Sources of Power and Privilege in Philanthropy
Perpetuation of White Supremacy Culture

Wealth
- Foundations have wealth—accumulated over time, grown passively (unearned) and with the benefit of tax laws
- Foundations make the rules about how the money is invested and disbursed
- Foundation wealth implies that funders are discerning and wise
- Maddox acknowledges that wealth is historically extractive

Paternalism
- Foundations participate in and perpetuate Benevolent Sovereign Syndrome and White Saviorism
- Foundations hold others accountable for what they deem good, right and normative
- Foundations enjoy respectability (earned or not)
- Foundations view themselves as objective and authoritative (real or not)
- Foundations want, and even require, their language and values be mirrored back to them
- Foundations esteem and give precedence to the written word
- Foundations expect accountability (measure, control, count, report)
- Maddox has historically made one-year grants as if doling out weekly allowances to children who can’t be trusted with managing resources
- Maddox acknowledges that charity models are inherently deficit based

Social Capital
- Foundations can open and close doors (introductions, connections)
- Foundations know other sources of funding and benefit from affiliation
- Foundations are connected to public policymakers and civic leaders
- Foundations can ensure their own comfort
- Foundations seek to influence the behavior of others

Anti-democratic
- Foundations perpetuate their boards of directors to maintain power
- Foundations establish frameworks and set agendas
- Foundations ask the questions and raise the issues
- Foundations cling to authority (earned or not)
- Foundations assert that they have objective knowledge of the community (real or not)

Voice
- Foundations can advocate without repercussions on issues of concern
- Foundations fund work focused more on individuals than systems
- Foundations can choose to use their voices or stay silent to advocate for and with partners
- Foundations can choose to remain comfortable and aloof by how they use or don't use their voices
People
- Foundations have board and staff members with reputational heft who are generally middle aged or older
- Foundation board and staff members have traditional modes of power—degrees, education, work experience, money
- Foundation boards are self-sustaining and have the power to maintain the status quo
- Foundations are grounded in white dominate culture

Liberties—enjoyed more fully by white people in philanthropy
- Foundation board and staff members are free from worry
- Foundations are free from accountability (beyond IRS regulations and fiduciary responsibility) and operate with relative impunity
- Foundations can take risks with minimal fear of backlash
- Foundations face minimal consequences in response to “failure”

“Trust me, when things get better for one group, they get worse for another.”
Captain America: The Falcon and Winter Soldier

“Philanthropy is commendable. But it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.”
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Resources
- Equitable Grantmaking Continuum
- Power Moves: Your Essential Philanthropy Assessment and Guide for Equity and Justice by Center for Responsible Philanthropy
- Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens by Philanthropic Racial Equity
- Mismatched: Philanthropy’s Response to the Call for Racial Justice by Philanthropic Racial Equity
- Spectrum from Extractive to Restorative to Regenerative Philanthropy—Justice Funders