits and risks?

1.5. Hybrid organizations

The research is viewed through the lens and concept of "hybrid organizations" – an increasing model for non-profit entities and social businesses. Hybrid organizations have been described as "blurring" the boundaries of the public, private and third sectors (Billis, 2010:3) and as "an international, multi-sector phenomena" where their "unclear accountability often engenders unease and distrust" (Billis, 2010:46). For the purpose of this study, we rely on a definition by Battilana and Dorado (2010) for "new types of hybrid organizations" that "combine institutional logics in unprecedented ways". In the case of this study, TF functions as a hybrid, with grant funding from governments to undertake its media development work, but seeking to balance its books by providing training and consultancy programmes for media organizations on a commercial basis. In the case of Battilana and Dorado they were investigating microfinance banks trying to balance the institutional logics of banking with a mission to help the poor: in other words, balancing mission and money. They pointed out that there is no "ready-to-wear" model for novel hybrids which can lead to a range of tensions. Typically this occurs where a strong social or artistic purpose has to be balanced with financial sustainability in organizations like a clean energy company (Jay, 2013) or an orchestra (Glynn, 2000). Similarly, universities and museums frequently rely on attracting donations as well as charging for services, with donors more likely to give if they feel a "oneness" with the identity of the organization (Brady, Noble, Utter, & Smith, 2002).

New hybrid forms of social entrepreneurship are creating a paradigm shift in the non-profit sector with philanthropists having a key role to play in stimulating, supporting and shaping socially-beneficial, entrepreneurial business activities (Dees, 2008). This new form adds to the historic structure of the capitalist system where there were two types of corporate bodies: profit-maximizing businesses to create shareholder value, and non-profit organizations to fulfil social objectives (Yunus, Moingeon, & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010). In the context of this study, the term, "non-profit organization", refers to organizations which do not have to return dividends to shareholders.

At the same time, Big Tech has pioneered hybrid models from another perspective, obscuring the boundaries between non-profit and commercial. For example, the founder of eBay, Pierre Omidyar, turned his philanthropic foundation into a limited liability company in 2003 in order to fund social projects with a non-profit grant or a for-profit investment – whichever was likely to have the greater impact (Omidyar, 2011). Reflecting this approach, Google decided to create Google.org as a for-profit philanthropic wing in 2006, expressing an interest in funding projects which were more entrepreneurial and market-based than traditional charitable ones, but leaving it open to accusations of lacking the transparency or accountability which traditional foundations would face (Lim, 2007; Wallace, 2006).

1.6. Disruptive philanthropy

The term “disruptive philanthropy” has so far been applied to allude to donors like Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan. Horvath and Powell (2016) and Brakman Reiser (2017) argue that the scale of their giving risks steering public policy to their agenda and eroding democracy. In this study, we employ a broader definition by Manning, Baker, and Stokes (2020) who used the term as a collective description of the new philanthropic funding mechanisms modelled on the business practices of Silicon Valley. This would also fit with the thinking of Negroponte (1995) that the logic, if not the technology, of the digital world, would disrupt all aspects of life – in this case philanthropy and the work of philanthropic foundations.

1.7. Methodological overview and participating organizations

To pursue the study into the research question, a qualitative, inductive approach was employed, with a total of 12 semi-structured interviews carried out with interviewees from three groups:

- The four senior managers of TF, other than the chief executive who is the researcher.
- Four trustees of TF who all had wider experience of the ethics of philanthropy across public life, education and international development.
- Four “elite interviews” (Moore and Stokes, 2012; Welch, Marschan-Piekkari, Penttinen, & Tahvanainen, 2002; Richards, 1996) with executives from organizations which had derived their funding from “Big Tech”.

For the ‘elite interviews’, access was inherently difficult, rarely accorded and therefore achieved through a purposive sample of well-established high-level contacts. The four organizations selected were different in character, but had all earned their wealth from Big Tech. Another common characteristic was that each of the four organizations had all been involved, at some stage, with projects offering support to media.

The four elite interviews included two executives from two Big Tech companies – a search engine and a social network. The other two were from philanthropic organizations which had derived their funding from Big Tech. Of the latter two, one was a senior executive of a philanthropic organization which takes a hybrid approach to funding – using commercial or grant-funding models whichever it feels will achieve the best impact. The second is a senior adviser to, and former executive of, a large philanthropic foundation established with funding from Big Tech. For ease of description, the study will refer to the two latter organizations as PODES – philanthropic organizations from the digital economy.

The interviews were then subjected to thematic analysis to inform a discussion of the issues raised, and implications for theory and practice as well as overall conclusions.

1.8. Summary

The research aims to consider, explore and add to the literature on corporate philanthropy and CSR by increasing the limited knowledge of how non-profits can engage with “disruptive philanthropy” and the “new donors” of Big Tech from a grantee, or investee, perspective. A conceptual model produced through the literature review process – interconnecting corporate philanthropy and CSR with the concepts of hybrid organizations and disruptive philanthropy - is designed to guide non-profit organizations in the ethical and operational challenges they will face when seeking philanthropic funding. The model was also used to guide the topics covered in the interviews carried out by the researcher. The study is specifically aimed at hybrid organizations striving to balance the competing logics of mission and money.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Scope

This literature review forms part of a research project aimed at finding the best strategic fit with philanthropy, corporate philanthropy or corporate social responsibility (CSR) to help the Thomson Foundation (TF), a UK journalism charity, seek funding for transformative change and to understand the associated benefits and risks. Multiple literature streams are examined to define, and understand, the nature of philanthropy, corporate philanthropy and CSR, the relevance of the wealth of Big Tech to those spheres of activity and its ethical consequences. New patterns of business in the digital world are reviewed to see if they may render previous understanding of corporate philanthropy and CSR outdated. Finally, this review assesses the new paradigms of philanthropic funding which have emerged from the more market-driven approach of Silicon Valley business practices in the past quarter of a century and synthesises them to provide a conceptual model for use by TF in seeking to understand whether, or how, it might engage with wealth from the digital economy. The issue is viewed through the theoretical framework of hybrid organizations which seek to balance conflicting institutional logics.

2.2. Methodology

The researcher opted for an integrative review, a form which is of relevance when wishing to critique and synthesise representative literature on an emerging topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives are generated (Torraco, 2005). This type of review often requires a more creative collection of data as the purpose is not to cover all the articles ever published on the topic but to combine perspectives and insights from different fields or research traditions (Snyder, 2019). It is presented as a narrative review with every effort made to find counterexamples of any emerging paradigms to seek to avoid any confirmation bias by the researcher in building new theory

(Baumeister & Leary, 1997). It is clear, as chief executive of TF, the researcher has an interest in the outcome, but has sought an objective approach to the research issue (Randolph, 2009). The development of a conceptual model has a wider aim of helping to provide new knowledge for researchers, or practitioners in non-profit organizations, wishing to understand the process of obtaining funding from the digital economy (Webster & Watson, 2002).

The primary search for literature was focused on philanthropy, corporate philanthropy, and corporate social responsibility (CSR), which initially yielded 447,000, 576,000 and 33,700 entries respectively through a Boolean search of Google Scholar. A search for "hybrid organization" returned 8,480 entries. After ascertaining an initial view of the extent of the literature, academic databases EBSCO, JSTOR and ProQuest were used to narrow the search. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journals of 2* and higher, as ranked by the Chartered Association of Business Schools Journal Guide. First, a search was carried out for management and business papers using the criteria "corporate social responsibility", "CSR", "non-profit" and "nonprofit". Next, the procedure was repeated, progressively substituting the terms "philanthropy", "corporate philanthropy" and "hybrid organization" for "corporate social responsibility". Through this process, 171 papers of direct relevance were found, including 76 for philanthropy and corporate philanthropy, 52 for corporate social responsibility and 43 for "hybrid organization". References from the academic papers were also used to identify relevant practitioner papers, legal journals and academic books. In line with an integrative approach to a literature review on an emerging topic, a further 31 papers and academic books were identified covering related topics of ecosystems in business organization, innovation, stakeholder theory and moral philosophy.

From the papers reviewed, four paradigms emerged since the later 1990s which owed their provenance, or prominence, to working practices of Big Tech and Silicon Valley: venture philanthropy, impact investing, shared value, and data philanthrophy – also known as "data for good" – a way of donating data for philanthropic benefit. Each has sprung from a seminal paper, or papers, in the United States as shown in Figure 1 below. Letts et al., (1997) proposed venture philanthropy as a way of getting philanthropic foundations to use venture capital techniques to help non-profit organizations strengthen their core operations rather than just giving them grants for projects. This was followed by the concept of impact investing (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011) – investing in organizations to achieve a measurable social outcome with a cash return but at sub-market rates. The same year, Porter and Kramer (2011) introduced the concept of "shared value" to encourage companies to create more economic value by also embedding societal needs in their value chains. While the latter paradigm is not directly attributable to the business practices of Silicon Valley, the authors claim tech companies like Google and IBM had embraced the concept. Finally, donating data emerged in 2013/14, (Kirkpatrick, 2013; Stempeck, 2014) encouraging private companies to provide data sets for the public good.

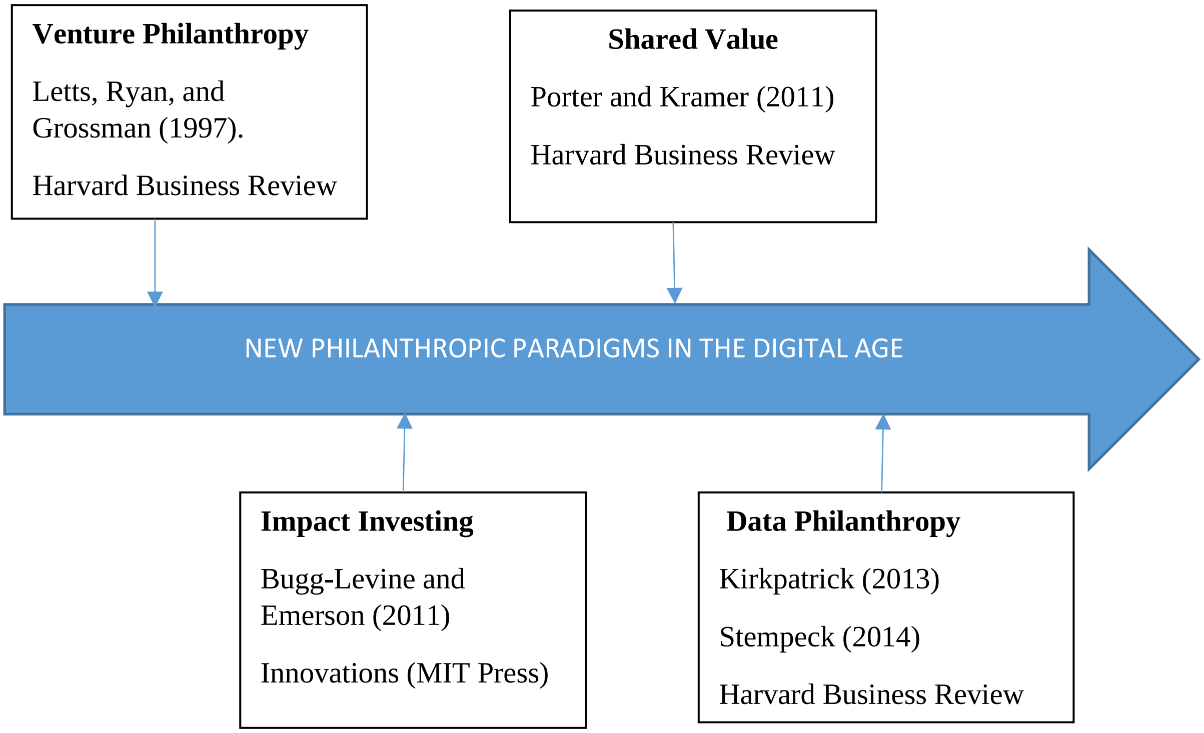

Figure 1: New philanthropic paradigms since 1997. (Source: Author, 2020).

By far the most debated is Porter and Kramer's concept of shared value, which had been cited 11,100 times by December 2020, according to Google Scholar. By comparison, Letts et al. (1997) had been cited 533 times; Bugg-Levine and Emerson (2011), 399 and Kirkpatrick (2013) and Stempeck (2014), jointly, only 33 times. Knowledge gained from the four paradigms will be synthesised to contribute to the conceptual model informing TF's decision-making in engaging with the digital economy.

2.3. Big Tech, ecosystems and innovation

The philanthropic paradigms mentioned above will give insights into the Silicon Valley business philosophies which helped to shape Big Tech in the early 21st century but were formed after the dot.com bubble of technology stocks burst in 2000 (Scarlata & Alemany, 2010). The thinking has given rise to new funding structures by foundations and philanthropic funders, but in a fast-moving sector like Big Tech, it is important for an organization such as TF to understand the contemporary business ethos and how it might shape a future request for financial support. Fukuda (2020) paints a view of "Society 5.0" where we have moved beyond the Information Society (after hunting, agrarian and industrial societies) to a "human-centred" one in which an ecosystem of science, technology and innovation (STI), can reduce economic and social gaps so that all people live a "comfortable and vigorous life". At the heart of this STI ecosystem are "Big Data" which can enhance productivity and create economic advantages and social welfare benefits by adapting products and services to meet individual needs. The notion of an ecosystem as an organizing principle is not a new one. The term, of course, derives from biology where an ecosystem is defined as "a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment" (Oxford Languages, 2020). Like natural ecosystems, business ecosystems go through birth, expansion, leadership and self-renewal, working with innovators to bring new ideas to the existing ecosystem (Moore, 1993). In the case of Big Tech, it has become a way of interacting with other parts of the value chain to ensure continuing success of innovation and market leadership (Adner & Kapoor, 2010), embedding the focal firm within an interdependent system of innovation (Adner, 2006). A benefit of being the focal point of an ecosystem is achieving "economies of scope" – using knowledge across a wide spectrum of services - which give incumbents a strong advantage, making them hard to dislodge (Cremer, de Montjoye, & Schweitzer, 2019). For tech companies, it means they can be at the centre of an "open innovation" network – knowledge sharing across a distributed innovation process that relies on purposively-managed knowledge flows across organizational boundaries (Chesbrough, 2017). In future dealings with Big Tech companies, or their philanthropic off-shoots, understanding their ecosystems may serve as a useful perspective through which to understand their interests and working practices. It also raises the question of whether traditional notions of CSR, for example, remain relevant to the focal company if it has many existing relationships with different businesses and organizations across its ecosystem?

2.4. Philanthropy or corporate social responsibility?

In this section, we seek to illustrate the difference between philanthropy by wealthy individuals or foundations, corporate philanthropy (by businesses) and corporate social responsibility. The respective motivations and expectations of the different types of funders are made clear to inform the different approaches by an organization like TF.

2.4.1. Philanthropy

A review of definitions of philanthropy over the last 400 years by Sulek (2010) synthesised it to a simple definition of "the application of private means to public ends". In an age of technology billionaires, society is seeing a return to the philanthropic titans of the 19th century. Comparisons have been drawn between the Big Tech billionaires Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates and industrial magnates John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, (Brakman Reiser, 2017; Harvey, Mclean, Gordon, & Shaw, 2011). Gates and his wife, Melinda, created world headlines in 2010 when they jointly launched The Giving Pledge with business investor Warren Buffett – an organization aimed at encouraging some of America's richest to make a public declaration that they would give at least half their wealth to help societal causes (Spreading gospels of wealth; Philanthropy, 2012). Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, followed by committing to the Giving Pledge in 2015 (Chan & Zuckerberg, 2015). Aside from Gates and the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative being prepared to give away billions of dollars, they could be defined as "entrepreneurial philanthropists" (Harvey et al., 2011) – or "philanthrocapitalists" (Bishop & Green, 2008) – not simply investing their money, but also their know-how, connections and reputation in projects which will bring a high rate of social return. While Gates and Zuckerberg made fortunes and a commitment to disburse them at earlier ages than Rockefeller and Carnegie, they potentially face a regulatory backlash earlier than their forebears. As the so-called "robber barons", Carnegie, as a philanthropist, was branded a hypocrite because of his business practices and Rockefeller saw his Standard Oil company broken up (Harvey et al., 2011).

2.4.2. Corporate philanthropy versus corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The roots of corporate philanthropy are also attributed to examples from the 19th century such as Scottish-born Carnegie (Drucker, 1984) who amassed great wealth in the United States from his steel business. In a foretaste of The Giving Pledge, he espoused the view that the rich should distribute their wealth in their own lifetimes to ease divisions between rich and poor, and used his to create free public libraries. In his 1889 essay, The Gospel of Wealth, he declared that a time would come when the man who dies rich "dies disgraced"(Carnegie, 2006). However, finding succinct definitions of corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility is more challenging than Sulek's summary of philanthropy.

Corporate philanthropy is described by Madden, Scaife and Crissman (2006), as the "voluntary business giving of money, time or in-kind goods, without any direct commercial benefit, to one or more organizations whose core purpose is to benefit the community's welfare". They noted a trend away from the altruism which shaped business engagement with the community in the first half of the 20th century to the more "context-focused philanthropy" outlined by Porter and Kramer (2002) which achieves economic gains for the company, as well as social benefits. An example was Cisco Systems, the technology company, investing in an academy to train computer network administrators, which provided job opportunities for high school graduates while alleviating a skills shortage for the company. This underlined corporate philanthropy becoming more strategic in focus, side-lining the notion that it delivers no "direct commercial benefit."

The consensus, however, is that corporate philanthropy does not imply the same level of stakeholder involvement as CSR. Gautier and Pache (2015) define corporate philanthropy as voluntary donations of corporate resources to charitable causes. They limit their definition to cash grants, excluding in-kind grants and volunteering. Fioravante (2010) describes corporate philanthropy as "altruistic capitalism" saying that it creates the sense of social responsibility with no strings attached for the recipient. In other words, it does not imply a collaborative relationship with the beneficiary. This supports the contention by Porter and Kramer (2002) that corporate philanthropy is used more as a form of public relations, advertising or cause-related marketing. Such giving, they argue, is diffuse and unfocused.

Reviews have found no universal definition of CSR (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011) with the definition depending on the context (Peloza & Shang, 2011). Dahlsrud (2008) analysed 37 different definitions of CSR from literature spanning more than 20 years and found no common definition but learned they had five congruent dimensions, revolving round "stakeholder", "social", "economic", "voluntariness" and "environmental". Barnett (2007) embodies those dimensions by describing CSR as a "discretionary allocation of corporate resources to improving social welfare that serves as a means of enhancing relationships with key stakeholders."

The origins of CSR can be tracked back to 19th century British industrialists like George Cadbury, William Lever and Sir Titus Salt who provided their employees and their families with housing and other amenities while other workers were living in slums (Smith, 2003). While the benefactors were motivated by a desire to do good, they were also motivated by "enlightened self-interest." An improved work environment and better living conditions meant a more productive workforce. While Carnegie gave away the personal fortune generated by his business interests, it later became controversial for businesses to distribute philanthropic funds in the course of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Milton Friedman's chiding of corporate philanthropists in his 1962 book, "Capitalism and Freedom" posited that there was "one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits…" (Friedman, 1962). But, post-Friedman, views on CSR softened, with Carroll (1979) seeking to synthesise the evolution of corporate philanthropy and CSR stretching back almost a century. Carroll (1979, 1991) argued that for a definition of social responsibility to fully address the entire range of obligations to society it must embody economic, legal, ethical and discretionary categories of business performance. In what became known as Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility (Carroll, 1991) he stated that a business's primary responsibility is economic – to make goods which customers want and sell them at a profit. A business needed, he said, to fulfil activities within the laws and regulations which society expects, and likewise operate within the ethical code which society expects. It is only then that companies can address "discretionary" social roles beyond those described so far. The discretionary roles are "not mandated, not required by law and not even generally expected of business in an ethical sense." For a non-profit seeking engagement with a business, Carroll's criteria could be used as a way of measuring compatibility with a donor. Before taking its funding, is a non-profit convinced of the business's economic stability, assured its activities are legal and comfortable with its ethical code?

In the twenty-first century there is a growing acknowledgement that companies do not function in isolation from the societies around them (Porter & Kramer, 2002) indicating that in the long-run, social and economic goals are integrally connected. There are those that argue that corporations who draw resources from society have a moral obligation to give back to society (Barnett, 2007). So now the argument about CSR in the last half century has shifted from "whether" to "how", driven by the expectation that CSR will improve consumer patronage and profits (Bhattacharaya & Sen, 2004). In re-visiting his 1979 work, Carroll (2016) acknowledges that philanthropy, or business giving, are now a part of everyday expectation of the public. He reflects, however, that while there is sometimes an altruistic motive for the giving, it is done mainly to enhance, or augment, the company's reputation and not for self-sacrificing reasons.

The alignment of philanthropic giving with business interests has given rise to the term "strategic philanthropy", defined by McAlister and Ferrell (2002) as the "synergistic use of organizational core competencies and resources to address key stakeholders' interests and to achieve both organizational and social benefits". In other words, the philanthropy is not just about donating money – but linking the organization's core skills, knowledge and financial resources, along with stakeholders like customers and suppliers, to meet societal needs (Bruch & Walter, 2005). They emphasise that strategic philanthropy is ongoing and tied to the organization's strategy and mission, unlike sponsorship and cause-related marketing which are of limited duration, and usually tied to products. Husted and de Jesus Salazaar (2006) take a serious look at Friedman's claim that firms should focus on their core business but assert that it is more profitable for firms to invest in CSR strategically than through altruism or coercion, as they are more likely to reap financial benefits. Again, Porter and Kramer (2002) voice concern that the term "strategic philanthropy" is often misused, with no direct link to a company's strategy. However, Bruch and Walter (2005) argue that strategic philanthropy is at its most effective when a company aligns philanthropic efforts with the core competence of their company, using the company's unique ability in order to benefit society.

2.4.3. Summary of definitions

A conclusion, therefore, in seeking funding for a digital transformation, is that a "philanthrocapitalist", corporate philanthropy or CSR are all potential options through which TF could seek funding – but that CSR might require more stakeholder involvement leading to a greater demand on management time. However, strategic involvement by the benefactor could bring other non-cash benefits. In a world of increasing “context-focused philanthropy” both corporate philanthropy and CSR are likely to seek a direct commercial benefit (Porter & Kramer, 2002), or to feel the relationship has made a contribution to the bottom line or created a positive influence with stakeholders (Barnett, 2007). The challenge for the non-profit organization seeking funding will be to convince the donor that any association with creating societal benefits association will bring a distinctive competitive advantage (Fioravante, 2010).

2.5. Theoretical framework: the hybrid organization.

Hybrid organizations provide a vehicle for non-profit organizations which increasingly are looking at more market-oriented solutions to achieving positive social change (Dees, 2008; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). The aim of a hybrid organization is to create an integrated model producing “both social value and commercial revenue through a single unified strategy” (Battilana, Lee, Walker, & Dorsey, 2012) – a description which aptly fits the challenge facing TF. The model normally exists at the interface between for-profit and non-profit models, adopting a mission-driven ethos while pursuing social or environmental goals (Haigh, Walker, Bacq, & Kickul, 2015; Holt & Littlewood, 2015). The level of market orientation can be on a continuum ranging from purely social to purely economic (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006) but they caution that charitable activity must reflect economic realities, while economic activity must generate social value. According to Jager and Schroer (2014) the concept of the hybrid organization embraces a wide range of entities attempting to balance the tension between social and economic issues, including “social innovation”, “social entrepreneurship”, “CSR”, “social enterprise”, and “enterprising non-profits”. No single definition of a hybrid organization emerges from the literature, but a wide range of issues are identified which can be created by the organizational form. Table 1 (below) outlines the main challenges.

A key challenge presented by hybrid organizations is balancing money and mission - best described by Battilana and Dorado (2010) who identify the need to manage “competing logics” in pursuit of the dual mission of financial sustainability and social purpose. As identified in Table 1, other challenges can include “mission drift” if there is too much focus on money (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014), or revenue drift if both the money and social performance are not carefully monitored

(Ponte, Pesci, & Camussone, 2017). The description by Haigh and Hoffman (2012) of intrinsic positive deviance, “changing the rules of the game”, indicates that those running them have to embrace disruption, or “navigate paradox” (Jay, 2013). Equally, the challenges of balancing profit and non-profit logics can lead to concerns over organizational identity, generating confusion among staff and stakeholders. Both Rawhouser et al. (2015) and Thomasson (2009) underscore how ambiguity of identity, borne of stakeholder confusion, can be a factor in mission drift, with Jay (2013) suggesting a new identity is needed to succeed.

Hybrid organizations: Issues to manage	**Authors**
“Unclear accountability often engenders unease and distrust”	Billis (2010)
No “ready to wear model” for managing hybrids	Battilana and Dorado (2010)
“Positive deviants… changing the rules of the game for all organizations”	Haigh and Hoffman (2012)
Tension between mission and finances can lead to mission drift	Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair (2014)
Measurement tools needed for social and financial performance to avoid revenue drift	Ponti, Pesce, and Camussone (2017)
Ambiguous identity can cause stakeholder confusion	Rawhouser, Cummings, and Crane (2015); Thomasson (2009)
The organization may need to evolve a new identity to succeed	Jay (2013)

Table 1: Issues to address in hybrid organizations. (Source: Author, 2020).

While clear definitions of a hybrid organization are scarce, Santos, Pache, and Birkholz (2015) provide a typology of hybrid models, which assesses the risk for each of four models, as shown in Table 2 (below) – providing a useful guide to an organization like TF as to whether its financial expectations are realistic. The models tackle three problems found in social businesses: inability to pay; difficulty of access (e.g., populations in remote villages) and unwillingness to pay, that is, a lack of appreciation of the value of the service or product on offer. The “Market Hybrid” and “Blending Hybrid” cover eventualities where clients of a hybrid organization are also the beneficiaries. The authors suggest that the risks of mission drift are low and intermediate respectively, and the financial sustainability easy and moderately difficult. However, as we progress down the table, the management challenges grow harder. “Blending Hybrids” potentially need additional interventions to effect change, which do not generate revenues. The risk is that a “Blending Hybrid” may prompt organizations to focus on clients with the ability to pay and neglect disadvantaged one. To avoid this, it is suggested, separate staff should monitor financial performance and social impact to avoid mission drift. “Bridging Hybrids” and “Coupling Hybrids” face the challenge of clients not being beneficiaries. For example, a “Bridging Hybrid” might match complementary needs so people with autism are trained to work in the IT sector – but this can carry a risk of prioritising client needs over beneficiaries’ needs so impact requires careful monitoring. An example of a “Coupling Hybrid” is a scheme to train the long-term unemployed to provide an unrelated service – for example laundry or gardening - to paying clients. Here management needs to monitor both commercial performance and impact to avoid mission drift.

Type	Characteristic	Risk of Mission Drift	Financial sustainability
Market Hybrid	Paying clients are beneficiaries e.g., access to basic services like health, water, sanitation.	Low	Easy
Blending Hybrid	Paying clients as beneficiaries e.g., microfinance, education. However, needs change of behaviour by client for impact to happen.	Intermediate	Moderately difficult
Bridging Hybrid	Clients are not the beneficiaries e.g., job matching for people with disabilities.	Intermediate	Moderately difficult
Coupling Hybrid	Clients are not the beneficiaries e.g., work integration social enterprise that requires a dual value chain serving both clients. and beneficiaries.	High	Difficult

Table 2: Typology of hybrid organizational forms, adapted from Santos, Pache and Birkholz (2015).

For an organization like TF, the typology signifies the risk of mission drift is intermediate to high, and the financial sustainability, moderately difficult to difficult. For example, an individual blogger in a developing country wanting to undertake an e-Learning course may fall into the “Blending Hybrid” category – keen to learn but unable to afford a rate which was financially sustainable for TF. A western government might fund a programme to support independent media in a low-income country, with TF tempted to put the funder’s needs above the beneficiary’s, thereby functioning as a “Blending Hybrid”. In the worst-case scenario, both funder and beneficiary may have diverging priorities, casting TF as a “Coupling Hybrid”. The analysis is useful in helping to understand where there is a viable business case, and where there might have to be a dependence on philanthropic support.

Muhammad Yunus, the economist and Nobel laureate, who pioneered microfinance, was an early exponent of the hybrid organization. He established the Grameen bank in Bangladesh in 1976 to provide small, unsecured loans to help entrepreneurs escape poverty (Yunus, Moingeon, & Lehmann-Ortega, 2010). The model demonstrated how stakeholders can take the place of shareholders to create value. The authors say the model attracted CSR interest from international companies but believed that, ultimately, they were only interested in profit rather than societal benefits.

2.6. The Stakeholder Role

The role of stakeholder has played a significant part in defining both CSR, and the efficient functioning of hybrid organizations like the Grameen bank. CSR is seen as enhancing relationships with stakeholders (Barnett, 2007), while hybrid organizations need to evolve a clear identity to avoid “stakeholder confusion” (Rawhouser et al., 2015; Thomasson, 2009). A stakeholder in an organization is any group, or individual, who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization’s objectives (Freeman, 1984:46). The main stakeholders in a business typically include employees, customers or clients, communities, suppliers and owners or investors. Executives need to find ways that their interests can be guided in the same direction (Freeman & Dmytriyev, 2017). Value creation can be achieved with a joint purpose and stakeholders’ active contributions (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & De Colle, 2010) but if value creation is not mutually beneficial for all parties, a business loses its legitimacy (Freudenreich, Ludeke-Freund, & Schaltegger, 2019). Grameen bank, for example, represents how developing close stakeholder relationships, governed by ethical qualities, such as fairness, trust, loyalty care and respect, can represent a source of sustainable competitive advantage, very difficult to imitate (Jones, Harrison, & Felps, 2018). Embedded in Freeman's "stakeholder theory" is an underlying view of ethical values in business which force managers and the public together to ask two questions: "what is the purpose of the corporation?" and "to whom are managers responsible?" (Freeman et al., 2010: 206). In considering relationships with the digital economy, organizations like TF would need to consider how to balance those with its other stakeholders and what the impact might be.

2.7 Disruptive philanthropy: the new paradigms analysed

The paradigms analysed in this section have brought disruption to the world of social change. They are catalytic by nature – approaching social-social sector problems in a fundamentally new way to create scalable, sustainable, systems-changing solutions (Christensen, Baumann, Ruggles, & Sadtler, 2006). All have disrupted the traditional philanthropic models of grants from foundations and corporations or corporate social responsibility aimed at mission-driven organizations (Manning, Baker, & Stokes, 2020). As the paradigms were derived from, or were adopted by, the business practices of Silicon Valley, the aim is to examine the mindset of the digital economy and their expectations of recipients of philantrophy. A new analysis of relevant literature will contribute to a conceptual model to advise TF - and other non-profits – of the issues which will be encountered when seeking funding for a digital transformation. All of the paradigms emerged over a 17-year period, from 1997 to 2014. The four paradigms are venture philanthropy, impact investing, shared value, and donating data, or data philanthropy. The literature originates from seminal papers, principally in the Harvard Business Review, as shown in Table 3 (below).

Paradigm	Definition	Publication
Venture Philanthropy (Letts et al. 1997)	Encouraging foundations to use venture capital practices to strengthen the core capacity of their grantees as well as funding charitable programmes.	Harvard Business Review
Impact Investing (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, Impact investing: Transforming how we make money while making a difference, 2011)	Investment strategies that bring financial returns while intentionally improving social and environmental conditions.	Innovations (MIT Press)
Shared Value (Porter and Kramer 2011)	Re-inventing capitalism by combining value creation with meeting societal needs.	Harvard Business Review
Data Philanthropy (Kirkpatrick 2013; Stempeck 2014)	Private sector holders of "Big Data" make it available for the public good.	Harvard Business Review

Table 3: 21st century paradigms of philanthropic support for mission-driven organizations. [Source: Author in Manning, Baker, and Stokes (2020).]

2.7.1. Venture philanthropy

Venture Philanthropy (VP) evolved from a new set of actors in the American philanthropy arena - a mix of individuals emerging from the West Coast technology boom of the 1990s and East Coast financiers who accumulated huge wealth in a short time as a result (Defourny, Nyssens, & Thys, 2016). They were seeking a more modern form of charity based on market principles, with a concern that "mainstream" philanthropy did not encourage innovation (Wagner, 2002). Their ideals rose to prominence in a seminal paper, "Virtuous Capital: What Foundations Can Learn from Venture Capitalists" by Letts et al. (1997). Their central thesis was that no-one was investing in organizational capacity in the non-profit sector which, they argued, could be cured by foundations funding core operational needs as well as projects. To strengthen the capacity of non-profits and increase their impact, Letts et al. (1997) argued that foundations working with non-profits should adopt the practices used by venture capitalists with commercial start-ups. Simply put, the authors summarized VP as "high-engagement funding" with three key elements – strategy coaching, the provision of "reliable money" for at least seven years and ensuring the grantor and grantee interests are aligned (Letts & Ryan, 2003). First, to be of interest to venture philanthropists, non-profit service providers must have a commitment to scaling their impact (Grossman, Appleby, & Reimers, 2013) which can be applicable for mature organizations as well as early-stage ones. The importance of “performance measurement” of the grantee is a crucial part in VP strategy, as shown in a more developed summary of the approach, provided by Table 4, below, adapted from (Buckland, Hehenberger, & Hay, 2013).

High engagement	“Hands-on” relationship between the supported organization and VP.
Organizational capacity building	Funding core operating costs rather than just individual projects.
Tailored financing	Using the most appropriate form of financing including grants, debt and equity.
Non-financial support	Strategic planning to strengthen management.
Access to networks	Providing contacts with complementary skill sets and resources.
Multi-year support	Exiting when organizations are financially, or operationally, sustainable.
Performance measurement	Good business planning, measurable outcomes, achievement of milestones and financial accountability and transparency.

Table 4: Key elements of venture philanthropy, adapted from Buckland, Hehenberger, and Hay (2013).

Empirical data on VP are limited but give insights into two phenomena which are relevant to this study: recent research has shown evidence of how hybrid organizations, balancing two institutional logics, respond when in receipt of venture philanthropy; earlier research was focused on the values and decision-making processes of the donors.

2.7.1.1. Venture philanthropy in hybrid organizations

Onishi (2019) surveyed 138 organizations in the United States which were in receipt of VP to understand if they were constrained by balancing institutional logics and multiple identities. The study found that “internal forces” from social identity consistently suppressed external pressures from commercial logic, thereby avoiding active implementation of VP. When organizations experienced severe tensions between logic and identity, social identity prevailed. To maintain internal harmony, they proceeded with the views of socially-oriented members so were less influenced by commercial logic. The survey sample included both for-profit and non-profit organizations, of which 84% were non-profits.

Di Lorenzo and Scarlata (2019) found that value-added services provided by venture philanthropists were more effective in organizations with a collectivist identity, rather than a utilitarian one. Their research involved 158 hybrid organizations, functioning as social enterprises in Indian municipalities, funded by western venture philanthropists. They found VP tends to "professionalize" social enterprises with a dominant collectivist identity more than those with utilitarian ones, which were more likely to be already equipped with market-oriented processes and capabilities. While the authors admit the results may be country specific, it raises the question of the value of VP to a non-profit organization which perceives itself as having reasonable managerial competency – actual or assumed.

2.7.1.2. Values of donors

Schervish, O'Herlihy, and Havens (2001) researched 28 wealthy donors, and two of their spouses, from high-tech industries who were involved with "high-impact philanthropy", including venture philanthropy. The authors found the donors to be "market conscious" and who insisted on research and due diligence before any new venture. The qualities they sought included strategic thinking, a belief in teamwork and partnering rather than competition, an optimistic view in the ability of the individual to make a difference, and a conviction that innovation and constant change are crucial to progress.

In a similar qualitative research, Moody (2008) found that practitioners and proponents of VP in California wanted to build a new philanthropic culture. Again, the traits they sought in investees were "data focused", strategic minded, results oriented and comfortable with deadlines. Other qualities included being very analytical, and "innovation junkies" who believed traditional grant-making approaches were inefficient and unproductive.

A study by Mair and Hehenberger (2014) in Europe compared the views of those who supported a traditional philanthropy model with those who advocated venture philanthropy. A principal difference between the models was that VP prescribed "investments" and direct involvement in the management of organizations carrying out social projects, whereas traditional philanthropy favoured hands-off support in the form of project grant-making. VP funders made it clear they were seeking "reciprocity", using the terms "giving, receiving and returning" and emphasising that "gifts are not free".

The clearest description of the decision-making process of VP is made by Gordon (2014) who conducted case studies of four UK foundations set up by VPs to administer their funds – predominantly in Africa. An assessment measure used by philanthropy teams was whether a potential investee organization had the ambition, desire and capability to strive for the "big win". Gordon charted eight stages of their investment process from deal sourcing to exit. At stage four, she synthesised the early decision-making criteria by venture philanthropists, as shown in Table 5, below. Similar to venture capitalists, there is a desire to understand the social and economic factors affecting the investees' area of activity, the motivation, skills and culture of the management team, and the potential for sustainability and eventual exit. The literature gives TF a clear understanding of the qualities which venture philanthropists seek, but as the paradigm matures, an insight into how it might work in a hybrid organization, where it may be resisted by socially-oriented members of the team. Learning the lessons from Di Lorenzo and Scarlata (2019) there is the possibility there may be covert, or overt, resistance to mentoring if a management team regards itself as well-qualified and experienced.

2.7.2. Impact investing

The term "impact investing" is often used as an umbrella phrase for other forms of funding including, green finance, microfinance, social impact bonds, and venture philanthropy. Yet while it has common characteristics with them, it is distinct and unique (Agrawal & Hockerts, 2019). It has, for example, common aims with venture philanthropy in maximising social impact, engaging with investees and emphasising accountability, but impact investors seek to recoup their capital at, or below, market rates (Rangan, Appleby, & Moon, 2011)

According to Höchstädter and Scheck (2015), the term "impact investing" originated in 2007 from the Monitor Institute, a United States think tank, during discussions to find ways to build a global investment sector seeking social and environmental impact. The concept achieved greater prominence after a landmark 2011 paper, "Impact Investing. Transforming How We Make Money while Making a Difference" (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011). The paper compared the concept to practices by England's 17th century Quakers who wanted to align their investments with their values. The authors contend that, in the 21st century, activities should be organized round the "blended value" of wealth and social justice, not the separate poles of financial return and social good.

Venture Philanthropists’ Early Decision-Making Criteria

Decision-making criteria	Social and economic factors	Leadership and management of organisation	Social return and potential exit
Criterion 1	Is there a workable solution that addresses a social/economic problem which fits with the funder’s broad area of philanthropy?	Does the social entrepreneur have personal integrity? Can the philanthropy team develop a relationship of trust?	Is there potential for a social (non-financial) return on investment? To what extent can a social and/or economic change/development be replicated?
Criterion 2	How innovative is the concept? Does it address a core social and economic problem?	What are the strengths and weaknesses of the management? What is the leadership capability?	What is the potential for sustainability? Has there been a pilot programme? Can an exit be secured?
Criterion 3	Are there reasonable capital requirements: economic, social, intellectual and symbolic?	What evidence of realism exists in the organization leadership? Is the leadership risk aware and open to a joint approach to managing risk?	What potential exists for scaling up the solution (either through policy change or replication)?
Criterion 4	What support exists for the intervention in the macro- and micro-environment?	How flexible is the organization to change?	How achievable is an exit? (Via takeover by government – indicative of policy change, or the creation of a sustainable income stream or through replication at scale?)
Criterion 5		How receptive is the organization to an experiential learning approach to philanthropy?	

Table 5: Venture philanthropists’ decision-making criteria, adapted from Gordon (2014).

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Brest and Born (2013) argue the term “impact investing” should only apply if it leads to a better outcome than if the commercial market had provided the capital. However, they identify two types of impact investors: “concessionary investors” who will accept a below-market return to achieve their aims and “non-concessionary” investors who are socially motivated but seek to achieve a market-level return.

Empirical evidence of relevance to TF is provided by Glänzel and Scheuerle (2016) who carried out 19 in-depth interviews with “social impacting investing” funds, investment advisers and social entrepreneurs as investees. They question whether financial return can be achieved when addressing social problems, with both investors and investees seeing it as a risk for taking up investment capital. Again, within hybrid organizations, they saw the approach of investors and investees shaped by their own “institutional logics” or belief systems: investees by the social sector logic, with impact investors mostly following the logic of commercial finance markets. They did, however, see signs of "assimilated hybrids" (Skelcher & Rathgeb Smith, 2015) where the core, or original, logic remains but the organization adopts some of the practices and symbols of the new logic.

2.7.3. Shared value

The concept of shared value is the most widely-debated of the paradigms reviewed in this chapter – but the hardest to illustrate with detailed examples. The paper which sparked discussion was "Creating Shared Value. How to reinvent capitalism – and unleash a wave of innovation and growth" (Porter & Kramer, 2011). By December 28th, 2020, it had been cited more than 11,000 times, according to Google Scholar, but the paper is conceptual with empirical evidence of its success limited. The proposition is that businesses should redefine value creation, exchanging short-term financial performance for creating economic value by "expanding the total pool of economic and social value," addressing society's needs. The paper claimed that most businesses had hitherto put societal issues at the periphery, not the core. They were urged to find new benefits by re-examining their value chains. The authors cite large technology companies like Google, IBM, Intel, Cisco and Microsoft, as organizations wishing to identify potential partners in a shared-value proposition, but no detailed case studies are provided. The most detailed example is of British retailer Marks and Spencer stopping the purchase of supplies in one hemisphere to ship them to another, reducing carbon emissions significantly, but also saving the business up to £175 million a year.

The 2011 publication was the culmination of four papers by the authors seeking to shape opinion in the debate about the relationship between business, philanthropy and grant-giving foundations. First, their 1999 paper, "Philanthropy's New Agenda: Creating Value", urged foundations to generate social benefits beyond the purchasing power of their grants. They suggested four ways to achieve it – although all had echoes of the Letts et al. (1997) paper on venture philanthropy. The four ways included calling for foundations to select the best grantees, "signal" (or introduce) other funders, and fund research as well as the systematic progression of projects.

In their second paper, "The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy", Porter and Kramer (2002) condemned the "myth" of strategic philanthropy by companies, saying much of it was public relations, advertising or brand promotion. They maintained that for corporate giving to be truly strategic, it must deliver benefits for both the business and the society, with positive commercial effect. Their third paper, "The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility" (Porter & Kramer, 2006). attempted to steer CSR thinking toward shared value. They argued that a CSR cause should not just be worthy, but be “an opportunity to create shared value, creating a benefit for society while being valuable for the business”.

While the papers are all conceptual, they underscore that, from foundations, to corporate philanthropy and CSR, the importance of philanthropic funds being used strategically which, in the case of businesses, also enhances their value chains while bringing optimal societal benefits. The implication for non-profit organizations seeking philanthropic funding is understanding which donors might derive an opportunity for shared value from their cause.

Critics, however, have dismissed “shared value” as “a management buzzword” (Dembek, Singh, & Bhakoo, 2016) and “simplistic” (Crane, Palazzo, Spence, & Matten, 2014). Dembek et al. (2016) believe the concept needs clearer definition and is unlikely to solve any social problems. Crane et al. (2014) accuse Porter and Kramer of not understanding the trade-offs which businesses have to make between economic and social goals. A study of 30 companies by Pfitzer, Bockstette and Stamp (2013) showed how they had embedded a social mission in a corporate culture to create business value and social benefits. The examples cited were large corporations like Intel, Dow Chemicals, and Nestle – often working with external stakeholders like NGOs and universities. While a non-profit might identify a potential commercial partner, it would indicate that the power of initiation is more in the hands of big business, where there would be likely to be a proportionately larger gain for the value chain.

2.7.4. Data Philanthropy

Donating data – known as “data philanthropy” or “data for good” – is the newest paradigm being reviewed and, arguably, the most controversial with its own emerging branch of ethics – data ethics (Floridi & Taddeo, 2016). In essence, the terms describe the use of private sector data for socially beneficial purposes (Lev-Aretz, 2019). Stempeck (2014) argues that data given responsibly could achieve the aims of Porter and Kramer (2002) in encouraging strategic philanthropy, producing meaningful social impact while improving the competitive business environment.

Companies like Facebook, Google, Apple and eBay hold more data about people and their behaviour than many governments (Shkabatur, 2019) – but consequently hold immense ethical responsibility. The issue was heightened as a matter of public concern after the unauthorized use of personal data from Facebook to target potential voters in the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Rosenberg et al., 2018). The social media platform arguably represents extremes of both negative and positive effects which can be achieved with data. The negative is the American election misuse of data by Cambridge Analytica; the positive is the 2017 launch by Facebook of its "Disaster Maps" project in its "Data for Good" programme, which shares real-time information with response teams dealing with natural disasters. (Facebook Data for Good, 2020). By mid-2020, Facebook's Disaster Maps website said responders had used the data in more than 100 disasters – before turning its attention to providing data to create publicly-available maps of Covid-19 cases by country. The company emphasises it uses only "privacy-preserving" products in the "Data for Good" initiative.

Floridi and Taddeo (2016) underscore the complex ethical issues faced in managing data. Even if donated data are anonymized, individuals could be "re-identified" through data mining, data-linking, data merging and re-use of large data sets. There is a need to guard against a breach of "group privacy" - identification of types of individuals which may lead to group discriminations such as sexism, ethnicism or ageism. The moral question of how data can be compromised is not a new one. Google withdrew from mainland China in 2010 after a "highly sophisticated and targeted attack" by the Chinese government attempting to access the email accounts of human rights activists (Tan and Tan 2012). Earlier, Google, Microsoft and Yahoo! were accused of abdicating moral responsibility by agreeing to censorship to do business in China (Dann and Haddow 2008). The question is whether Big Tech will compromise ethics in pursuit of profit, if the financial "prize" is big enough? For non-profits, or hybrid organizations, the issue is whether accepting donations of data creates a dependence on the donor for technology and expertise to access the data.

A proposed solution to guarantee the ethical management of data sets is a "global data commons" project where private businesses holding large amounts of users' data on their platforms could have them managed collectively and responsibly (Shkabatur, 2019). The aim would be to use the data to further large societal objectives as well as the business models of the platform companies. The proposal was originally tabled 10 years earlier when the concept of "data philanthropy" was first proposed as part of the United Nations' 2009 Global Pulse initiative to discover whether "Big Data" and real-time analytics could make policy-making more agile and effective (Kirkpatrick 2013). The director of the initiative, Robert Kirkpatrick, believed private sector data contributed to a "real-time data common" could achieve "massive social impact". Early data from social media, mobile networks and online fora could be used to safeguard vulnerable populations by tracking of the spread of health epidemics, and phenomena like changes in food prices. The issue poses an unresolved legal and moral issue over ownership of data. Does a private sector business have the right to offer customer data collected for one purpose to be re-used for a different one (Lev-Aretz, 2019)? She also raised whether the term “philanthropy” is appropriate in this case, as data can be offered for re-use at minimal, or no, cost with no practical limit, compared with more tangible gifts of money or services.

Experience, so far, has shown that access to large data sets can achieve positive or negative outcomes. Any non-profit, or hybrid organization, which accepts donations of data or data philanthropy, will need to navigate the “moral ambiguity” of whether it fosters morally good outcomes like scientific progress or health benefits, as opposed to negative ones (Taddeo, 2017). Would a smaller non-profit understand all the associated risks? If it agreed to support from a data donor, or a Big Tech company with appropriate skills, is it then overly-dependent on the relationship to manage the data with limited, or no, control?

2.8. Disrupted ethics

An important test for a non-profit organization wishing to align with the digital economy is not just accepting public perceptions of a funder but seeking an understanding of the moral philosophies underpinning the business ethics of the respective organizations (Freeman et al., 2010:198). Are the ethics of a long-standing charity like TF, which are rooted in providing social good in developing countries, relatable to business practices stemming from Silicon Valley? We have seen from Onishi (2019) that socially-oriented businesses tend to reject a more commercial logic imposed by mission-driven venture philanthropists. How would the values which shape the beliefs of staff (Stokes, Baker, & Lichy, 2016) respond if a more rigorously commercial Big Tech company was a stakeholder, for example? A perspective for TF would be to examine the three main moral philosophies which may span the activities of non-profits, mission-focused organizations from the digital economy and the more ruggedly-commercial Big Tech companies. At one end of the spectrum is the deontological approach of Kant, where duty to oneself and others is the governing creed, taking a rational approach to achieving the right end (Kant, 2019:44). This contrasts with the utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill, and his “Great Happiness Principle”, where the philosophy is to achieve an outcome for the greatest happiness and the absence of pain (Mill & Bentham, 1987:278). At the other end of the spectrum to

Kant’s sense of duty is the rational egoism of Ayn Rand, where rational self-interest predominates (Rand, 1964).

In approaching a potential funder, TF could be faced with a range of options from the digital economy: from “philanthrocapitalists” and their foundations and hybrid funding organizations, to CSR arms of tech companies to impact investment funds and venture philanthropists who have derived their funds from the digital economy. The literature has charted a declining perception of Big Tech’s ethics since the beginning of the 21st century, when tech companies were perceived as wearing a “Teflon mantle that keeps social issues from sticking to them” (Krumsiek, 2003). Since then, the ethics of Big Tech have been progressively called into question over accepting censorship in China (Tan & Tan, 2012; Dann & Haddow, 2008), large-scale tax avoidance (Lanis & Richardson, 2015), misuse of Facebook users’ private data (Rosenberg et al., 2018), lack of disclosure about how illegal content is moderated (Espinoza, 2020) and allegations of abusing market powers (Gordon & Sisak, 2020). In the case of Facebook, Google and Twitter – among others – their platforms are also being used by malicious actors for “computational propaganda”, namely spreading misinformation and disinformation over social networks. (Woolley and Howard, 2019). Letts et al. (1997) and Bugg-Levine and Emerson (2011) advised that an important test for partnering with a business was alignment of ethical and strategic interests, coupled with trust and transparency.

Ironically, moves by actors from the digital economy to start their own hybrid philanthropic organizations have called into question their transparency. Google.org, the search company’s charitable wing, is described as a "for-profit philanthropy” with the freedoms to use market mechanisms to further its aims, if necessary through political means, (Lim, 2007) but does not face the same legal requirement for accountability and transparency which would normally apply to commercial or political activities by non-profits (Rana, 2008). Under those circumstances, an investee or partner non-profit might be left wondering where the true division lies between Google.org and the Google commercial entity. Pierre Omidyar, a founder of eBay, created a philanthropic foundation after the company flotation in the 1990s, but in 2004 switched to a limited liability company called the Omidyar Network to invest in businesses, or organizations, with a social purpose (Omidyar, 2011). A “hybrid approach” of blending for-profit and non-profit skills left the Omidyar Network free to make a grant or take an equity stake in a social-purpose company. Omidyar maintained that the market orientation allowed his Network to take greater risks, akin to venture capitalists who might get only two out of 10 investments right but reap great rewards for the right risks. In 2015, the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, adopted a similar model to Pierre Omidyar (Goldman, 2016), announcing their intention to commit an estimated $45 billion of their Facebook stock to improve the state of the world - but through a limited liability company rather than a foundation. Milbrandt (2008) says the Google development indicated a trend where the distinction between profit and non-profit blurs, "evidencing a decaying century-old dichotomy which has become stale to its modern participants."

That disruption, no longer separating business from its philanthropic endeavours, would appear to end the consensus enshrined in Carroll (1979, 1991) that companies had to fulfil their economic, legal and ethical obligations to society as part of their corporate social responsibility before considering philanthropy. Carroll (2016) now acknowledges that philanthropy, or business giving, has become an everyday expectation of the public. While it may sometimes be altruistic, it is done mainly to enhance, or augment, the company's reputation. Brammer and Millington (2005) say that, historically, corporate giving goes up to atone for socially-irresponsible behaviour, for example, by alcohol and tobacco companies – a potential signal that Big Tech will increase its philanthropic spending as it faces greater public scrutiny over its ethics.

2.9. Conceptual model: hybrid organization engagement with the digital economy

The new philanthropic models inspired by the business practices of Big Tech provide non-profits with a potential array of choices for funding – but also with a wide range of strategic and ethical challenges which need to be understood before entering any funding arrangement with money from the digital economy. In the case of TF, this is compounded by understanding the effects on the culture of a hybrid organization which needs to balance two belief systems – or "institutional logics" – where money and mission compete (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Billis, 2010). Learning from the literature, a conceptual model has been devised (see Figure 2 below) to illustrate the challenges which TF would need to understand and address. It will then be used to inform semi-structured research interviews with stakeholders from TF and actors from the digital economy. The model could serve for future non-profit, or mission-focused hybrid organizations, wishing to understand the issues involved in engaging with Big Tech or the "new donors". The model will guide three phases in the research interviews as follows:

2.9.1. Phase 1: Alignment and Control

We have seen from Onishi (2019) that the imposition of a more commercial ethos in socially-focused organizations can cause resistance from staff. In this phase the intention will be to understand the tolerance to market-orientation by TF stakeholders – and that desired by any funder. As Austin et al. (2006) advised, this is not an absolute and can be on a continuum from purely economic to purely social – but ideally not be at extreme ends of the continuum. Understanding the alignment of ethical and strategic interests, coupled with trust and transparency, is an important test for both funder and beneficiary (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011: Letts et al., 1997). From Onishi (2019) and Mair and Hehenberger (2014) we have learned that funders may desire control, expecting reciprocity for their money. "Gifts are not free" sends a clear message that they have high performance expectations of investees.

2.9.2. Phase 2: Disruptive values

This phase is to understand the values which motivate TF stakeholders and those from the digital economy (Stokes et al. 2016) helping to tease out their underlying moral philosophical positions. We have seen from the literature that the "new donors" are seeking "innovation junkies" (Moody, 2008) after the "big win" (Gordon, 2014) who are "data focused" and analytical (Letts et al., 1997; Moody, 2008). Donors also need to find a unique position to maximize impact (Porter & Kramer, 1999). Given hybrid organizations are considered to be "positive deviants" (Haigh & Hoffman, 2012), they may have an unpredictable position or unanticipated values. An assessment of the values expected by all parties will help to inform alignment issues in Phase 1 but also to understand alignment on issues of innovation and whether TF are comfortable with the disruptive forces of Big Tech (Christensen et al., 2006).

2.9.3. Phase 3: Hybridity challenges

The final phase is to ascertain from stakeholders of TF, a deeper understanding of the issues they have faced running a hybrid organization, and how the funders from the digital economy interact with hybrid forms. Again, the literature has indicated problems which are likely to occur, including organizational identity (Onishi, 2019: Jay, 2013) mission drift (Ebrahim et al., 2014) revenue drift

(Ponte et al., 2017) and stakeholder confusion (Rawhouser et al., 2015; Thomasson, 2009). In addition, the tensions experienced in balancing mission and money (Battilana & Dorado, 2010) will also be examined to see how these are managed.

2.10. **Summary**

This narrative, integrative review examined multiple literature streams to inform the emerging topic of new philanthropic models which have evolved from the working practices of the digital economy. The topic was viewed through the lens of hybrid organizations which seek to blend institutional logics. Literature was examined on philanthropy, corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility as well as hybrid organizations. This was supplemented by additional papers on ecosystems, innovation and stakeholder theory. The learning was synthesised into a conceptual model which identified the issues to be examined by a long-established UK charity, established as a hybrid organization, if it wished to engage with funders from the digital economy to support transformative change.

Conceptual model

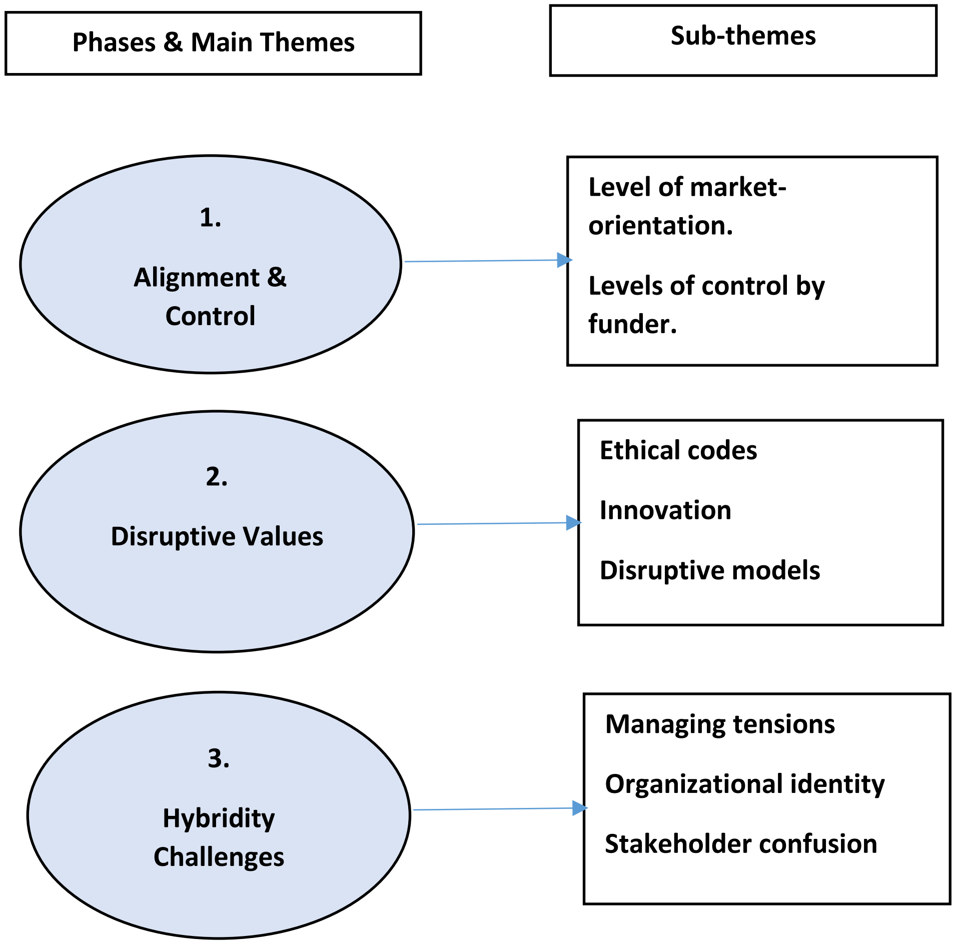


Figure 2: Conceptual model for non-profit/digital economy engagement. (Source: Author, 2020).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As the starting point of any research project, researchers need to identify exactly what they wish to learn and the context in which they wish to learn it (Knight & Cross, 2012). Context, in this case, is provided by the research question and by a conceptual model derived from the literature review. First, the aim of the research project is to understand whether the digital economy can be a source of philanthropic, or CSR, funding for the digital transformation of a UK charity which works to improve media in developing countries and emerging economies. The research question signifies the essence of the study:

How can a long-established journalism charity understand, and engage with, the philanthropic funding mechanisms of the digital economy in order to fund transformative change, while appreciating and managing the associated benefits and risks?

Through the theoretical research of a literature review (Remenyi & Money, 2006), the researcher developed a three-stage conceptual model for non-profits wishing to engage with "the new economy" to create a hybrid organization – a mission-driven entity which blends financial sustainability with social purpose. The model defined the scope of the inquiry and provided the architecture to inform the data gathering for the next stage – empirical research. Accordingly, this thesis identifies a research paradigm which enables the understanding of the decision-making by all parties involved in the process: stakeholders of the charity in question and those with an insider view of funding organizations which owe their origins to the digital economy. The research question, and framework provided by the conceptual model, help to shape the requirements for a research philosophy.

3.2 Research strategy

The major task in designing a piece of social research is to work out how to answer the research question (Blaikie, 2010:17). In so doing, it is necessary to determine the best research strategy to generate new knowledge – qualitative or quantitative. The phenomena that would encourage a funder to engage with the charity at the centre of the study, and vice versa, are currently not clearly defined and actors from each party may have different perspectives. The study, therefore, falls into a classic definition of qualitative research where the *sine qua non* of a qualitative methodology is a commitment to seeing the social world from the point of view of the actor (Bryman, 1984:78). In deciding a research strategy, Blaikie (2007:8) presents us with four choices: inductive, deductive, retroductive and abductive strategies. Each outlines a separate mechanism by which the research can collect data, as shown in Table 6 (below). As Blaikie points out, inductive and deductive are the two most common. Inductive starts with the collection of data and seeks to build theory and generalizations from them. The aim is to describe characteristics of people and social situations and to determine the patterns of relationships between the characteristics. A deductive research strategy works inversely – beginning with a pattern, or "regularity", which needs an explanation. The researcher has to formulate a theoretical argument for the existence of the pattern, deduce one or more hypotheses from it, and then collect data to prove, or disprove, the hypotheses. Retroductive starts with working back from an observed pattern and locating the real underlying structures or "mechanism" responsible for the observed regularity. With an abductive strategy, the researcher has to enter the world of the social actors being investigated and discover the motives and reasons which accompany social activities. Individual motives and actions have to be abstracted into typical motives, for typical actions in typical situations.

The process of understanding the link between a charity and philanthropy from the "new donors", or Big Tech, is still an emerging area of research and depends on assessing the individual judgements of stakeholders in all parts, and stages, of the process. With no known existing theory, deductive reasoning would appear not to be an option. It is not a process where there are patterns to be observed, so a retroductive strategy is not appropriate. Similarly, an abductive strategy is not feasible. While Blaikie makes it clear that an abductive strategy can answer both "what" and "why" questions, it would not be practicable for the researcher to immerse himself in organizations on all sides of the social activity being examined. Therefore, an inductive strategy, with qualitative research, was chosen as most appropriate, given the need to establish a generalisation about the relationship between the digital economy and non-profit organizations.

	Inductive	**Deductive**	**Retroductive**	**Abductive**
Aim	Establish universal generalizations to be used as pattern explanations	To test theories, to eliminate false ones, and corroborate the survivor	To discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed patterns	To describe and understand social life in terms of social actors' motives and understanding
Start	Accumulate observations or data. Produce generalisations.	Identify a pattern to be explained. Construct a theory and deduce hypotheses	Document and model a pattern. Construct a hypothetical model of a mechanism	Discover everyday concepts, meanings and motives. Produce a technical account from lay accounts
Finish	Use these 'laws' to explain further observations	Test the hypotheses by matching them with data	Find the real mechanism by observation and/or experiment	Develop a theory and test it iteratively

Table 6: Options for research strategies, adapted from Blaikie (2007).

3.3 Philosophical foundations

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:22) emphasise that all (qualitative) researchers are philosophers to the extent that they have to combine beliefs about ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the relationship between the inquirer and the known). In other words, what the inquirer takes as "reality", or current fact, (ontology), and how new knowledge is derived (epistemology).

3.3.1. Ontology

Defining "reality" in a social science study arguably presents problems when researching an issue from different stakeholders' perspectives. Morgan and Smircich (1980) develop a continuum of ontological assumptions from a subjectivist approach to an objectivist approach. At the subjectivist end of the continuum, reality is seen as a projection of human imagination, or as a social construction. At the objectivist end, reality is seen as a concrete structure or process. It is reasonable to assume, for the purpose of this study, that the existing views of stakeholders will be socially constructed by their own backgrounds and experiences. As Morgan and Smircich (1980: 494) put it, humans shape the world within the realm of their own immediate experience, which is the essence of a subjective ontological understanding. Their world is not likely to be "concrete", but their reality is constructed afresh in each encounter of everyday life through the medium of "language, labels, actions and routines which constitute symbolic modes of being in the world." Thus, the inquiry lends itself to a subjectivist/constructivist ontology, with the core ontological assumptions outlined in Table 7 (below).

Subjectivist Approach					**Objectivist Approach**
Reality as a projection of human imagination	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	Reality as a contextual field of information	Reality as a concrete process	Reality as a concrete structure

Table 7: Ontological assumptions, adapted from Morgan and Smircich (1980).

Values, such as integrity and trust, are likely to play a key part in the research. In dealing with the preferences, or beliefs, of actors, it unlikely that any data collected from them will not include value elements (Stokes et al., 2016; House, 2005). For example, in her empirical, qualitative study of how venture philanthropists select investees, Gordon (2014) says screening, and building mutually-beneficial working relationships are identified as an integral part of the process. Perceptions of personal integrity, management capabilities, openness and flexibility form parts of the decision-making. However, the researcher in the Thomson Foundation (TF) study has to be aware about drawing a distinction between the values of the research subjects and his own, ensuring wherever possible not to impose his personal values. An organization like TF has trustees from a wide variety of professional backgrounds and managerial staff recruited from both the media, international development sectors and business sectors. They may all, to a degree, perceive the organization's purpose and form in differing ways, shaped by their own experiences and reasons for being involved; likewise, external stakeholders such as clients, and potential funders from the digital economy. This further validates the use of a subjectivist, ontological approach to understand their nuanced perceptions of the respondents.

3.3.2. Epistemology

Following the logic of Morgan and Smircich (1980) the corollary of a subjectivist/constructivist ontology position, is an epistemological stance which is phenomenological and “interpretivist” (Bryman, 1984). Such a stance would mean that the researcher was seeking to obtain phenomenological insights or revelation, and trying to understand how social reality is created, along with patterns of symbolic discourse. The core epistemological assumptions are outlined in Table 8 (below).

Subjectivist Approach					**Objectivist Approach**
To obtain phenomenological insight, revelation	To understand how social reality is created	To understand patterns of symbolic discourse	To map contexts	To study, systems, process, change	To construct a positivist science

Table 8: Epistemological assumptions, adapted from Morgan and Smircich (1980).

A subjectivist, or interpretivist, epistemological approach would lead to inductive theory building and again accord with the view of Bryman (1984) about seeing the world from the actor’s point of view. In creating new knowledge, it is important to understand the perspectives of the different actors and how they form their views. The actors being studied will be seen through the lens of social constructionism – taking a criticial stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, including ourselves (Burr, 2003:3). Social constructionism cautions us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be. Language can construct immense edifices of symbolic representations (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:55), with common symbolism attached to certain words. So there will be a need to understand different actors’ understanding attached to words like “mission” and “money”.

3.3.3. Axiology

Axiology is the theory of values – the aspects of human behaviour which, through evolution, give us aims, goals and opinions (Allen & Varga, 2007). The authors argue that our values create our intentions and desires which, in turn, drive changes in our epistemologies since they determine what it is we wish to achieve and therefore what we seek to know in order to achieve it.

In undertaking qualitative research in a mission-driven organization, it is therefore important to understand the value systems of both the inquirer as well as the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2016). The authors make the point that values inhere in every human project, rendering objectivity a "chimera". It will, therefore, be important for the researcher, as an actor in the entity being studied, to reflexively test his own values as well as clearly interrogating those of other actors to ensure that the bases of their aims, goals, intentions and desires are properly understood.

3.3.4. Summary of philosophical foundations

To summarize the philosophical foundations of the study: we have arrived at a research paradigm which is broadly one of interpretivism, as defined by Blaikie (2010:99) where "social reality is regarded as a product of its inhabitants …a world that is interpreted by the meanings participants produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together." The research project takes a subjectivist/constructivist ontological position, and an epistemological stance which is phenomenonlogical and interpretivist. Social constructionism will form a lens through which to undertand the actions and emotions of the actors, but there will be a need to understand clearly the axiological position of the main actors to ensure that their motivations are properly examined and do not go unchallenged. In terms of addressing the research question, this presents a semantic challenge. The actors who are interviewed may have greatly varying values about what constitutes "transformational change" and "benefits and risks". For example, a trustee of the TF who is a cautious retired lawyer may see "risk" as troubling and multi-layered – financial, legal, reputational and even existential. A trustee who has worked in private equity, and is used to large commercial deals, may have a more relaxed and confident attitude to risk, regarding it as an inevitable precursor to growth and change, to be faced head-on. Their values are equally valid but there needs to be a careful interrogation of what each understands by “transformative” and “benefits and risks”.

3.4. Research design and methodology

3.4.1. An inductive study

Having established the philosophical foundations of the research, it is necessary to establish the research design and methodology to provide a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The researcher considered several designs laid out by Blaikie (2010:40) from field experiment to cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study and comparative design. After consideration, the experimental and cross-sectional designs were deemed inappropriate, as the study would be impractical to set up as an experiment with a control group or capture at a single point in time with a cross-sectional design. The timeframe of the study was too limited to be longitudinal. The relative rarity, and complexity, of the study precluded it becoming a comparative one with another organization. A possibility was an “instrumental” case study to provide insight into a specific issue (Stake, 2005:443) or possibly “revelatory” in that such a case has not believed to have been previously accessible to social science inquiry (Yin, 2009:48). However, the researcher, was able to secure a series of “elite interviews” (Richards, 1996; Moore and Stokes, 2012), with executives from the digital economy. All had involvement in programmes helping to fund, or support, the development of journalism in the digital age. To capitalise on their phenomenologicial insights, the researcher decided to focus on an inductive study based on their interviews – complemented with similar interviews with key stakeholders from the TF.

3.4.2. Elite interviews

An “elite” interviewee in international business is an informant “who occupies a senior or middle management position; has functional responsibility in an area which enjoys high status in accordance with corporate values; has considerable industry experience and frequently also long tenure with the company” (Welch et al., 2002). Elite interviews allow the researcher to gain an insight into the mindset of actors who have played a role in shaping the society in which we live and understand the interviewees’ subjective analysis of the phenomena under investigation (Richards, 1996).

In the case of this study, the "elite interviewees" were selected to represent a cross section of organizations from the digital economy which provide funding, training and mentoring for news media globally. They are executives from four organizations: a philanthropic foundation involved with media through its work in international development; an international philanthropic organization providing non-profit grants and for-profit investments, and two Big Tech companies which provide funding and support programmes for media internationally. The four fall into the definition provided by Welch et al. (2002), with at least two fulfilling the definition of an "ultra elite" (Zuckerman, 1972) - a "thin layer of individuals with the greatest influence, prestige, and power in an institutional sphere" - where access is a delicate and lengthy process.

The profiles of the four are as follows:

- An economic and policy adviser to the billionaire founder of a philanthropic foundation which funds international development programmes, including media. The interviewee also has extensive, executive experience in inter-governmental organizations.
- The chief executive of a "hybrid" philanthropic organization, funded by a Tech billionaire, which has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in non-profit grants and for-profit investments to support civic empowerment, including for independent media. The interviewee previously had wide sector experience in media development at senior executive level.
- A long-standing leader of a search engine's efforts in Europe, the Middle East and Africa to build, and manage, partnerships and collaboration with the news media. The role has included oversight of funding projects totalling hundreds of millions of dollars.
- An executive running a social network's international accelerator programme, aimed at providing funding and practical support for community news organizations internationally.

Each has "knowledge, influence, control and power" in their given setting (Moore & Stokes, 2012), enabling the researcher to gather valuable data from those who were "influential decision makers" for their organizations (Harvey, 2010). For this reason, the researcher opted to use semi-structured interviews for data collection to get a deep understanding of their theoretical positions, perceptions, beliefs and ideologies (Richards, 1996). It provided an insight into the mindset of actors who were shaping programmes aimed at delivering support to journalists globally. A semi-structured approach is desirable with elite interviews to ensure the ability to cover all relevant topics, rather than sticking to a rigid questionnaire. The elites were interviewed at the end of the data gathering process when the researcher had the best command of his material. Elites "do not suffer fools gladly" (Richards, 1996), with their time often limited, which underlined the importance of maximizing insights in the time available.

3.4.3. Research sample

Judgemental, or purposive, sampling was used to select interviewees for the study (Blaikie, 2010: 178). This served a dual purpose – in selecting both the elite interviewees and those who were stakeholders of the Thomson Foundation. First, with elite interviewees, this form of non-probability sampling allows the opportunity to identify the key political actors who have the most involvement with the process of interest, rather than drawing on a representative sample of a larger population of actors to make generalisations about the full population (Tansey, 2007). The researcher understood the potential drawbacks to this method – namely, inappropriate selection if the researcher did not have prior knowledge of the population, and inadvertent biases of the researcher leading to possible over-representation of subjects with particular characteristics. In this case, the researcher focused on elites from four leaders in the field of supporting media globally, based on a detailed knowledge of sector. Efforts were made to balance the sample of elites by selecting two executives with responsibility for journalism programmes from Big Tech companies, and two from philanthropic organizations. All the organizations had derived their wealth from Big Tech. While their relevance was a matter of judgement for the researcher, access was perceived as a possibility through his knowledge of the sector and the ability to reach them through well-established, high-level contacts. In each case, intricate negotiation was required to gain access to the interviewees – either directly or through intermediaries within their organizations. In the most complex case, the interview took six months to arrange through a series of written requests and last-minute postponements. The positions of "elites" within their organizations meant they were in a position to answer questions on motivations for funding digital journalism initiatives and to understand the models used and their ethical considerations.

With the Thomson Foundation, purposive sampling was again used to select the interviewees - a pre-defined and visible set of actors where the researcher was in a position to identify the respondents of interest and sample those deemed most appropriate for the research needs (Tansey, 2007). They were four executives and four members of TF's trustee board. The executives were the four senior managers of the Thomson Foundation, other than the researcher, who was chief executive. They had originally been recruited from a mix of sectors including business, international development, higher education, and journalism with between 15 years' and five years' service with TF. To balance the number of senior managers and elite interviewees, four trustees were selected for interview as a purposive sample from a trustee board of seven. The criterion for selecting trustees were those who had had exposure to philanthropy with international organizations in their professional, or other extramural, activities. Their wider experience provided useful context when the TF stakeholder groups were questioned about approaches to obtaining philanthropy, including ethical considerations, issues surrounding the funding of increasing core capacity and their openness to different methods of philanthropical funding. Table 9 (below) lays out the full list of interviewees, coded for anonymity. The four senior managers of TF are coded SM1 to SM4, and the trustees, coded T1 to T4. The four "elites" have two separate codes: BT, if from Big Tech, and DE for those from philanthropic organizations with funding from the digital economy. DE1 is the chief executive of a hybrid philanthropic organization, and DE2 is the economic and policy adviser to a billionaire philanthropist.

3.4.4. Unit of analysis

Accordingly, the unit of analysis is the organization, the Thomson Foundation, as the final report of the study will need to link back to the research question (Boyatzis, 1998:62) as to how it can understand the mechanisms for engaging with the digital economy to fund transformative change, while appreciating the associated benefits and risks. This is distinct from the units of coding which will be the individuals who were interviewed (Boyatzis, 1998:64).

Interviewee	Role
SM1	Senior manager of Thomson Foundation
SM2	Senior manager of Thomson Foundation
SM3	Senior manager of Thomson Foundation
SM4	Senior manager of Thomson Foundation
T1	Trustee of Thomson Foundation
T2	Trustee of Thomson Foundation
T3	Trustee of Thomson Foundation
T4	Trustee of Thomson Foundation
BT1	Search engine executive
BT2	Social media platform executive
DE1	Exec. from hybrid philanthropic foundation
DE2	Executive from philanthropic foundation

Table 9: Coded list of interviewees. (Source: Author, 2020.)

3.4.5. Data Collection

All the interviews were planned as semi-structured, keeping in mind that methodological rigour was required to ensure that such qualitative, empirical research did not end up merely as "sophisticated storytelling" (Diefenbach, 2009). He highlights this as a particular risk in case studies where the researcher's theoretical position, interests and political perspective will affect, if not determine, the research question, methodological approach and the analysis and interpretation of data. However, he answers his own criticism to a degree by saying that qualitative research is explorative. Diefenbach argues that at the beginning of a study, neither the sites and units of study, nor the precise objects of reasoning, circumstances and core problems are really known. However, it reminds us that qualitative researchers should ask themselves throughout the whole research process whether they have asked the right questions, challenge their most basic assumptions and see issues from as many different perspectives as possible.

The initial intention was that all interviews would be carried out face-to-face, but this was rendered impractical due to travel and health restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. All the interviews with the Thomson Foundations stakeholders were carried out face-to-face and concluded before the pandemic. While negotiations for the elite interviews began before the pandemic, they were not concluded before Covid restrictions on personal contact were imposed. Consequently, only one was carried out face-to-face – the interview with the chief executive of a philanthropic organization. Of the other three elite interviews, one was conducted using online video conferencing, and two others by telephone to accommodate the wishes of the interviewees. While telephone interviewing can lead to a loss of visual cues and rapport, research has also shown it may allow respondents to feel more relaxed, with no evidence that it leads to lower-quality data (Novick, 2008). All the interviews lasted for between an hour-and-a-quarter and an hour-and-a-half and recorded, with the permission of interviewees, to ensure accuracy and to allow the researcher to concentrate on what was being said, rather than taking notes. The interviews were then transcribed to enable the researcher to familiarise himself with the content in detail.

Questioning for the semi-structured interviews was based on the conceptual model developed during the literature review – interrogating the themes of alignment and control, disruptive values and the challenges of hybridity, as shown in a repeat of Figure 2 (below). The researcher structured the themes into a more detailed schedule of questions (see Appendix A) which was used to guide the semi-structured interviews – while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions and seek clarifications, as well as seeking greater detail on any emergent theme. The researcher focused on using open-ended questions to maintain conversational flow and to allow the interviewees to respond in their own words, without being influenced by the interviewer (Harvey, 2010) and to avoid researcher bias (Chenail, 2011). Open-ended questions are deemed particularly important when interviewing elites who may resist categories or choices on their reasoning processes (Rivera, Kozyreva, & Sarovskii, 2002). However, the authors maintain it is acceptable to follow-up with a more formulaic question to clarify detail. Similarly, Harvey (2010) asserts it is reasonable to also follow-up with a close-ended question. While the same schedule of themes was used to guide the interviews with the TF stakeholders and the elite interviewees, the questions were adapted to take into their account their different perspectives, as demonstrated in Appendix A, to help address the research question. For example, in ascertaining desired levels of market orientation, TF stakeholders were asked: “Which qualities do you think define the Thomson Foundation?”. Interviewees from the digital economy were asked, “Which qualities do you seek in media organizations you support?”

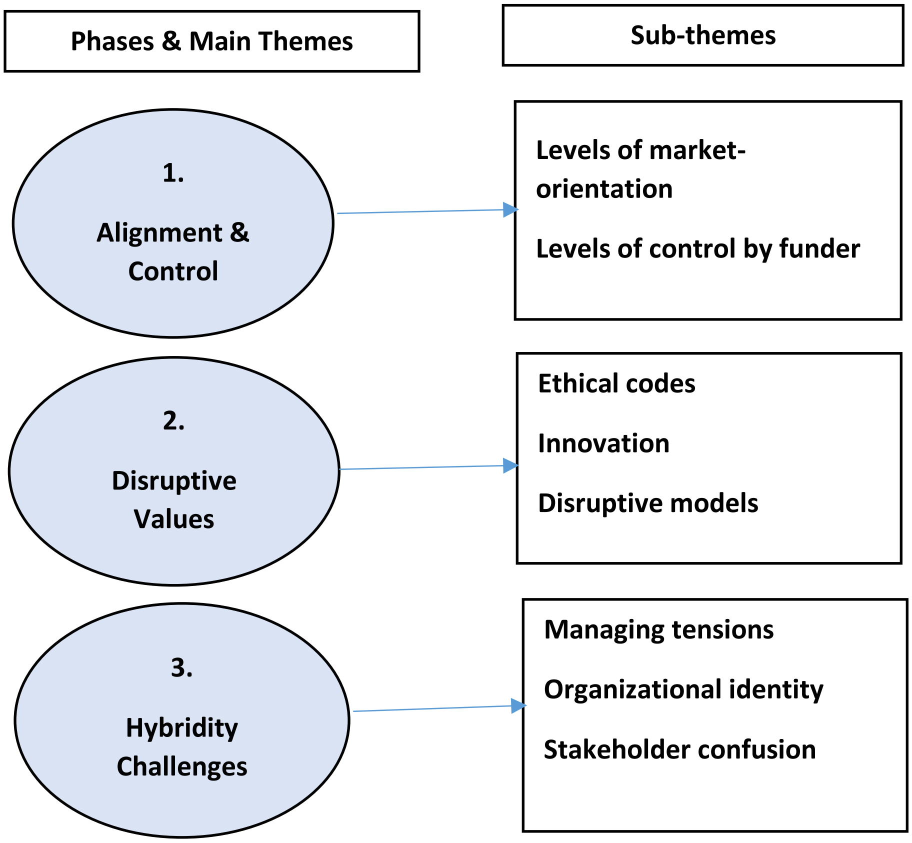


Figure 2 (repeated): Conceptual model for non-profit/digital economy engagement. (Source: Author, 2020).

3.4.6. Data Analysis Strategy

The data collected from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; King & Horrocks, 2010). Thematic analysis involves searching across a data set – in this case the transcripts of the interviews – to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006:86) or “recurrent and distinctive features of participants’ accounts, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question” (King and Horrocks, 2010:150). In a subsequent work, King and Brooks (2018) highlight the philosophical positions which are relevant to the use of thematic analysis. The type of study which the researcher is undertaking accords with what King and Brooks label a philosophical position of contextualism, with a relativist, or indeterminate, ontology, and a constructivist/relativist epistemology. In such a case, the researcher seeks to understand participants'meaning-making with a focus on induction and emergent themes, with a highly tentative use of *a priori* themes. While the researcher used *a priori* themes as the foundation for the semi-structured interviews, he was also seeking to make sense of the reasoning of the actors concerned and the motivations for their decision-making.

King and Brooks (2018) outline four types of "generic" forms of thematic analysis which can be applied but are not linked to a wider methodology. They are template analysis (King and Brooks, 2016); Braun and Clarke's (2006) version of thematic analysis; matrix analysis (Nadin and Cassell, 2004) and framework analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). The researcher chose Braun and Clarke's style of analysis for its relevance to the project. It allows for identifying themes that capture something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response, while leaving it to the researcher's judgement as to which level of response constitutes a theme. It provides for a rich, thematic description of the entire data set, so the reader gets a sense of predominant themes, rather than one aspect – a useful method in an under-researched area. Themes can be identified on an inductive, or bottom-up, approach, rather than purely in a "theoretical" analysis linked to a single question. The researcher needs to decide whether themes are identified at a "semantic" level within their surface, or explicit, meanings or at a latent level, to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and ideologies that shape, or inform, the semantic content of the data.

Braun and Clarke's style provides a six-step procedure for undertaking analysis. The six phases include familiarisation with data by reading and re-reading; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and producing the report. A characteristic of Braun and Clarke's thematic style of analysis is producing a thematic map to check if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. These steps were followed to provide the eventual thematic template to guide the data analysis.

3.5 Reflexivity and bias

The inherent risk in a qualitative study is “researcher bias”, where the researcher’s involvement in the organization being studied may lead to bias in both the wording of the research question and the formulation of interview questions. (Knight & Cross, 2012). Similarly, this might be compounded by “participant bias” – or the “Hawthorn effect” - with interviewees telling the interviewer what he wants to hear (Coombs & Smith, 2003). To guard against this, the researcher was mindful of reflexivity – to engage with himself at every stage to think about his own thinking (Johnson & Duberley, 2003) to ensure, as far as possible, his stance was not biased. While the research question was robust, asking “how”, rather than “should”, a long-established journalism charity understand and engage with the philanthropic mechanisms of the digital economy, the question allowed for respondents to give opinions on both the benefits and risks. Further, the researcher sought to establish reliability by using a credible and consistent line of inquiry which each interviewee (Knight & Cross, 2012). The clear schedule of questions (Appendix A), which informed the semi-structured interviews, ensured a consistent approach across all the actors involved.

Steps were also taken to limit bias by avoiding over-representation of any particular sample (Tansey, 2007). Within the limited sample of elite interviewees, they were from organizations with different profiles, balanced equally between Big Tech and philanthropic organizations. The two samples from the Thomson Foundation included the entire senior management group other than the researcher, as chief executive and trustees to whom he was accountable. The disparity in status between the researcher and the elite interviewees, and the researcher and TF trustees, limited the likelihood of the Hawthorne effect. Similarly, a feature of the respondents from TF staff was their assertion of the need for “mental independence” as journalists, asserting their ownership of independent thinking.

However, in an inductive study, with a subjectivist epistemology, there may be no absolute truths and the researcher is not testing a specific hypothesis (Knight & Cross, 2012). To this extent, all qualitative research may be subject to an element of bias by the researcher (Fielden, 2003). Ultimately, the researcher reflected on his own practice while being disciplined so as to modify components of his imagination to see what changes that makes in theoretical understanding (Weick, 1999). He strove to avoid the accusation that research accounts in social sciences are inescapably an order of fiction and representative of a world unknowable in an objective sense because of the researcher's perspective and proximity (Linstead, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (2016) counselled that, from an axiological perspective, both the values of the inquirer and research participants are interrogated. As part of the reflexive process, the researcher's stance was one of seeking an answer to the research question but without any view on a pre-ordained outcome.

3.6 Ethical considerations

All research was carried out in line with the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association, 2002), ensuring that the physical, social and psychological well-being of interviewees was not adversely affected by the research. The researcher ensured the research participants had given informed consent with full information about the project, how the data would be used, with the right to anonymity, if they so wished, with no obligation to take part in the project. No covert research was undertaken. As mentioned above, the biggest ethical issue was the potential conflict of interest for the researcher who is a stakeholder in the Thomson Foundation, with a potential interest in the outcome of discussions with organization which were potential funders (Linstead, 1994). He mitigated this by declaring his interest to all parties and not using the interviews unethically to make the case for funding of the Thomson Foundation. No final inducement was offered to any interviewee.

The interviewees were given a written summary of the project at the start of the conversation. An example, attached as Appendix B, was an initial brief to the chief executive of a philanthropic organization from the digital economy. Interviewees were then asked to sign a participant consent form (Appendix C) giving them to right to anonymity, and to withdraw from the project at the any time.

Chapter 4: Data and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

The research interviews were conducted to inform the process of how a long-established charity could engage with the philanthropic funding mechanisms of the digital economy in order to fund transformative change, while appreciating and managing the associated benefits and risks. The interviews were structured round the points raised in the conceptual model constructed from the literature review. The researcher then used Braun and Clarke's method of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transcripts were read repeatedly to become familiar with the data and identify points of interest, organizing them into coherent themes. To conform to the principles of inductivism, the researcher, however, kept an open mind about further themes which emerged from the data. A coding template (Table 11) was constructed under the main themes of Alignment, Disruption and Hybridity. Under each were sub-themes representing the main points to emerge during analysis. A narrative was then prepared for each theme, and sub-themes, illustrating the points raised with supporting text from the transcripts, and then appraised critically.

4.2. Overview of data analysis.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns – or themes – within data, organizing and describing the data set in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this case, the intention was to conform to the view of Boyatzis (1998) that the analysis should go farther and interpret various aspects of the research topic. The methodology of Braun and Clarke (2006) allows flexibility for the researcher to decide what constitutes a theme. Their view is that a theme is not governed by prevalence although, ideally, there will be a number of instances of the theme across the data set. Their definition is that "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response, or meaning, within the data set." Although the researcher's interview questions were based broadly on *a priori* themes in the conceptual model developed from the literature review, an inductive approach was taken to analysing the data: understanding that the themes which emerge from the analysis may not necessarily fit into a pre-existing coding frame. The analysis was carried out at a “semantic” level – based on the words spoken by interviewees - rather than at a “latent” level with the researcher seeking to interpret their underlying meanings. Every effort was made to achieve consistency of approach, using open-ended questions wherever possible so as not to influence the response of interviewees. For example, in terms of understanding the view of TF stakeholders to funding from the digital economy, they were asked first how they would regard funding from a Big Tech company and how they would regard funding from a philanthropic foundation. If they expressed concerns they were asked: “Which factors have influenced your views of Big Tech companies or other organizations from the digital economy?” (See Appendix A). This allowed interviewees to articulate any area of specific concern, such as “data misuse”, without leading them on a specific issue.

However, Braun and Clarke (2006) concede that researchers cannot free themselves of their “theoretical and epistemological commitments” and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum. To that extent, the researcher was alert to emerging themes in the data which might also help inform the research topic. The researcher complied with six phases of thematic analysis recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), as follows:

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarisation with data:	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set and collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if themes work in relation to coded data extracts and
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	Final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples. Final analysis of selected extracts relating back to the research question and literature in a scholarly report.

Table 10: Phases of thematic analysis, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006).

With Phase 1, the researcher transcribed that data and re-read it several times to understand the ideas emerging from the texts. With Phase 2, each interesting data extract was colour-coded with highlighter pen, for ease of recognition, to reflect the three, main *a priori* themes – Alignment and Control (AC), Disruptive Values (DV) and Hybridity Challenges (HC). A text code was then added to each extract to denote existing, or emergent, sub-themes. For example, when BT1 was talking about disruptive values he alluded to new theme of the “ecosystem” as a potentially disruptive method of organising the news media, as was demonstrated in the following data extract

Data Extract (BT1)	Coded for
So, the ecosystem is kind of all the elements that contribute to getting end consumers to journalism and consuming that. So, I think in the old days the ecosystem was very linear: news happens, news person finds out about it...and then they publish and then that goes out on a satellite for TV or delivery and you’re done. Now we’re in a whole melange of stuff.	DV/Ecosystem

Following the advice of Braun & Clarke (2006), the researcher sought patterns of themes across the entire data set. This meant, for example, that prevalence of a specific sub-theme could within or across, answers to a variety of questions about multiple themes – and not necessarily in response to a single question. For example, under the schedule of questions, (Appendix A), TF stakeholder, SM1, was asked about his “market orientation” and what motivated him personally in his role involving innovation. His answer encapsulated a latent theme of “trust” which subsequently contributed to a sub-theme of “core values” as well as well as disruptive values.

Data Extract (SM1)	Coded for
Success for me is making a breakthrough. It’s always finding ways of doing things better that motivates me. What’s very interesting for me is the potential for social impact, helping solve that puzzle of the information gap, that trust gap, that truth gap, that now exists.	DV/Innovation AC/Values/Trust

Having coded the data and collated the codes into potential themes, the next step was Phase 3 – refocusing on the themes. An initial thematic map (see Figure 3 below), as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), was used to identify “candidate” themes. In mapping the themes, it proved clearer to group them initially round the four topics of Alignment (denoting values), Control, Disruptive Values and Hybridity Challenges to look for commonalities or overlap. Several themes emerged across the different lines of questioning.

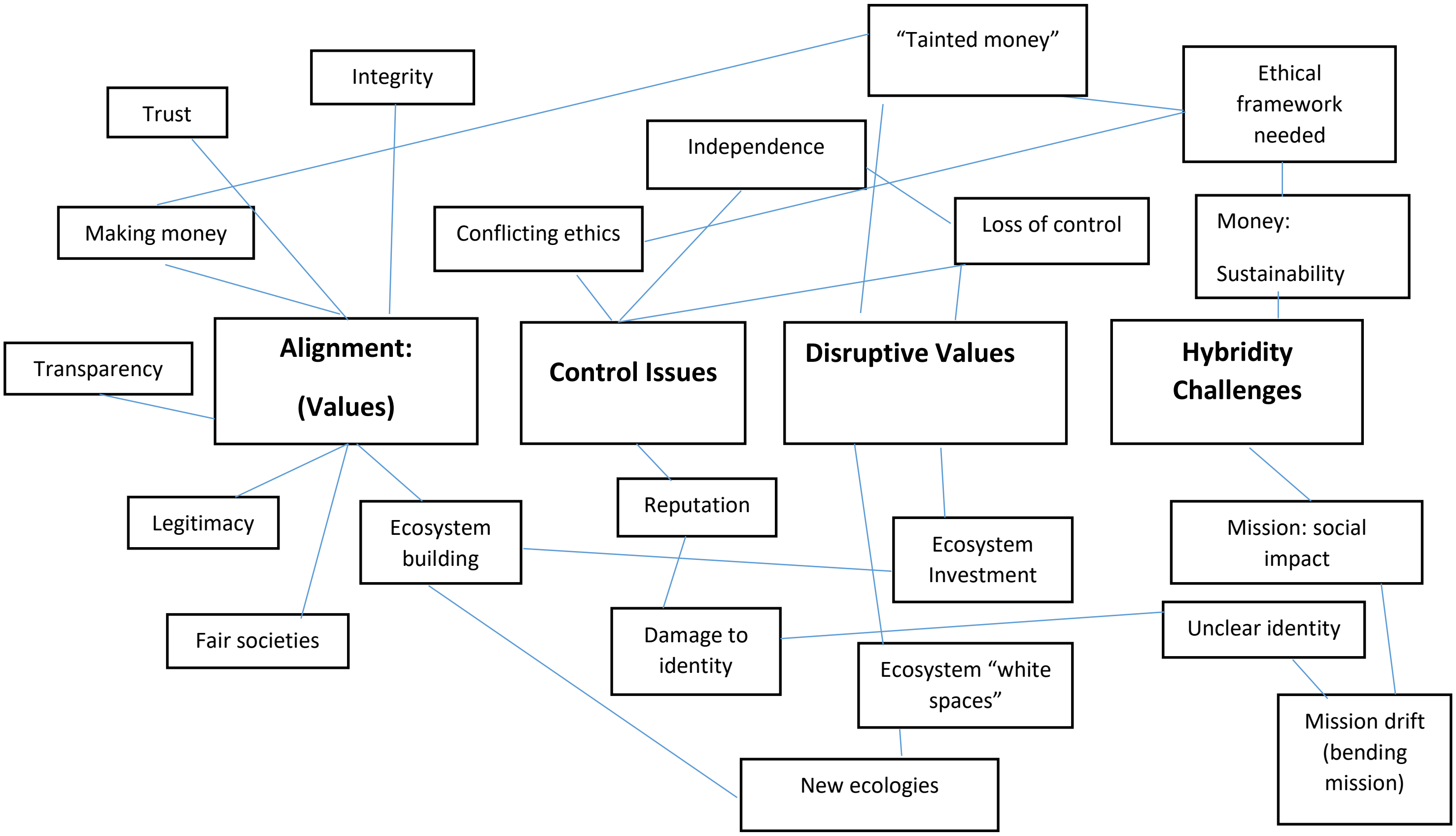


Figure 3: Map of candidate themes emerging from thematic analysis. (Source: Author, 2020).

Initial questioning on alignment and market orientation elicited rich data on the underlying "core values" which motivated each of the respondents in their work with media, providing a key to their underlying moral philosophies. Divergent values, with perceived risks to TF's reputation and independence from an association with the digital economy, emerged during questioning about control, and subsequently hybridity when discussing the balance of mission and money. The ecosystem emerged as an organizing principle for philanthropic funding, or Big Tech support, for media, as well as from TF stakeholders suggesting it as a concept to build the organization's own networks. The value of an ethical framework for non-profit hybrid organization to manage the balance between mission and money was an issue that spanned both Hybridity and Control. In organizing the final thematic map, the researcher was mindful of the advice of Braun and Clarke (2006) that data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum. To that extent, the final map (Figure 4) encapsulates the main emerging themes but also addressed objectives of the study including perspectives on the ethical and operational benefits and risks of new philanthropic models, for example in understanding the ethical and operational risks of funding models used by “the new donors” and the desired level of market orientation – mission versus money.

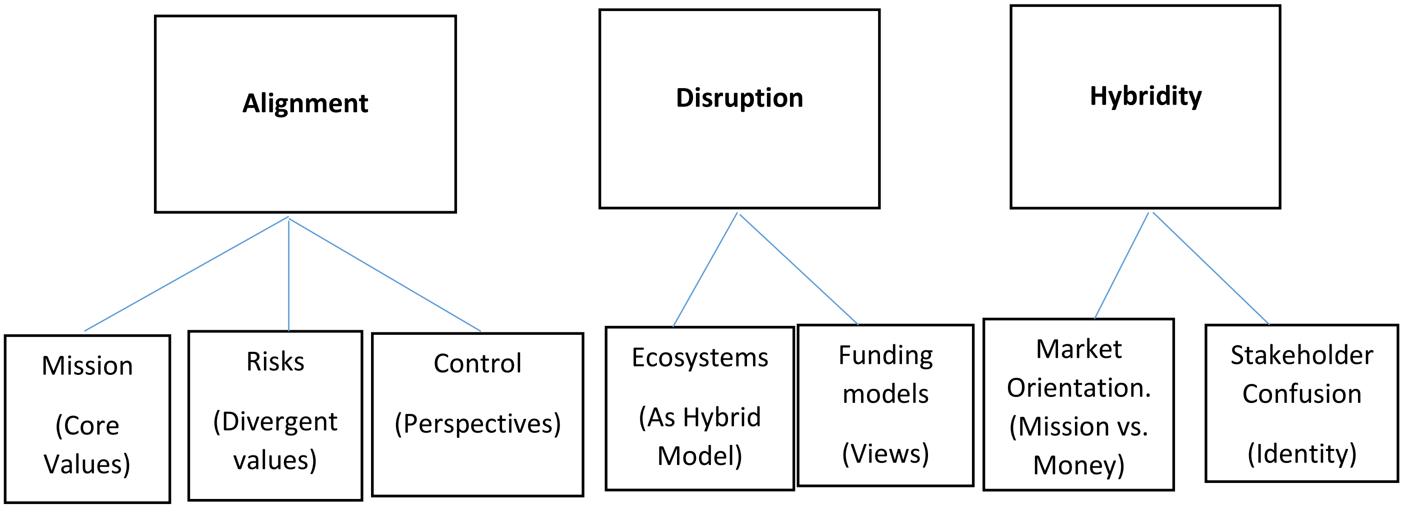


Figure 4: Final thematic map showing the main themes in thematic analysis. (Source: Author, 2020).

The map was then translated into a coding template with more detailed description and used to form the basis of the final report (Phase 6), providing compelling extract examples to inform the research question.

Thematic Analysis Coding Template

Main theme	Sub-themes	Description
Alignment	Mission	Language of core values.
	Risks	Understanding divergence of values.
	Control	Perspectives on control.
Disruption	Ecosystems	A new model for hybridity?
	Funding models	Reaction to the new models of philanthropy.
Hybridity	Market orientation	Desired level of market orientation.
	Stakeholder confusion	Need for clarity of mission and identity.

Table 11: Thematic analysis coding template (Source: Author, 2020).

4.3. Analysis of themes: Alignment

4.3.1. Mission: The language of core values

For a relationship to succeed between a non-profit organization and one from the digital economy, there would need to be alignment of ethical interests (Letts et al., 1997; Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011). An indicator of ethical interests of the different organizations is to look at the values they espouse while describing their work and objectives. From an axiological perspective, this provides an insight into the drivers of their organizations and how they define their relative missions.

In the course of the interviews, the three different stakeholder groups responded in three different ways. Thomson Foundation (TF) seniors managers and trustees described their roles in the language of personal ethics; the two philanthropic organizations from the digital economy (PODES) expressed themselves in the language of sectoral aspiration, and the Big Tech providers of industry grants to news organization responded with business aims. A Thomson Foundation senior manager (SM2) summarised their perception of people working within its sector - media development:

> " People work within media development, by and large, because of an ethical commitment to (media) pluralism, or an ethical commitment to journalists' safety, or an ethical commitment to exposing corrupt practices through support to investigative journalism, and so forth….So, it's very important to continually make sure there is an ethical dimension; there is a mission-led focus."

The language of TF stakeholders rested heavily on ethical qualities: "trust" (SM1 & SM3); "integrity" (T1 & T2); "legitimacy and longevity" (T4); "reputation" (SM3 & T1) and "worthy" and "good quality" (SM1).

The language of the philanthropic organizations from the digital economy was expressed mainly as third-party, organizational and sectoral aims,while both interviewees espoused the common value of "transparency". DE1 talked of supporting press freedom, protection for journalists, training for journalists and "building just and fair societies" and "building an ecosystem for alternative business models". DE2 articulated it in terms of the general aims of the "new philanthropists" like Bill Gates as being more "interventionist and dirigiste or strategic" in what they want to fund, governed by what interests them, rather than aligned to where they made their money.

> "I think the primary thing is at on their best days, the new philanthropists are mainly thinking about outcomes and success rates and the business-like approach to making sure they stay on track and that money is used well and achieves important goals."

The Big Tech companies providing grants for journalists and journalism organizations described their mission in business terms. The search engine (BT1) said news played a huge part in its "values-based reason" for their mission – universal access to information.

> "We only make money when publishers make money. So a thriving and healthy news ecosystem is important to us from a values perspective."

The social media platform (BT2) said their initiative with journalists was to "build a bridge to that group of people that are important to the company".

"We just want to make sure that what we're doing is actually returning more money to the (news) ecosystem than what we spend….returning multiples of what we spend."

As an introduction to the approach of the three groups, language provides an important indicator to how they construct their different realities surrounding their relative missions – and whether they might align. Each group sees itself with a "mission" – but approaches with a range of values ranging from personal ethics, in the case of TF stakeholders, to one where there is a commercial gain, in the case of Big Tech organizations. The PODES sit between them, driven by sectoral advance.

In axiological terms, two sets of values begin to emerge. In the case of Thomson Foundation stakeholders, their values appear rooted in an ethical code akin to the tier of ethical responsibilities in Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility (Carroll, 1991). The language of both Big Tech and PODES revolve round servicing the "ecosystem" of actors in their spheres of activity, akin to Porter and Kramer's concept of shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2011) where there is a blurring of lines between business and social impact. The language shows a potential division between the approaches of a traditional charity and organizations created by the digital economy.

4.3.2. Risks: Understanding divergence of values

4.3.2.1. Thomson Foundation interviewees

To test the views on ethical alignment, stakeholders from the Thomson Foundation were asked whether they would be comfortable with a funder from the digital economy investing in its core costs to help to underwrite a digital transformation. If so, what element of "control" of the Thomson Foundation would they be comfortable with the new funder having, if any?

The paradox of examining ethical alignment between the TF and the digital economy is that while they both apparently are participants in the information and media spheres, one side has a greater mistrust of the other. A perspective from the TF was that in the world of the news media "the most important resource for journalists is…mental independence – the ability to see a story for what it is" (SM1). That freedom of will and expression is a potential source of tension between money and mission which could be greater in an organization where the nature of work is about "balance and objectivity" (T4) and where the "currency" of the business is information – as distinct from a charity seeking funding for physical goods like water and food supplies. The culture of news media inherent in leading actors in the Thomson Foundation could affect their attitude to funders because journalists are "very cynical about the rest of the world" (SM3). The risk was a "traditional media approach" to organizations like Facebook, Google and Twitter, in an "echo chamber where all journalists are talking about the badness and goodness" of those organizations rather than viewing them as just other media companies.

In the same vein, T1 drew comparisons from the news industry to define his desired nature of the relationship between a funder from the digital economy and TF – having influence but not operational control.

"I think you should engage. You should be willing to have an appropriate degree of interaction and, hence, inevitably influence from the funder/partner but not allow them to determine exactly what you do or say. Isn't that quite similar to the role of the (newspaper) proprietor relative to the editor?" (T1)

Of the eight Thomson Foundation stakeholders, none had an absolute objection to engaging with, or accepting money from, the digital economy but identified a series of potential risks. Responses fell into two clusters: a) concerns about the business practices of Big Tech, and b) general fears that too deep an association with the digital economy might change ethical perceptions of TF.

The concerns over Big Tech business practices perceived as risks by TF stakeholders were:

- Regulation avoidance

Entrepreneurs from the digital world may offer funding to an organization to use it as a vehicle to “challenge the regulator or minimise regulation” (T1).

The digital world is a “jungle and free-for-all” without the regulation of the physical world. (SM1)

“People are using the digital architecture and digital techniques to do more and more things that benefit the companies, rather than with certain decency or without checks and balances”. (SM1)

- Data misuse

SM2 was concerned over institutions whose business models were “predicated on commercialisation of private data.”

“I think there are severe questions marks over how that model works both ethically and in terms of how it has literally been monetised in the course of the last five or six years, and that that has subsequently been used in terms of political campaigning and disinformation.”

- Tax avoidance

The use of a publication model by social media platforms was described as “worrisome” by SM2 for not “being suitably taxed and skewing markets accordingly. And exactly who is governing the algorithm?”

- Ethical framework concerns

T3 said their cynicism about Big Tech companies had increased over the previous two years.

“I think the absence of an ethical framework in many of these organizations has become apparent.”

- Product placement

SM3 stressed the need to avoid being compelled to use and promote the software products of a primary funder, for example like Microsoft or Apple.

“I think we, as journalists and trainers, can’t get involved in that way, in sort of like a product placement environment.”

The perception risks included loss of the TF’s identity:

- Identity risk (T4, SM3, SM4)

T4 had a concern about the Thomson Foundation undervaluing its brand, and brand values, in a relationship with a digital entity.

“Thomson Foundation has a fantastic brand. It brings with it a lot of legitimacy, a longevity, a history, a tradition, and a lot of these companies who’ve been around for a relatively short space of time (would) benefit hugely from that brand association. So, I think in lots of cases we have a lot more to offer, can be a lot more demanding and can be a lot more resistant to the requirements of these potential partners.”

SM3 was concerned about an imbalance in a close relationship with a funder from Big Tech, with the TF being “marginalized” and “overpowered”, with the “danger” of becoming, or perceived as, an outlying wing of their company.

SM4 feared that other funders might view the Thomson Foundation as “just a kind of puppet” of a Big Tech organization. SM4 also warned that being too closely aligned with an organization from the digital economy could bring longer-term risk to the mission.

“The problem is there’s a risk that the mission, or the vision, can change on their side and then you get stuck.”

- Reputation risk (SM3/SM4/T3)

The notion of a close partnership with a Big Tech partner raised the spectre of damage to the TF’s reputation with different stakeholders – funders and beneficiaries.

SM3 was concerned that a Big Tech partner might survive a reputational issue like Cambridge Analytica, but Thomson Foundation would not “because so much trust and everything associated with us would not recover from the wrong type of relationship.”

SM4 highlighted concern that other Thomson Foundation stakeholders might see the money from the digital economy as “tainted”. Activities might be eliminated through other funders withdrawing.

T3 felt other funders would be more comfortable if money was coming from a foundation which had made its money from the digital economy, rather than a Big Tech company.

Despite concerns about ethical alignment, all the Thomson Foundation stakeholders were not against accepting funding from the digital economy – but were reluctant to cede any control. The concerns were related primarily to the ethical issues outlined above. The views of the eight Thomson Foundation interviewees are summarised in Table 12 below.

Interviewee	**Positions on funding from organizations in the "digital economy".**
T1	Engage - but be prepared to reject, or lose, funding if ethical positions diverge.
T2	Accept money – but do not allow the funder any direct control in the organization.
T3	Accept project funding but be concerned about the funding of core costs. Funding by foundations from the digital economy, rather than Big Tech companies, allows understanding of their clearly stated mission and governance structure.
T4	Accept funding but be "very cautious" of ceding any control. Require "very strict due diligence" for any digital partner.
SM1	Accept money from Big Tech and the digital economy but do not allow them to have any control of the organization.
SM2	Accept funding and an element of control in the organization if the funder is "one voice among several" with no overall control.
SM3	Accept funding but do not cede organizational control.
SM4	Accept limited funding – but only if comfortable with the source to avoid "tainted" money.

Table 12: Thomson Foundation stakeholders' views on control. (Source: Author, 2020).

The conditional acceptance of funding from the digital economy was driven by the fact that it was strategically important for the TF to understand the digital opportunities for its mission. (T1/SM1).

"If we try to uphold a position of ultimate purity and chastity, it seems to me we would end up failing to have the impact that potentially we could have, not just because of funding, but because it seems to me that the interaction with commercial players in the digital economy should, and could, be positive and constructive in terms of what we do, or how we operate, and of our understanding of the digital world.” (T1).

“I don’t have anything against digital companies in the sense of (being) digital. It’s like saying in the days of horses, I’m not going to deal with the car manufacturers or the oil business. I’m only going to deal with the horse and cart owners. You’re going to be left (behind). Digital is everything.” (SM1)

Counter to the views of T3, an opinion was expressed that a foundation established with money earned in the digital economy, was not necessarily a guarantee of ethical probity. Given the relatively young age of some wealthy tech entrepreneurs, T1 posited that trustees might be conflicted by having an economic interest in the company which was the source of funds or be “conflicted cronies” of the settlor of the trust.

The historical perspective was provided by T4 who questioned at which point technology foundations “crossed the threshold” to acceptance. He drew comparisons with the older, philanthropic entities in the United States – “the Rockefellers, the Fords, the Annenbergs: they’re all ‘robber barons’.”

4.3.2.2. *Digital economy interviewees*

When interviewees from the digital economy were asked about alignment, they were concerned more with strategic alignment, than ethics, reflecting the findings of Schervish et al. (2001), and Moody (2008) that donors in the knowledge economy were “market conscious”, strategic minded, results oriented and “innovation junkies”.

The primary concern of DE1 was that any entity funded by their organization was a “strategic fit with our strategy areas” and considered whether they had “pathways to impact.” Likewise, DE2 said their organization looked for “a strong outcome orientation” with “focused strategy, good budget management, clear objectives and clear pathways.”

Big Tech is looking more for qualities it can change within grant recipients, rather than their proactive characteristics. BT1, the search engine, said it looked for acceptance of culture change “to stimulate innovation” and encourage a culture of research and development in the news industry. BT2, the social media platform, wanted to get news businesses to a “sustainable growth level”, “be a good partner” and to “make sure talented people don’t leave journalism”. BT2 said they wanted to “take the mentality of a tech company and share that with the news industry if they want it, if they need it, and if that's interesting to them."

Perceptions of control, accordingly, differed between funders and potential recipients at the Thomson Foundation but point to the digital economy having motivations beyond exercising direct control. DE1, as a hybrid which funds for-profit organizations and provides grants to non-profits, said:

"It's not our business to control them (grantees)." DE1.

DE1 said it would take a seat on the board if they were investing in a for-profit company, but no longer took seats on non-profits boards after negative feedback.

"If you imagine yourself in a situation where you're with your board and you've got one of your big donors round the table, the tendency is not to show, or be honest, about all the problems because you're fearful about whether that's going to have an impact on our grant renewal." (DE1)

From the digital economy organizations which were interviewed, none sought direct control of the organizations they funded, and only a board position in extreme cases of large-scale funding. However, it was noticeable that the Big Tech companies were seeking indirect control through culture change to bring grantees into their ecosystems, whereas philanthropic organizations from the digital economy were seeking to improve impact in their areas of interest. The stated position on control of grantees by organizations from the digital economy is shown in Table 13, below:

4.3.3. Summary on Alignment issues

Responses have so far demonstrated that, while the three groups interviewed had a common interest in working to enhance the skills of journalists, their own sectoral views are a bar to clear alignment. Each is perceived as having a different motivation for working in the digital knowledge economy, with each constructing a different set of values by which to measure their actions. Although the TF is seeking funding to facilitate the training of journalists digitally, the mindsets of its stakeholders appear to be governed more by the traditional values of journalism – "mental independence" and "balance and objectivity" – rather than the values of the digital economy, "innovation" and "strategic focus". This would appear to have a particular bearing on taking a sceptical stance to ethical issues relating to Big Tech companies and their entrepreneurs who have funded philanthropic organizations – from concerns about data misuse to lack of regulation of Big Tech activities. In addition, the clear concern of Thomson Foundation stakeholders was reputational damage caused by any element of apparent control by a Big Tech organization, even if being offered funding in the guise of philanthropy.

While neither group from the digital economy stated any desire for control of non-profits to which it offered grants, it is clear that Big Tech companies seek to use grant-funding mechanisms to imprint their values and influence on the news industry, "sharing the mentality of the tech company" (BT2). The philanthropic organizations sit in between the "news-conditioned" of TF. While they may offer a clearer statement of mission and governance, any initiative they fund has to fit within their strategic interests.

Interviewee	**Position on control of funding recipients in the news industry.**
DE1 **(Philanthropic Hybrid)**	Non-profits: gives core grants (unrestricted funding) but does not seek a seat on the board. For-profits: provides equity investment and debt and takes a board seat, or board "observer rights".
DE2 **(Foundation)**	Non-profits: normally "arm's length" involvement with grantees. Agrees grantees' detailed "milestones of success" prior to funding, then "leaves them to get on with it." (Only in exceptional cases of big investments will it have a representative on a grantee board.)
BT1 **(Search engine)**	Offers "support" – but not control – to news organizations to which it gives grants. Seeks a culture change to encourage innovation.
BT2 **(Social media platform)**	Seeks no organizational control with news industry grantees but seeks a commitment to culture change.

Table 13: Digital economy stakeholders' views on control. (Source: Author, 2020).

4.4. Analysis of themes: Disruption

4.4.1. Ecosystems: a model for hybridity?

An emergent theme with all four interviewees from the digital economy is that they viewed their grant-giving activities through the prism of their own "ecosystems" – in the tech industry a mechanism for creating competitive advantage by increasing the potential for learning and increasing barriers for imitation (Adner and Kapoor, 2010). However, while their nomenclature is similar, Big Tech companies and the PODES have different ways of defining their ecosystems.

BT1, the search engine, described itself as part of the "news ecosystem" - defined as all the non-linear elements which contributed to getting end users to journalism and consuming it. The organization's stated position was to "care deeply about journalism…because of the crucial role it plays in democratic society, ensuring the spread of knowledge and the free flow of information." Its services, like the search function, meant its future, and that of journalism, were tied together as part of a "rich and sustainable knowledge ecosystem". BT1 said they were trying to stimulate the process of innovation in the news industry and let the outcomes "take care of themselves" with a belief in the tech industry mantra of experiment and iterate.

BT2, the social media platform, defined its accelerator programme – offering business advice and grants to help local news websites - as "ecosystem investment…making sure that these companies are strong, that they continue to exist and that they thrive." BT2's organization hopes that by providing education and training, as well as grants, that it will return multiples of its investment to its ecosystem.

While BT1 and BT2 were part of their companies' commercial operations, they were not taking a financial stake in the organizations receiving grants. However, they were only able to define the process in terms of their ecosystems, and not philanthropy or CSR.

"I think the clean delineations that you have don't really fit any more in the digital world. And, sure, there'll be a part of big companies that are more (like) that traditional kind of CSR, which is a pot of money that it doles out. But I think the approach we have tried to take within news is let's spend money in a way that will increase the sustainability of the news ecosystem." (BT1).

“We are not connected to philanthropy in any way, shape or form…. However, we do work on some programmes that would probably look like that, and we could be housed in another company’s CSR department.” (BT2)

Both BT1 and BT2 rejected that there was a “redemptive” element to the activities of their organizations, given the news industry has accused Big Tech of damaging its revenues. BT 1 said the accusation that their organization had “eaten the news industry” was factually inaccurate based on a misunderstanding of its business model. BT2 said its organization would get blamed anyway if news organizations failed – so it was trying to help make small organizations sustainable, rather than large, existing newspaper organizations.

“We have a foundational thesis that the future is going to look a lot more like these digital start-ups than it is the integrated, large newspaper companies of the 1980s. So…we’re looking for promising people and models; people and businesses in a particular market that we think can really make it, and that we’re trying to put some investment behind them to make sure that they do, or that we help them get where they need to go.” (BT2)

The PODES also view their activities in terms of their ecosystems, looking at them analytically to see where they can be improved by plugging the gaps. While they view it in terms of their strategy, DE1 said they are taking an altruistic look at the media landscape as a whole or supporting a new ecosystem round a particular issue like digital rights and platform regulation, including the digital threat to democracy. Funding might go to a non-profit, or a for-profit, organization, whichever offered the most effective solution, with funding used as a way of “de-risking” emergent sectors and projects.

“We think about where we can add value and where can we provide tactical support; where there are ‘white spaces’, if you like. What we look for as we think about that kind of strategy is what are the pathways to impact, what are the ‘white spaces’ within those areas and who’s appropriate to fill them.” (DE1)

DE2 said that the scale of funding generated from the tech industry offered a way of transforming existing non-profit ecosystems.

“What certainly has happened over the last 25 years, or so, is that an enormous influx of new money primarily from the tech industry….is taking the existing ecosystem in various fields of non-profit activity and offering the possibility of scale and scope. That is quite different from the sort of worthy, but poky, little NGO chuntering along in a doom-destined can, living from one project to another, to say, ‘Okay, if you guys are people that we really ought to be backing, we’re going to do it in a meaningful way.” (DE2)

For an established organization to attract funding from the digital economy, it would need to have a “very good track record that works, smart people, a brand and a ‘footprint’”, coupled with a “bold idea” which appealed to a particular philanthropist. (DE2)

4.4.1.1. Summary on Ecosystems

The introduction of the term “ecosystem” provides a new perspective on philanthropy in the 21st century. At best, it delivers an opportunity for an organization like TF to clearly analyse the ecosystem of a specific philanthropic funder to identify the gaps and opportunities, rather than making a general approach. Finding the funder’s “white space” is a clear way of understanding their needs on a non-profit, or even a commercial, basis. As defined by DE1, viewing a cause through an ecosystem, transcends the boundaries of non-profit or for-profit to find the most effective solution to a problem.

In terms of Big Tech companies, the use of the term “ecosystem” implies a hybrid system where there is no clear delineation between for-profit and non-profit activities provided activities serve the best interests of the focal organization. In the context of this inquiry, it may also be a convenient way of Big Tech seeking to redeem itself with sections of the news industry, in a long tradition of philanthropic spending by organizations, like alcohol and tobacco companies, perceived as doing societal harm (Brammer and Millington, 2005). Or it could be a way of defending and increasing its network and market position (Adner and Kapoor, 2010). Whatever the true motivation, it points to a more fluid system of financial “hand-outs” by companies in the digital age, whether defined as “ecosystem investment”, CSR or philanthropy. A more hybrid approach to such funding, classed as grants but from commercial organizations, would appear to diverge from Carroll’s 20th century pyramid of CSR (Carroll, 1991). Given the responses of BT1 and BT2, it is not clear whether their payments of grants to encourage innovation in the news industry, falls within the economic, ethical, or philanthropic stratum of the pyramid.

4.4.2. *Funding models*

The eight TF stakeholders were interviewed before those from the digital economy, so were not asked about ecosystems. When discussing funding models, the eight were questioned on the four "disruptive" paradigms identified in the literature review: venture philanthropy, impact investing, shared value and data philanthropy. The eight had limited knowledge of the models but were given clear definitions and descriptions of each. Where there was existing understanding, there was scepticism about viability, and issues about control.

4.4.2.1. *Venture philanthropy (VP)*

T1, with wide experience of philanthropic funding and private venture capital, summed up scepticism about venture philanthropy and impact investing by questioning their thinking that they could transform non-profit organization through implanting commercial business practices.

"Amongst some of the business community, there's an arrogance that, in a few months, (by) imposition of a few very simple commercial disciplines the place will be transformed. On several counts, I don't think that's the case, and so that's why I'm cautious about how far philanthropist funders get involved…. I think non-profits are, in a large number of cases, really quite well run." (T1)

The TF stakeholders either were negative, with concerns over alignment – including levels of control, and alignment of mission and ethics – or positive but with qualifications, as follows:

Only two interviewees expressed a qualified, positive view. T2 was in favour of VP if it led to "self-sustaining (financial) independence". SM2 described VP as "a good thing" if it was "geared toward sustainable revenue return" – a common challenge in media development. Another five identified risks centred on levels of control, alignment of missions and concerns about how the money was managed, as outlined in Table 14, below.

Interviewee	Risks identified with venture philanthropy
	Levels of control
T1	Risks of the funder “backseat driving”.
T3	Concerns over funder’s level of “power” and possible sanctions if the investee did not meet its targets.
SM1	A case of “weighing the benefits, versus the (level of) independence” for the investee.
	Alignment - Mission
T1	Risk of the funder “not seeing the world the same way”.
T3	VP needs to fit with the investee’s mission.
SM4	VP aims need to be aligned with those of the investee.
	Alignment – Money
SM4	A VP funder focused on social impact “will be very attached to the mission rather than the money itself.”
T4	A need to match the “right kind of money” with organizations which are “investor ready” and able to “credibly demonstrate social impact”.

Table 14: Risks identified with venture philanthropy. (Source: Author, 2020).

4.4.2.2. Impact Investing

Two overarching issues governed the responses to questioning about impact investing: doubts about whether a financial return could be achieved in pursuit of social impact, weighed against how effectively the impact of the investment could be measured.

T1 argued that most “operating charities” - those which, like the Thomson Foundation, charge for services - have “very limited ability to generate surplus revenues, particularly if it’s cramping what they could otherwise do with that revenue to achieve impact.” This pointed to grant funding achieving greater impact, as no money had to be returned.

“Clearly if there is to be a financial return, that financial return has to come from commercial, or semi-commercial revenues, and not all organizations can generate those without unacceptable diversion from the underlying mission.”

T2 said a “guarantee of the return is out of the question”. Even returning money at non-commercial rates amounted, in charitable terms, to “giving to you with one hand and taking back with the other - eventually”.

The senior managers of TF shared the reservations about achieving a financial return but felt that online training, with the capacity to measure performance and outcomes digitally, provided an opportunity. SM3 voiced concerns that impact investors might need more tangible outcomes than TF could provide, although e-Learning could be used to measure the success of training programmes. SM2 argued that impact investing was predicated primarily on the green economy and sanitation projects within international development, where infrastructural outcomes were much easier to assess. Raising journalism standards through E-learning, within the context of media development, “gives you a clear, measurable status” of past achievement in terms of training but could not predict a direct correlation with future outcomes – for example, whether “the next presidential election vote would be held more cleanly, with a greater and more informed audience.”

SM1 was not against impact investing in principle but said monetising, for example, a journalism qualification delivered by e-Learning was a challenging proposition among the foundation’s stakeholders in developing countries.

“But if you’re able to prove the concept, you could see that an impact investor might find something like that attractive because you need the investment to achieve scale. But if you do achieve scale, you’re going to have the revenue which will enable it to become somewhat sustainable. It could even become profitable, depending on how you do it.”

4.4.2.3. Shared value

The common denominator with shared value and data philanthropy was that both were new concepts to all the eight interviewees from the Thomson Foundation. Consequently, their responses were limited, despite the interviewer citing practical examples.

Both SM1 and SM4 believed there was an opportunity for the Thomson Foundation to access markets by seeking to embed its e-Learning courses in the network of a large mobile or Big Tech organization, providing new channels of distribution. SM4 said a proviso would be that the missions of the organizations sharing value would need to be aligned, but with a contract which was easy to break to avoid any “reputation risk” in the case of a conflict of ethics. The latter presupposed the potential transgressor would be the large, digital organization.

T4, however, reversed the logic to suggest the Thomson Foundation could create its own “ecology of trainers, tutors, mentors and teachers…so that we’re building our own ecology of expertise, but from countries that we’re focused on. So, there’s a kind of “fair trade”, shared value aspect to that…We’re actually building up and mentoring a whole new generation of journalists to do our work in their countries.” This was the only reference to the ecosystem paradigm employed by the organizations from the digital economy – but appeared to be creating value for others rather than TF.

SM2 drew comparisons with the way the oil industry spent money upskilling middle management at a national level in countries like Angola, Azerbaijan and Algeria to provide long-term operational stability for their industry. However, for a Big Tech company to invest in such a way in journalism skills would require it be in countries with guaranteed rule of law, a “solid” media environment and a population with core media literacy skills.

T2 and T3 were both in favour of the model “provided our essential mission…and our standards are not compromised” (T2) and was helping to “deliver a CSR element for an organization”. (T3)

4.4.2.4. Data Philanthropy

The interviews with the Thomson Foundation stakeholders came in the wake of the controversy of Cambridge Analytica’s misuse of personal data of Facebook users. T3 would not object to the receipt of data philanthropy so long as the ethical framework was clear, and the data were anonymised. Likewise, T2 did not have a problem with a gift of data, provided there were “no strings” attached.

Scepticism came, however from SM1 and SM4 who felt the TF’s limited size was a barrier to benefitting from data philanthropy. SM4 felt that unless there was a change in the foundation’s current target population of mostly professional, or student, journalists the organization was not big enough to benefit from the gift of “big data”. SM1 said the right data could be transformative – but timing would be important.

“Right now, we wouldn’t be sure which data we would want and what we would do with it. We know we could do a lot, but we’d have to explore that”. (SM1)

With the data would come additional risks and responsibility.

"If we get this data, obviously we take responsibility with it. What can you add (up) from that data and what can you do with that information, because the same information could help somebody change the outcome of an election for evil purposes?" (SM1)

4.4.2.5. Summary on funding models

Concerns over organizational control and alignment of mission again dominated the reactions of TF interviewees, when assessing the newer funding paradigms. This was pronounced in the case of venture philanthropy and impact investing – weighing the benefits versus perceived loss of independence (SM1). The views on impact investing reflected the findings by Glanzel and Scheuerle (2016), cited in the literature review, over whether financial returns can be achieved when addressing social problems (T1 and T2), and the difficulty of measuring social returns (SM2 and SM3). However, SM1, SM2 and SM3 had guarded optimism that providing a digital service like e-Learning could provide immediate data on journalists' performance on training programmes – although would be unable to measure the longer-term impact on the media landscape (SM2). Any impact investment would have to address T1's concern that providing a financial return, even at sub-market rates, might cause an "unacceptable diversion from the underlying mission" with grants upheld as a more efficient route to impact.

The lesser-known paradigms of "shared value" and "data philanthropy" attracted caution in case they did not fit with the foundation's ethics (T2, T3, SM1 & SM4). The lack of any known financial obligation with either model appeared to lead interviewees to be more creative in thinking about implementation, seeing an opportunity to create shared value with others in different parts of the value chain – either higher up amid Big Tech companies (SM1 and SM4) or lower among journalism trainers in developing countries(T4). SM1 acknowledged that access to the right gifts of data could be transformative but would need new, specialist expertise to help understand how it might be used. Overall, the responses to the new models by Thomson Foundation stakeholders demonstrated an attitude of risk aversion to financial, control and ethical issues, putting them at odds with the "innovation junkies" of funders who derive wealth from the tech sector (Moody, 2008) and who seek to build capacity in non-profit organizations rather than just giving grants for projects (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1997).

4.5. Analysis of themes: Hybridity

4.5.1. Level of market orientation

The definition of a hybrid organization is one which seeks to balance the competing logics of money and mission, or "financial sustainability and social purpose" (Battilana and Dorado, 2010). It implies working within a commercial framework (Haigh and Hoffman, 2012) to raise funds to achieve the social mission. Understanding the relative values that TF stakeholders put on each logic would help to assess the level of market orientation with which they were comfortable. Accordingly, the views on each were sought from the TF stakeholders.

4.5.1.1. Money

Three themes emerged about how stakeholders perceived the role of money. Overall, all the senior managers of the organization were positive about the role of money believing it was necessary to achieve sustainability, although one senior manager (SM1) was wary of being perceived as extracting profit from individual beneficiaries by charging fees for learning programmes. The four trustees were split, with two believing making money was a positive within a defined ethical framework. The other two, whose professional backgrounds were in business and finance, were cautious about the organization becoming commercial. The three views of the eight stakeholders are summarised in Table 15, below.

Interviewee	**Thomson Foundation stakeholders' view of Money**	
SM1, SM2, SM3, SM4	Positive (sustainability)	Money is necessary to achieve sustainability and self-determination for the organization.
T3, T4	Positive (ethical framework)	Making money is fine within a defined ethical framework to support the mission.
T1, T2, SM1	Caution (commerciality)	Avoid becoming overtly/covertly commercial.

Table 15: Thomson Foundation stakeholders' views of money. (Source: Author, 2020).

i) Positive (Sustainability)

One senior manager - SM4 - believed the idea of creating a “profit”, could bring greater self-determination of mission for a charity, rather than following the agendas of third-party project funders.

“The ideal will be actually to generate enough profit so that you could even start choosing the type of activities you want to do…Historically, most of the projects we are working on are led by the funder. So, we are dependent on the funder rather than (doing) what we really want to do. If we were able to generate enough resources to start doing what we want…. the money will help the mission rather than the other way around.”

A similar view was expressed by SM3 who said that making money enabled the organization to continue with its mission, as distinct from a wholly commercial organization which handed money to shareholders.

SM1 said there was a fine line between non-profit and profit and between “mission and sustainability”, denoting sustainability as synonymous with money. He said that “there shouldn’t be tension between sustainability and mission”, provided the mission is done the right way in order to make the foundation the “go to” organization in its field.

SM2 said a principal point of differentiation for the organization in the “marketplace” was its “commerciality” and its relationship to “real world of media businesses.” All of which required “a tight management” of finances rather than just accepting that “the mission is singular and the only driving motivation behind doing something.” It was important for the organization to consider projects based on their financial sustainability.

SM4 pointed to an “issue of culture” where people in the charitable sector thought money and mission were “two different worlds.” Putting too much resource into the cause (mission) to the exclusion of (enough) core resources to be sustainable as an organization was a “recipe for disaster.”

“Some people may feel that trying to make money - in this charitable sector - seems to be like the devil’s work; it's something you are not supposed to do…...It's actually good to make money as long as it's not distributed to shareholders and is redistributed to the good cause.” (SM4)

ii) Positive (Ethical Framework)

T3 and T4 saw no problem with making money, provided it was achieved within an ethical framework. T3 said so long as the way you are making money is "aligned to the values of the organization and supports the mission I don't think there's a problem at all."

T4 saw the only tension as being clear about the parameters about where the monies came from and what the source, or the sources, of the revenue should be. "In other words, what pools we're playing in to raise those monies. And as long as there are no ethical boundaries crossed in terms of our mission, then I think there's no reason for there to be a conflict."

T3, however, identified the potential issue of managing the perceptions of previous funders of the organization who might query why what they had regarded as "a penniless charity" was now "making money". "I think that's probably diminishing (as a view) because I think that funders actually are embracing the entrepreneurial spirit within the organizations they support."

iii) Caution (Commerciality)

T1 warned that taking on activity that could be done by a wholly commercial organization could help provide a financial surplus to deliver "higher mission" activity but was a "slippery slope and you end up being just a covert commercial organization. But that seems to me to be quite a long way away, but I still think the tug is in that direction."

T2 felt the foundation was at risk of mission drift in pursuit of money. "I have seen that around the (board) table, that we lose sight of why we're here, because we can see opportunities for raising money. I would not compromise on the holistic mission just to get money. I wouldn't enter into activities – where it would be a real stretch to say they had a charitable purpose - just to raise money. That might be a very purist view, so we may have to compromise as years go by."

Although equating money with sustainability, SM1 warned against money causing mission drift by encouraging "bending your mission to fit the (financial) opportunity, rather than saying 'no, that's not within my mission.'"

Money should not be an end in itself, but in the context of what it can do for the mission. "If you just focus on the revenue, if you just focus on winning projects, then you're talking (only) about sales skills…I'd feel uncomfortable in turning into a commercial focus." He warned against "mining the journalists, not trying to extract profit from them."

4.5.1.2. Mission

By comparison with money, the role of mission was expressed through the language of values, from "trust" and "reputation" to "ethical commitment", "effectiveness" and "social impact". Six of the TF stakeholders (SM1, SM2, SM3, SM4, T1 & T2) directly stressed the desire for the Mission to have social impact. All eight felt that balancing money and mission was achievable, but several outlined risks involved in doing so and how they needed to be managed.

i) Social impact

The desire for social impact by stakeholders in the Thomson Foundation was best summed up by SM2's observation that people chose to work in media development because of an "ethical commitment" to the aims of the sector. "So very few people will enter media development from a position that says, 'Well, what I want to do is create a sustainable business.' That is generally not a position that most people are going to adopt." (SM2)

SM1 had a vision of success as "making a breakthrough. First of all, it's always finding ways of doing things better that motivates me, but it's finding the better way, a measurable way, of doing something well but also really what's very interesting for me is the potential social impact."

SM3 said the structure of the organization was not a motivation for most clients or beneficiaries.

"When people say come to the Thomson Foundation… they're not necessarily coming to us because we are a hybrid organization. They're coming to us because they trust us, because they know what we've done before, they can then look at our institutional history, and perhaps they know that we won't be charging the earth for it…. They come to us, as I say, I think because of our trust and reputation."

"…. If we were money-driven completely we would turn down an awful lot of things…. we will still not go on something that we will end up losing (money) on, but we won't judge it on money. What you do is you judge it on…. whether it is in line with our mission, whether we think we will have some impact or effect to do it. So, it's not just driven by the financial gain that we will get as a result of doing it."

T1 perceived TF as being at “the high impact, high mission-related area. We’re not offering a financial return to any of our partners. We’re offering to deliver the impact that they want and which we jointly define with them…. They will judge us on the effectiveness with which we’ve achieved the impact.”

T2 saw the Mission as paramount. “We’re not doing what we’re doing just to stay in existence. We’re in existence to do some good.”

4.5.1.3. Managing risks to balance mission and money

All eight stakeholders from the TF felt that successfully balancing money and mission, was achievable but identified a series of risks which needed to be managed in the process. These ranged from “revenue drift” to “mission drift”, incorrect resources and staffing and client (stakeholder) confusion over core competencies, as shown in Table 16 below.

Interviewee	**Risks identified in balancing Mission and Money**	
SM2	Revenue drift	Over dominance of mission can cause disregard for financial discipline.
SM2, SM3	Stakeholder confusion	External stakeholders need to understand why the organization has to make money and to be seen as financially competent and value for money.
SM4	Balanced culture	The organization needs the right culture and resources to manage financial sustainability.
T2	Mission drift	Avoid opportunities purely to make money if they are not in line with mission.

Table 16: Risks identified by Thomson Foundation stakeholders in balancing mission and money. (Source: Author, 2020).

SM2 warned against “revenue drift”, viewing tension between mission and money as “quite a healthy thing” to “stress test” grant-funded projects to see if they are financially viable for the foundation, weighed against the impact they deliver and avoiding the over-dominance of mission.

"When mission dominates the view (can be) that is a bottomless pit into which finance is then thrown, efforts are then thrown, and little rational assessment can often be found."

T2**,** however, felt that the organization was always exposed to mission drift. "I have seen that around the (board) table, that we lose sight of why we're here, because we can see opportunities for raising money."

SM4 believed balance required "the right culture and the right resources to do so." The culture needs to understand behaving "partly in a commercial way" to generate sufficient financial margins "to balance the books…If you don't have that culture of trying to at least to generate enough margin you are never going to be able to balance (the books) and to reach that goal."

Two senior managers felt that perceptions of external stakeholders – clients and beneficiaries - needed to be managed, so they understood how the organization provided value for money as well as being financially competent.

SM3: "If you're running a good operation and a good business, then there's no reason why just because you have a mission, and you're basically perceived as a charity, that you should not be able to make money at it or are providing any less of a service because you are a charity. I think there's a lot of perception that perhaps NGOs of our type may not be so professional, and offering such a high standard, because of the type of organization we are, and I don't think there's any reason why that should be (the case)."

SM2 felt it was important for the organization to "practise what it preaches…and run an organization within a business-like manner to cover its costs" to demonstrate credibility with the media businesses it advised.

4.5.1.4. Summary on the level of market orientation

The senior managers from the Thomson Foundation showed an acceptance of money as a way to achieve sustainability (SM1, SM2, SM3 and SM4) but with only SM4 advocating "profit" creation to bring greater self-determination for the charity, and so providing more funds to implement the mission. All the interviewees saw money as a facilitator for the mission rather than an end in itself. Two of the trustees felt making money was fine if the way it was made was "aligned to the values of the organization" (T3) and that there were "no ethical boundaries crossed in terms of our mission" (T4). T1, T2 and SM1 all warned against mission drift – by compromising the mission just to get money (T2), taking on activity which could be done by a wholly commercial organization (T1) or "bending your mission to fit the (financial) opportunity" (SM1). By comparison, six stakeholders directly stressed the desire for the organization to fulfil its mission by achieving social impact, in a sector where creating a "sustainable business" was not usually a primary motivation for staff (SM2), and "trust" and "reputation" a greater draw for clients and beneficiaries than business model (SM3). Decisions on which projects to undertake were made more on social impact than financial gain (SM3). The responses would indicate that tolerance to market orientation at the TF is low with money regarded as a servant to mission, amid a concern of not undertaking commercial activity which might contravene the organization's ethical values or distract from a mission seen as the primary purpose.

4.5.2. Stakeholder Confusion

Thomson Foundation appeared to conform to the theory that a hybrid organization, with dual functions, can face confusion over its identity. As shown in the literature review, Rawhouser et al. (2015) and Thomasson (2009) underscored how ambiguity of identity, borne of stakeholder confusion, can be a factor in mission drift. Jay (2013) says those who establish hybrid organizations have to navigate paradox to achieve an effective organization and be prepared to evolve a new identity. Thomson Foundation stakeholders felt there was a lack of clarify over the organization's identity and mission but, ironically, mixed views as whether that was detrimental to activity. A summary of the potential impact of stakeholder confusion is set out in Table 17 below.

Interviewee	Issues caused by stakeholder confusion at Thomson Foundation
SM1	Mission too broad – lessens appeal to philanthropic funders
SM3	Unclear identity can deter clients
SM4	Leads to unclear approach from board of trustees
T2	Clearer identity needed to define scope and rationale of activities
T4	Clear identity needed to inform priorities

Table 17: Issues resulting from stakeholder confusion at Thomson Foundation. (Source: Author, 2020).

An inability to project a clear identity and mission was seen as an impediment to attracting philanthropic funding. SM1 felt the foundation's mission was not clear "because it's so broad." There was a risk that external stakeholders did not see the foundation as having a mission, but more as a "service firm" or "social enterprise: this semi-professional firm that does training" which was unlikely to appeal to a philanthropic funder.

T3 felt having a clearer identity was needed to define the organization's scope of activities and suspected that "everyone uses a different way of describing what it is that we do."

"So, from a marketing perspective, I would really like us to really hone that mission so there is a greater clarity about what we do, who we do it to and where we are doing it. And, actually, why we do it…. I think that as an organization we need to be much clearer about the stuff that we don't do, as much as the stuff we do." (T3)

T4 stressed the importance of achieving a consensus on the nature of the organizational identity and communicating it "explicitly…. that it's actually kind of a very central part of how one defines oneself within the organization but also externally to stakeholders…."

"I think it's imperative… that there is a consensus internally and among the stakeholders exactly what that identity is. Because then I think it informs people's understanding of lots of decisions and choices and priorities in a much more nuanced way than it would otherwise." (T4).

SM4 believed that each audience saw the foundation's message a different way. There was no clear view from "board meeting to board meeting" as to whether money or mission was more important.

“Sometimes the money is more important and sometimes the mission is more important. So that is difficult. When we have a meeting with the trustees, we end up more with the questions rather than statements from them.” (SM4)

SM3 felt there was a risk that the organization might not be considered “professional” with the more “commercial” clients because it was viewed as an NGO. Different clients and beneficiaries “perceive us in the way they want to perceive us” depending on which service is being delivered. However, SM3 believed the range of different activities was necessary for the organization’s survival.

“As long as we're not being used (for), or allied to, corruption…and it's still within the broad confines of the mission statement, which is very broad, then I don't think it matters at all.” (SM3).

T2’s perception was that there was not a common view of the organization by stakeholders – defined as staff, trustees and beneficiaries.

“If there is a tension the commercial view prevails**.** And I've sensed that - not strongly - but sensed that on a number of occasions that when some lofty minded trustee says, "Well, I'm not quite sure why we're doing that" you feel a stiffening in some of the ranks (by senior managers) on either side of you.”

However, T2 felt that, ultimately, it was “too idealistic to expect human beings, which is what we all are at the end of it all, to have the same view.”

4.5.2.1. Summary on stakeholder confusion.

An emergent theme during the interviews with TF stakeholders was a lack of shared understanding of the organization’s mission and identity. It was clear that SM1, SM3, SM4 and T3 all felt the mission was either too broad, or that different clients and beneficiaries perceived the organization in different ways, depending on which service was being provided. Ultimately, this was seen as leading to inefficiency, lacking a clear vision to guide priorities(T4) and which activities were undertaken and, crucially, which were not (T3). The point was made by SM1 that the lack of a focused mission would serve as a deterrent to philanthropic funders. In terms of this inquiry, this would set TF at a disadvantage with funders from the philanthropic segment of the digital economy who are potentially seeking non-profit organizations to fill a particular “white space” in their ecosystem (DE1), or with a clear brand or “bold idea” (DE2).

Chapter 5: Discussion, conclusions, limitations and implications.

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter reviews the evidence of the study undertaken to answer the research question: namely, how a long-established journalism charity can understand, and engage with, the philanthropic mechanisms of the digital economy in to order to fund transformative change, while appreciating and managing the associated benefits and risks. The aim was to enable the subject of the study, the Thomson Foundation (TF), to understand, how – and whether - to engage with new philanthropic funders who have emerged from the digital economy since the 1990s, particularly those who could enable TF to increase its core capacity and add business insights. The subject was examined through the lens of hybrid organizations which have to balance competing logics – in this case mission and money (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). An integrative literature review was undertaken to inform the design of a conceptual model which provided the basis for a qualitative, inductive study. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with eight stakeholders from TF and four "elite" interviewees from a mix of Big Tech companies and philanthropic organizations whose wealth was derived from Big Tech.

Findings from the literature review and the inductive study are drawn together to understand how the research question has been answered, with the aim and objectives satisfactorily achieved. To address this, a discussion will be framed by the three themes which guided the thematic analysis in Chapter 4 – alignment, disruption and hybridity – while exploring emergent themes from each area.

The conclusions drawn from the discussion will address the study's aims and objectives. The limitations of the research will then be examined before outlining the implications for theory and practice.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1. Alignment: Values and Ethics.

Relevant literature has shown how an important test for a non-profit organization partnering with a market-oriented funder is an alignment of ethical and strategic interests, coupled with trust and transparency (Letts et al., 1997; Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011). In assessing alignment between

TF, and the organizations from Big Tech and the wider digital economy, an analysis was undertaken during the literature review of the qualities which funders sought in investees. The main qualities were “innovative” (Gordon, 2014; Moody, 2008), “entrepreneurial” (Brest & Born, 2013), “strategic-minded” (Schervish et al., 2001), and “analytical” (Pfitzer et al., 2013; Moody, 2008). Indeed, the interviewees from the digital economy in this study broadly mirrored those requirements, supporting organizations where they can “stimulate innovation” (BT1); spread the “mentality of Big Tech” (BT2) or which have “pathways to impact”, a “strategic fit with our strategy areas” (DE1) and a “strong outcome orientation” and “clear objectives” (DE2). The interviews provided a chance to understand the relative values of the different groups – TF stakeholders, Big Tech companies and the philanthropic organizations from the digital economy (PODES). Each group had a subjectivist ontological approach, with variants on the notion of a mission to help journalists. Each group’s mission was socially constructed in line with its organization’s interests: TF stakeholders in the language of ethical qualities to enhance practice through improved skills; the PODES in terms of sectoral advance of issues like press freedom, and Big Tech in terms of business objectives, primarily making money. This identified an early mismatch between the three groups. By TF stakeholders defining themselves through the organization’s values rather than objectives, it signalled their primary concern as their ethical values – “trust” (SM1, SM3), “integrity” (T1, T2), “legitimacy” (T4) and “reputation” (SM3, T1) – rather than the “strong outcome orientation” of the digital economy.

As well as ethical values, TF stakeholders identified their attitudes as being defined by the habitualization and externalization of the culture of the news media (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:71), where “mental independence” (SM1), “balance and objectivity” (T4) and even (journalistic) cynicism about others’ motives (T3) constructed their thinking, along with a willingness to be part of the “echo chamber” of other journalists’ views on companies like Facebook, Google and Twitter. During the research, the misuse of Facebook user data by Cambridge Analytica (Rosenberg et al., 2018) heightened concerns over whether data held by Big Tech companies can be used by governments and malicious actors to purposely distribute misleading information (Woolley & Howard, 2019). As TF trustee, T4, pointed out, alignment is more complicated when the “currency” of both investor and investee is information – each with its own perspective on the knowledge economy.

Of the three different cultures discussed, each is apparently underpinned by a different moral philosophy. The culture of TF appears deontological (Kant, 2019) - striving dutifully to fulfil its 60-year-old remit to help journalists in developing countries, but with pretensions to utilitarianism: seeking funding from the digital economy to help maximize its benefit to society (Mill & Bentham, 1987). The PODES are utilitarian with strategies to maximize impact. The Big Tech companies take on a public stance of utilitarianism but their actions in cultivating ecosystems, with their companies as focal points, would point to their being rational egoists – with a selfish desire to maximize their own commercial positions (Rand, 1964).

Therefore, TF, as a non-profit hybrid organization working directly for the news industry and for international development agencies, does not appear to align comfortably with the Big Tech organizations but has the possibility to align with the PODES. TF is closer to the latter regarding its moral stance but would need to adapt its culture to one derived from the tech sector. In reality, there is little scope for alignment with Big Tech organizations, caused not just by the risks attached to their business practices, but with TF clearly being mission driven and Big Tech money driven – with each holding different philosophical positions, as shown in Figure 5, below.

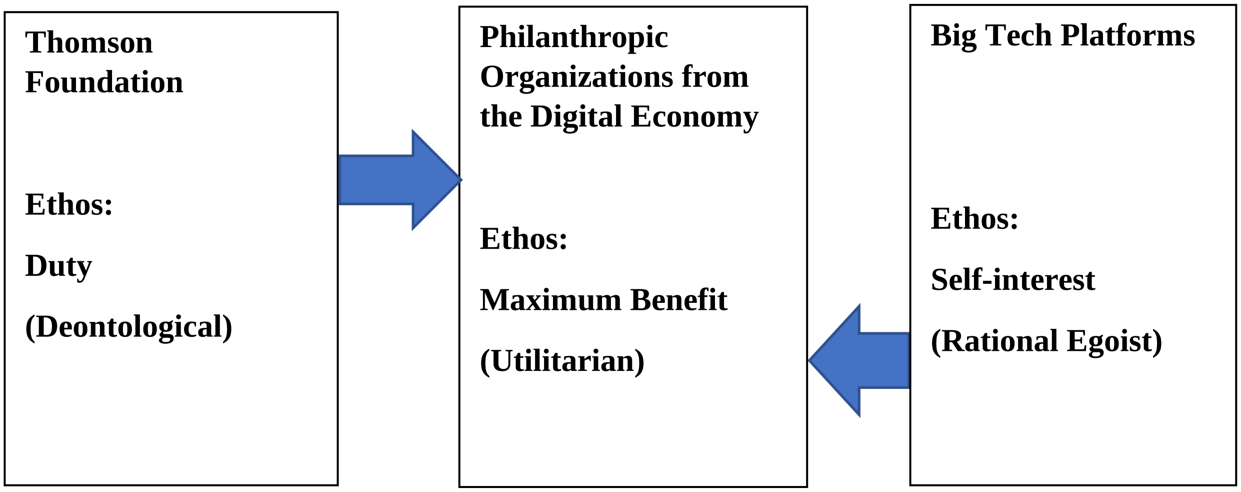


Figure 5: Moral philosophies of Thomson Foundation, digital economy philanthropists and Big Tech. (Source: Author,2020).

An emergent theme goes to TF's roots in the culture of news media and ethical journalism, where the need for "mental independence", or independent thought, provides an added area of caution in aligning too closely with a funder from the knowledge economy where there is the potential for each to have divergent views on the ethics of information. As Waisbord (2018) points out, dominant digital platforms like Facebook and Twitter, allow for a speed, scale and massive proliferation and consumption of false information, unvetted by “conventional” or “mainstream” news organizations. He contends that the subsequent “communication chaos”, limits the role of what he describes as “legacy journalism” to remain the arbiter and “social connector” of what is truth even though he acknowledged that “fake news” exists primarily outside mainstream media. Rather than limiting TF’s relevance, the organization’s deontological stance, “mental independence” and commitment to “balance and objectivity” points toward it taking on a greater mission to support independent media in efforts to limit the “communication chaos”. The fact TF works primarily in low and middle-income countries, gives its work greater validity, according to the reasoning of Dragomir (2018). He asserts that, outside the Western world, independent journalism needs to be supported as a “public good” – avoiding “capture” by governments offering the media financial support as a trade-off for favourable coverage.

5.2.2. Alignment: Governance

Thomson Foundation’s cultural heritage also pervades the issue of governance. A founding principle of TF, established in Britain’s post-colonial era, was to train journalists in the “new countries and developing world” (Thomson, 1975) as a way of improving governance by holding governments and businesses to account. This mission statement provided an indication of the value TF had placed historically on ethical organizational behaviour. The emphasis on governance also presaged caution by current TF stakeholders about becoming too enmeshed with funding from the digital economy. The literature calls into question the transparency of philanthropic funding from Big Tech. For example, Google.org, the “for-profit philanthropy” wing of the search engine company, with the freedom to use market mechanisms to further its aims, does not face the same legal requirement for accountability and transparency as non-profits over commercial or political activities (Lim, 2007; Rana, 2008). Similarly, the eBay founder, Pierre Omidyar, switched philanthropic funding to a limited liability company, enabling investment in businesses with a social purpose (Omidyar, 2011) as did the Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan (Goldman, 2016).

None of the TF stakeholders had an absolute objection to engaging with, or accepting money from, the digital economy but concerns over governance issues limited the appetite for too close a connection. In the words of trustee T1, organizations from the digital economy could be allowed influence but not operational control or the ability "to determine exactly what you do or say". At the time of research, the TF trustee, T3, said cynicism about Big Tech companies had increased over the previous two years, with their having an apparent "absence of an ethical framework". Concerns voiced by other TF stakeholders about the digital economy generally included regulation avoidance (T1, SM1); data misuse and tax avoidance (SM2), leading to overall concerns that an association could pose a reputational risk to TF (SM3, SM4, T3), affecting the foundation's relationships with other funders and beneficiaries.

TF's perception of the PODES - philanthropic organizations with wealth generated by the digital economy - was more positive, but not without caution. The PODES were perceived as more transparent in their dealings as they have clearly stated missions and governance structures (T3). However, T1 raised the concern that, with many entrepreneurs becoming benefactors at a relatively early age, trustees of their philanthropic foundations may be "conflicted cronies" who had an interest in the companies which were the source of funds. While the PODES sought a strategic fit with investees, they arguably offered a more straightforward relationship. Both DE1 and DE2 said their organizations did not seek any direct control – other than to agree project milestones at the planning stage. The Big Tech organizations said they wanted no financial control of grantees, but their conditions were at direct odds with TF's underlying need for "mental independence", given that funding would need a formal commitment to innovation (BT1) or a desire to embrace the mindset of Big Tech (BT2).

Overall, the TF stakeholders all felt there was a need to engage with the digital economy and accept their funding but within a strict governance framework to include:

- **Control**: not allowing the funder any direct control of the recipient organization – TF (T2, SM1, SM3) or any overall control (SM2).
- **Due diligence**: before accepting funds from a digital partner, there should be strict due diligence to understand the source of funding (T4) and accept limited funding only when comfortable with the source of funds, to avoid "tainted" money (SM4).
- **Right to withdraw:** be prepared to reject, or lose, funding if ethical positions diverge (T1).

TF stakeholders' concerns about governance also stem from the imbalance of scale between their organization and a large entity from the digital economy. This was summarised by TF senior manager, SM3, who said a Big Tech partner might survive a reputational issue like Cambridge

Analytica, but TF would not recover from the wrong type of relationship. There was a concern, however, that TF needed to find a framework to deal with digital companies or get left behind (SM1). The trustee, T1, indicated that TF needed to explore constructive relationships with commercial players in the digital economy to understand the digital world. If TF sought to "uphold a position of ultimate purity and chastity" it would end up failing to have impact through lack of understanding of the digital sphere.

5.2.3. Disruption: The new funding models.

The literature review highlighted how, over the last 25 years, the business practices of Silicon Valley have led to new, more market-oriented models of philanthropy – termed in this study as "disruptive philanthropy". It identified the models as venture philanthropy, impact investing, shared value and data philanthropy, or "data for good". The first two paradigms involve funding an increase in core capacity of non-profits to improve impact, rather than just providing funds for specific projects. The reaction of TF stakeholders to these two paradigms reflected extant literature. On venture philanthropy – using the venture capital practices of Silicon Valley to fund and support non-profits – TF stakeholders expressed concerns over levels of control by the funder (T1, T3 and SM1), and whether priorities on mission and money would be aligned (T1, T3, T4 and SM4). Onishi (2019) found that venture philanthropy was hard to implement in organizations balancing institutional logics, with internal forces from "social identity" consistently suppressing commercial logic. Venture philanthropy stands a better chance of success in non-profit organizations with a collective identity which don't perceive themselves as having market-oriented capabilities and skills (Di Lorenzo & Scarlata, 2019). The views on impact investing reflected the findings by Glanzel and Scheuerle (2016), over whether financial returns can be achieved when addressing social problems (T1 and T2), and the difficulty of measuring social returns (SM2 and SM3). However, SM1, SM2 and SM3 had guarded optimism that providing a digital service like e-Learning could provide immediate data on journalists' performance on training programmes – although the service would not measure the longer-term impact on the media landscape (SM2). Any impact investment would have to address T1's concern that providing a financial return, even at sub-market rates, might cause an "unacceptable diversion from the underlying mission" (T1), with grants upheld as a more efficient route to impact.

The paradigms of “shared value” and “data philanthropy” attracted caution in case they did not fit with the foundation’s ethics (T2, T3, SM1 & SM4). The lack of any known financial obligation with either model appeared to lead TF interviewees to be more creative in thinking about implementation, seeing an opportunity to create shared value with others in different parts of the value chain – either higher up amid Big Tech companies (SM1 and SM4) or lower, among journalism trainers in developing countries(T4). SM1 acknowledged that access to the right gifts of data could be transformative but would need new, specialist expertise to help understand how they might be used. Overall, the responses to the new models by Thomson Foundation stakeholders demonstrated an attitude of risk aversion to financial, control and ethical issues, putting them at odds with the “innovation junkies” of funders who derive wealth from the tech sector (Moody, 2008) and who seek to build capacity in non-profit organizations rather than just giving grants for projects (Letts et al., 1997).

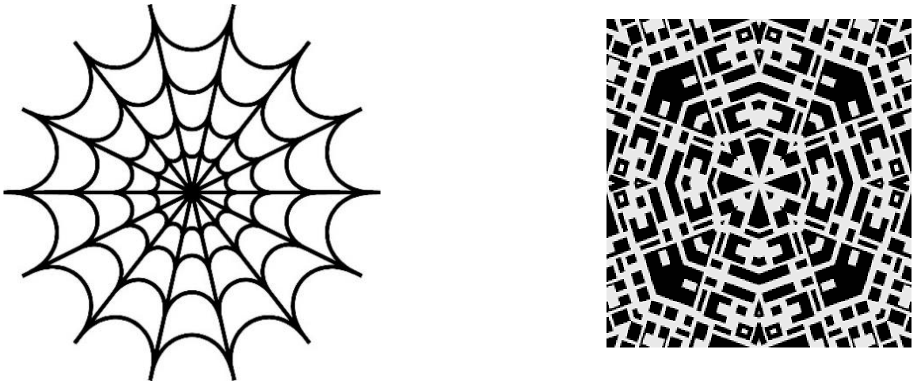
We have seen how the PODES use a “spectrum” of models to achieve impact. In the case of DE2 this included non-profit grants, for-profit investment, and their own operational intervention – helping with “seeding, and helping to create, new organizations, where you see there is ‘white space’ – some of which would qualify it as a venture philanthropy organization. DE2’s organization perceived it, however, as “de-risking sectors” – for example, providing risk capital for independent media in countries where it would not be appropriate to seek government support. DE1 said that an enormous influx of money from the tech industry over the last 25 years had seen a reconsideration by big foundations of their traditional reluctance to fund core budgets of non-profits they support. He expressed reservations, however, about using impact investing to seek a return from existing NGOs, think tanks and training entities, preferring to “put together something new which has also been very much a hallmark of the last 20 or 30 years of philanthropic capital.” To achieve their goals, all four organizations from Big Tech and the PODES evaluated their funding decisions through the lens of their own ecosystems – an emergent theme elaborated below.

5.2.4. Disruption: Ecosystems.

A theme to emerge from the “elite” interviewees, whose organizations have substantial funds at their disposal, was that they all defined their funding decisions as being dictated by the requirements of their own “ecosystems”. Fittingly for the digital economy, they perceived the ecosystem as a “non-linear" structure to bring together all the elements needed to achieve their objectives – whether commercial, non-profit or a hybrid combination of the two. While the "ecosystem" had not previously been identified as a paradigm in corporate philanthropy and CSR, it is seen as the cornerstone in the next stage of societal development - Society 5.0 (Fukuda, 2020) - bringing together science, technology and innovation to improve quality of life. Its significance to Big Tech, and the philanthropic organizations from the digital economy (PODES), is that it puts them as the focal point of an "open innovation" network in their sphere of influence, gaining from knowledge flows across organizational boundaries (Chesbrough, 2017). In turn, being at the centre of innovation enables them to attain, and retain, market leadership in their field (Adner & Kapoor, 2010), providing "economies of scope" from the knowledge they have acquired (Cremer et al., 2019). The definition of "ecosystem investment" by the social media network – making sure emerging online news companies are strong and continue to exist and thrive (BT2) – denotes a reflexive process with the social media platform seeking to maintain market dominance.

The PODES employ the paradigm of the ecosystem in a different way - making the focal point the issue they are seeking to address rather than their own organizations. The construct provides the PODES with a level of analysis to determine what, or whom, needs funding to plug any "white space" in the ecosystem (DE1) to make a programme more impactful, with flexible consideration of the most beneficial way of implementing it – by using a non-profit, or for-profit, organization or a hybrid combination. In addition, the approach allows a more strategic consideration of tackling issues through scale and scope (DE2).

In reality, two ecosystem models emerged from the digital economy: the one from the PODES where there is direct philanthropic intent from the focal organizations which stressed the value of transparency in their dealings. The other was from commerical organizations – a search engine and a social media platform – which provide funding for innovation, or "free" accelerator programmes, for organizations in the news industry. The social media platform (BT2) acknowledged that its initiative was "not connected to philanthropy in any way, shape or form…. However, we do work on some programmes that would probably look like that, and we could be housed in another company's CSR department." The logic of the ecosystem approach provides a clear explanation for the "price" of entry for a news organization signing up to an accelerator, or grant, programme. It is either a commitment to innovation (BT1) or adopting "the mentality of the tech company" (BT2), thereby being drawn into the ecosystem. By their own admissions, the fact that both Big Tech organizations are providing funding, or free professional support, gives them the veneer of CSR or corporate philanthropy in this instance, which might lead a non-profit organization to believe that the funding was philanthropic. In this context, Big Tech's aims are about their commercial ecosystems, rather than the social benefits envisaged in "context-focused (corporate) philanthropy" defined by Porter and Kramer (2002) or the "altruistic capitalism", with no strings attached, as defined by Fioravante (2010). This is distinct from the PODES who are open to funding for-profit and non-profit organizations, depending on the most effective route to social impact. Accordingly, this study seeks to define the two approaches. The approach by Big Tech is referrred to as the "spider's web" ecosystem, where the focal company is seeking to draw in innovators and activity to protect its network and increase adoption of its practices. The approach by PODES is desribed as the "kaleidescope" ecosystem – assembling the right components to fill "white spaces" to facilitate optimum social impact with the most effective solution – from non-profits, for-profits or a combination. Their main characteristics are summarised in Figure 4, below.



Spider's web ecosystem

Kaleidoscope ecosystem

Aims

- Strengthening commercial ecosystem
- Innovation
- Advancing tech culture
- Focal company-centric
- Commercial

Aims

- Solving social issues
- Seeking new solutions to fill "white space".
- Issue-centric
- Social impact
- Non-profit/for-profit

Figure 6: Funding ecosystems in the digital economy. (Source: Author, 2020).

In terms of the literature reviewed about the disruptive paradigms, the ecosystem model would appear nearest to “shared value” (Porter & Kramer, 2011). The authors’ belief was that companies can create shared value opportunities by reconceiving products and markets, redefining productivity in the value chain and enabling local cluster development. The Big Tech companies might argue that all three “shared value” objectives fit with their activities. The difference with the ecosystem model is that it is less open to the charge levelled at “shared value” by Dembek et al. (2016) that it is purely a management “buzzword” as it is a model in operation and clearly articulated by both Big Tech companies and the PODES. In the case of the Big Tech companies, however, it is arguably redefining the news industry value chain but not sharing a lot of value, if you accept the criticisms levelled by the shrinking newspaper industy (Big Tech says publishers keep majority of ad revenue, but experience suggests otherwise, 2020) that Big Tech companies have cannibalised their revenues. A useful by-product for Big Tech is that their activity would appear to have a beneficial redemptive function, to defend their corporate reputations and help to “buy” media influence to counter attempts for greater government regulation (Brammer & Millington, 2005).

Before this study was undertaken, the motivations by Big Tech companies for the funding of journalism innovation and accelerator programmes were not immediately clear – whether they were philanthropic in nature or purely commercial. BT 1 said traditional labels like CSR and philanthropy no longer fit in the digital world, while BT2 said the accelerator programme might look like CSR but that the programme was only intended for commercial organizations. It calls into question where Big Tech’s activity would sit in Carroll’s Pyramind of Corporate Social Responsibility? If it is not CSR, it must be economic activity. While it doutbless conforms to law, the New Media Alliance would argue it is not ethical in the way it is taking a large proportion of tradional revenues from the news industry.

It would seem Big Tech would see no merit investing in a non-profit organization like TF unless it would yield a provable return on “ecosystem investment”. TF stakeholders would appear to have concerns about an investment from Big Tech, voicing concerns about tax avoidance, data misuse and lack of an ethical framework. Big Tech’s “spider’s web” model may not be fully understood by TF, as its ethics owe more to the self-serving nature of rational egoism (Rand, 1964), with any help for journalism just a useful by-product. By comparison, the “kaleidescope” ecosystem model, as defined by the PODES, offers an opportunity to TF on several levels. First, TF might find a way in to their ecosystems by identifying relevant “white space” it could fill. Through understanding the ecosystem principle, there is an insight into the contemporary knowledge, language and mindset of the funders, enabling more effective communication and relationship building. It also has the potential to spur new thinking by TF about its own structure. In considering the new funding models, T4 suggested a new opportunity for TF in reversing the logic of the ecosystem so TF could create its own "ecology of trainers, tutors, mentors and teachers" in different countries, creating value for others, and putting itself at the centre of its own ecosystem.

5.2.5. Hybridity: Market Orientation

In deciding with which part of the digital economy TF might engage to fund transformative change, it was important to understand the relative attitudes of TF stakeholders to the "competing logics" of mission and money. In others words, what is the desired level of market-orientation and where do stakeholders sit collectively on the continuum facing hybrid organizations which ranges from purely social to purely economic (Austin et al., 2006)? An observation by senior manager, SM2, attempted to sum up the motivations of stakeholders by saying that people chose to work in media development because of an "ethical commitment" to the sector, rather than trying to build a sustainable business. During the interviews, TF stakeholders saw money as a facilitator of the mission rather than an end in itself. The four senior managers were positive about making money as a route to sustainability and self-determination for the organization. The trustees, who are ultimate guardians of the organization's risk and reputation, were more cautious. Two trustees, T3 and T4, felt that making money was acceptable within a defined ethical framework to support the mission. The two trustees with high-level commercial experience, T1 and T2, expressed concerns about "mission drift". T1 warned of a "slippery slope" of becoming a "covert commercial organization" by taking on activity which could be achieved by a wholly commercial organization, while T2 advocated not to "compromise on the holistic mission just to get money".

As with alignment, TF stakeholders expressed the role of the mission primarily through the language of values – from "trust" and "reputation" to "ethical commitment", "effectiveness" and "social impact". T1 saw TF as being "high impact, high mission-related" – with delivery measured in terms of the impact desired by funders, rather than a financial return. SM3 articulated that the financial model of TF was not a motivation for most clients or beneficiaries. They were not engaging TF because it was a hybrid organization but because of "trust and reputation" and the knowledge that "we won't be charging the earth".

The responses indicated that the tolerance to market orientation at TF is low with money regarded as a servant to the primary purpose of mission – in other words, nearer the social, than economic, end of the continuum described by Austin et al. (2006). Indeed there were concerns about an over-emphasis on money in case TF became covertly commercial. This was further evidence that while TF is a hybrid organization, it would not align well with Big Tech companies. Any engagement with the digital economy would be better achieved with the PODES which had an similar emphasis on social impact. However, in order for TF to position itself correctly, stakeholders raised concerns about a known challenge for hybrid organizations – managing multiple organizational identities (Onishi, 2019) caused by competing institutional logics or belief systems (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Billis, 2010) which can lead to stakeholder confusion (Rawhouser et al., 2015; Thomasson, 2009).

5.2.6 Hybridity: Stakeholder Confusion

"Stakeholder confusion" occurs where stakeholders have different views of the organization's underlying philosophy (Rawhouser et al., 2015). In the case of TF, the hybrid form manifests itself in implementing granted-funded training programmes for governmental donors, while seeking to balance the books by undertaking more commercially-focused consultancy and training directly for media organizations. This dichotomy between serving mission and money can give rise to confusion about the focus of a hybrid organization, leaving stakeholders unable to define the essence of the organization.

In this study, the stakeholders being interviewed were the four senior executives, other than the chief executive who is the researcher, and four trustees who between them had wide experience of running organizations in philanthropy, government and international development as well as the commercial sector. All, in turn, had an understanding of other stakeholders, including beneficiaries, government funders, commercial clients and other staff.

Collectively the interviewees felt there was a lack of clarity about the mission. The concern was summed up by T3 who suspected that "everyone uses a different way of describing what it is that we do." It was as important for TF to understand what it did not do as much as what it did do, with T4 positing a clear identity was central to how an organization defined itself, set priorities and communicated to external stakeholders. One of the senior managers, SM3, acknowledged that clients had different perceptions of the organization, depending on which service was being delivered, but felt a wide range of activities was necessary for TF's financial survival. The breadth of mission, however, was seen as a negative by SM1, who felt an inability to project a clear identity and mission was an impediment to attracting philanthropic funding, with TF appearing more as a "service" company rather than being mission-driven.

At the crux of the issue are two factors which could inhibit TF's quest to find a funder for a digital transformation. First, all stakeholders in an organization need to have the same purpose and make active contributions if value is to be created (Freeman et al., 2010). Inability for stakeholders near the core of the organization to agree on an identity would make it hard to convey one to stakeholders further from the centre. Second, DE2 from a philanthropic foundation, emphasised that securing funding from the digital economy needed an organization to have a "brand" and a "bold idea" – difficult to articulate if the organizational identity is in doubt.

To define its identity, TF would need to clearly understand not only its mission, but the role of money and tolerance to market-orientation within the organizational culture. The research showed that desire for social impact predominated over financial gain – but there would ideally need to be a shared understanding of the balance between the two so there were agreed criteria for accepting grant-funded projects or commercial business. A greater understanding of the risks and difficulties of the different hybrid forms, as demonstrated by Santos et al. (2015), could allow executives and staff to understand the dynamics of their business and adjust strategy accordingly. In reality, TF has demonstrated a low-level of market orientation during the research interviews, with no objection to making money within an ethical framework but viewing it solely as a facilitator for mission, not as an end in itself. This has implications for TF in attracting funding from a philanthropic organization with a high level of market orientation. Onishi (2019) has outlined previously-undocumented risks that if mission-driven hybrids accept more commercially-oriented support – for example, venture philanthropy – the "internal forces" of social identity consistently suppress external pressures from commercial logic. Having a uniform view of mission and the role of money would therefore help to avoid "stakeholder confusion".

Applying the test of Freeman et al. (2010:206) could help understand the ethical values of TF and clarify the mission: namely, what is the purpose of the organization and to whom are managers responsible? Certainly, if the answer to the latter is "the beneficiaries" then that would confirm the mission-driven stance. Of course, if not seeking a funder from the digital economy, the option exists to build a sustainable, competitive advantage based on its stated ethical qualities of “trust”, “integrity” and “quality” (Jones, Harrison, & Felps, 2018).

To summarise, questioning TF managers and trustees on their attitude to hybridity, a concern emerged that the organization needed a clearer identity in order to define priorities and communicate clearly to external stakeholders. This was of particular relevance if looking for funding from the digital economy which required a clear brand and a bold message from an investee or grantee. TF stakeholders demonstrated a low level of market orientation which, learning the lessons of Onishi (2019), would mean caution in aligning with an organization from a commercial culture. It does, however, leave open the door to seeking philanthropic funding from the PODES, provided TF could demonstrate a clear identity and clear mission.

5.3. Conclusions

This study has answered the research question by providing the researcher with a series of options of how a long-established journalism charity can understand, and engage with, the philanthropic funding mechanisms of the digital economy in order to fund transformative change, while appreciating and managing the associated benefits and risks.

To secure funding from the digital economy, the Thomson Foundation needs to focus efforts on connecting with philanthropic organizations which have a low market orientation. To do this, the foundation is advised to clarify its identity and re-focus on its mission-related work – a position where its stakeholders appear most comfortable. To attract a funder will require a clear brand and bold position (DE2) which would bring the additional benefit of clarifying priorities to remove “stakeholder confusion” (Rawhouser et al., 2015; Thomasson, 2009). The risk of connecting with a funder with high market orientation is that the initiative fails through suppression by socially-oriented staff (Onishi, 2019). However, the discovery of the ecosystem as a new “disruptive” organizing principle in the philanthropic sector offers an opportunity to the Thomson Foundation. TF could succeed in philanthropic support from the PODES if it had a clear mission and identity and analysed the sector to find appropriate “white space” to attract funding (DE1). As identified by one of its trustees (T4), greater knowledge of the ecosystem organizing model also provides a chance for TF to reinvent itself at the centre of a non-profit ecosystem, widening its influence across organizational and geographical boundaries by establishing a knowledge network of connected training organizations in the developing countries which it serves.

In meeting the main aim and objectives of thesis, this study has provided a clear guide on the issues which hybrid non-profit organizations will face if seeking philanthropic funding from the digital economy. It brought together, and evaluated, literature on the main “disruptive” philanthropic funding models (Manning et al., 2020) which have emerged from the digital economy in the last quarter of a century – and the factors which attract its so-called “new donors” (Wagner, 2002). It provided a conceptual model to inform hybrid non-profits how to understand the main challenges in engaging with funding from the digital economy, including the need to balance the competing logics of mission and money (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Billis, 2010).

The conceptual model ensures a full examination of alignment of ethics and values between funder and “investee” – and an examination of the axiological and moral philosophical positions of all parties. This is an issue particularly pertinent in relation to organizations involved in journalism, like the Thomson Foundation. The study showed that “habitualization and externalization” of the culture of the news media (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:71), demands “mental independence” (SM1) and “balance and objectivity” (T4) – potentially at odds with the values and moral philosophies of Big Tech funders.

The moral motivation of funders from the digital economy has been demonstrated as paramount to Thomson Foundation amid the “communication chaos” of the digital media age. TF built a reputation initially funding its own programmes as a corporate foundation – able to set its own mission and moral code. While the founder, Roy Thomson, may not have had genuinely philanthropic intent, under his ownership and funding, the Thomson Foundation was able to define its own ethics and had sole responsibility for its reputation. Accepting money from the digital economy would be to link TF’s reputation in all, or part, to the fortunes of the funder in a sector beset with increasing ethical scrutiny over its practices. To the question of whether the motivations of the funder matters, this study shows that it does, if it means receiving significant funds from a third party whose ethics are beyond the recipient’s influence and control – particularly when the digital age allows for so much scrutiny of corporate information.

5.4. Limitations and further research

The researcher had broad access to Thomson Foundation stakeholders, complemented by rare access to elite interviews at a senior level in organizations from the digital economy which provide relevant funding for the news industry. However, the lengthy nature of negotiations to achieve access to the elite interviewees meant it was a small, purposive sample, with the unit of analysis a single organization. An issue for further study would be to interview a greater number of "elite interviewees" from a larger cross-section of organizations in the digital economy to test the generalisability and trustworthiness of the findings. This would test further the relevance of the "ecosystem model" of assessing funding, or whether Big Tech companies and philanthropic organizations from the digital economy with no direct interest in the news media have a more traditional approach to corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Another area for exploration is also interviewing philanthropic foundations who are not directly from the digital economy but which have adopted practices like venture philanthropy and impact investing to increase the literature on the understanding of these paradigms, particularly in relation to funding news media ventures, to examine the ethical issues which have arisen, particulalry if the concept of "mental independence" is universal among recipient organizations.

The study has also shown that an emerging concept in the field of philanthropy is the use of "the ecosystem" – an organizational structure which offers an opportunity for hybrid activity, blending non-profit and commercial initiatives. Further analysis of philanthropic ecosystems would give a greater understanding of how they work in detail. In addition, much of the focus of most research into the disruptive philantropy models has so far been in the United States, which fostered the development Big Tech. Further research into disruptive philanthropic models is recommended, where practicable, in middle and low-income countries.

5.5.Implications for theory

The ecosystem as an organizing principle provides another perspective on the changing nature of corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Its "non-linear" nature is a further challenge to Carroll's more-linear Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility. In the course of this research, Big Tech firms have indicated that traditional models of philanthropy and CSR are no long perceived as relevant in the digital world where Google.org and Omidyar Network have demonstrated they favour a principle of "whatever works" – whether through a philanthropic or commercial route. In addition, there are facets of the ecosystem, as practised by commercial Big Tech companies, which mirror the concept of shared value. The ecosystem potentially contributes a more tangible version of shared value, but indicates that organizations from Big Tech have introduced another disruptive concept which blurs further the lines between for-profit and non-profit, and business and social impact. A question to be resolved is what proportion of value is achieved by the focal company in the "spider's web" ecosystem compared with other participant organizations. Similarly, there is a need to understand further structures within the "kaleidescope" ecosystem and the benefits and risk for non-profits which participate in this hybrid model.

5.6.Implications for practice

This study provides a roadmap for non-profit organizations seeking to engage with the digital economy to secure funding – in particular, hybrid organizations trying to balance money and mission. The conceptual model highlights the issues hybrid organizations will need to assess if seeking funding from the digital economy, and draws the distinction between dealing with the philanthropic organizations which have derived their funds from Big Tech, as opposed to dealing directly with the commercial Big Tech companies. The elucidation of the ecosystem concept will help practitioners on several levels. It gives an insight into the culture and organizing principles favoured by the tech sector but also provides an organizing principle for non-profit organizations to implement themselves. Finally, it enables organizations to understand the motivations behind "free" support services or grants which may be offered by Big Tech companies and the commitments they might expect in return – helping recipients to understand what is commercial and what is philanthropic.

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Appendix A: Question grid for semi-structured interviews.

Alignment & Control

Thomson Foundation stakeholders	**Digital Economy organizations**
1. **Market orientation**	1. **Market orientation**
a) Which qualities do you think define the Thomson Foundation?	a) Which qualities do you seek in media organizations you support?
b) Which qualities do you think motivate the staff of the Thomson Foundation?	b) Which qualities do you look for in the people running the organizations you support?
c) Which qualities do you feel would be necessary to attract funding from the digital economy? (If commercial, entrepreneurial, do you feel TF has those qualities?)	c) Which factors generally attract funders from the digital economy?
d) What would be your view of TF receiving funding from the digital economy to fund the increase of core capacity in order to increase TF's activity?	d) Do you fund the increasing of core capacity? If so, why and how?
2. **Ethics**	2. **Ethics**
a) How would you regard funding from a Big Tech company?	a) How would you describe the nature of the funding you provide for media organizations (e.g. as philanthropy, corporate philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, commercial, other)?
b) How would you regard funding from a philanthropic foundation set up by an entrepreneur from the digital economy (for example, the Gates Foundation or Chan Zuckerberg Foundation)?	b) How do you feel your support benefits the recipients? (How do you assess impact?)
c) [If you have concerns, what is the nature of those concerns?]	c) Which factors influence your organization to support media?
d) Which factors have influenced your views of Big Tech companies or other organizations from the digital economy.	d) How has scrutiny of the ethics of the digital economy in recent years affected philanthropic giving/support for media, if at all?

3. **Control**	3. **Control**
a) How would you regard ceding any level of control of the Thomson Foundation to a funder in return for financial support?	a) Do you seek any level of control over organizations you fund?
b) If you ceded an element of control, under what circumstances?	b) If so, which form(s) does it take and why?
c) What difference would you see – if any – in ceding any control to a Big Tech company as opposed to a philanthropic organization which has received its funding from Big Tech?	c) Are the recipients/beneficiaries expected to make any ongoing commitment to your organization in return for support? If so, which form(s) would it take?
d) What do see as the risks of aligning closely with an organization from the digital economy, and what do you see as the benefits?	d) How important to you programme is the interests of recipients/beneficiaries being aligned with those of your organization? What do you see as the risks of misalignment?

APPENDIX A continued.

Disruptive values

Thomson Foundation stakeholders	**Digital Economy organizations**
What are your views on the following:	What are your views on the following:
a) Venture philanthropy – encouraging foundations to use venture capital practices to strengthen core capacity? b) Impact investing – investment strategies with financial returns and express social and environmental aims? c) Shared value: policies and operating practices which enhance the competitiveness of a company/organization while advancing economic and social conditions in the communities in which they operate? d) Data philanthropy: private sector holders of "Big Data" making it available for public good? e) Are there other models/paradigms which you feel are, or might be, effective? f) If so, what do you see as the benefits/possible negatives?	a) Venture philanthropy – encouraging foundations to use venture capital practices to strengthen core capacity? b) Impact investing – investment strategies with financial returns and express social and environmental aims? c) Shared value: policies and operating practices which enhance the competitiveness of a company/organization while advancing economic and social conditions in the communities in which they operate? d) Data philanthropy: private sector holders of "Big Data" making it available for public good? e) Do you use/support any of the above models? f) Are there other models/paradigms which you feel are effective? g) If so, what do you see as the benefits/possible negatives?

APPENDIX A continued.

Hybridity Challenges

Thomson Foundation stakeholders	**Digital Economy organizations**
a) Would you describe TF’s support to media as mission led or money led? (On a continuum between mission and money where would you place TF?) b) How is it possible to balance the demands of mission and money in a non-profit organization (like TF)? c) What kinds of issues do you think are created by trying to balance the two “logics” of mission and money? (Have you sense a drift more toward mission or money?) d) How do you feel a hybrid model – balancing mission and money – affects organizational identity, if at all?	a) Would you describe your support to media as mission led or money led? b) If both are possibilities, how do you decide which pathway to follow? c) How clear do you feel the distinction is between whether the funding models you support appear philanthropic or commercial? (What is the understanding of beneficiaries/recipients?) d) Which factors/features do you look for in the identity of the media organizations that you fund?

Appendix B: Sample introductory briefing note (digital economy interviewee).

Thomson Foundation: Doctoral Research Project.

The study began as an attempt to find an updated operating model for the Thomson Foundation – an independent media development organization which has evolved from a corporate foundation. It is a UK-registered charity and operates as a non-profit organization working to improve news media in developing countries and emerging economies to enable them to improve governance by holding governments and businesses to account.

A key aspect of the research is looking at whether, and how, the foundation can engage with the digital economy as a potential source of support for a digital transformation; for example, helping to widen its reach through e-Learning and developing its online training community.

The literature review phase of the project has indicated that over the last 25 years, the Tech sector has changed the nature of philanthropy, implanting business practices of Silicon Valley to help non-profits, while adopting a more flexible approach to funding mission-driven organizations.

The interview will take about 90 minutes in the form of a "semi-structured" interview.

It is important to stress this is a business and academic research project and not an attempt to solicit funding which would be deemed unethical in terms of academic research.

Potential broad areas of questions will be:

- The culture and characteristics that your organization looks for in the journalism/media projects that you fund?
- What level of "market-orientation" do you require i.e. the balance between achieving the mission and business sustainability?
- How important is funding core capacity in organizations you support?
- What kind of impact do you seek in the media organizations you support/investment in?
- What level of control – if any – do you seek in organizations you support?
- How important is ethical alignment with beneficiary organizations?
- The types of funding models you use.

Appendix C.

Participant consent form.

Study into: "Disruptive Philanthropy: Assessing the Challenges of Funding from "Big Tech" for a UK Charity"

For: Nigel Baker, Doctor of Business Administration candidate at the University of Chester.

I, ___________________________________

voluntarily agree to take part in this research study.

I understand that, even if I agree to participate, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves a semi-structured interview of approximately 90 minutes on the challenges a non-profit organization would have in securing funding from the digital economy.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researcher's thesis, and subsequent conference presentations or published papers.

Appendix C, continued.

I understand that if I inform the researcher that I, or someone else, is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained by the researcher and until the University of Chester confirms the result of the thesis, with the transcript of my interview, with identifying information removed, for no more than two years.

I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above. Further, I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

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Signature of research participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

--- -------------------------
Signature of researcher Date