

Workshop Program Report

Philanthropy and Public Culture: The Influence and Legacies of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in Australia **24 – 25 February 2010, University of Melbourne**

The workshop was convened by Professor Kate Darian-Smith and Associate Professor Julie McLeod, both at The University of Melbourne, and Professor Glenda Sluga, The University of Sydney. It was attended by around 25 participants, spanning senior scholars to Early Career Researchers and postgraduates, from around Australia and held over two full days at the University of Melbourne, with administrative support provided by the Graduate School of Education.

Overview

This workshop examined the impact of the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) on Australian public culture, addressing four sites of Carnegie influence: International Relations; Education and Citizenship; Public Health; and Cultural Institutions. Across these domains, a number of key themes were explored that are directly relevant to the history of the social sciences and contemporary sociological debates: citizenship, national and cosmopolitan identity; globalisation, international relations and public policy; self and collective or national improvement; and taste, cultural judgement and modernity. Of particular interest was the CCNY's influence on the development of the social sciences in Australia, a topic that has much contemporary salience given recent interest in transnationalism and the influence of North-South relations in the recognition and reception of different traditions of social theory (eg: Connell 2007). The papers also opened up discussion on the history of international philanthropy, on conceptual approaches to analysing philanthropic networks, and on the social and cultural impact of philanthropy more broadly, both historically and in the present. It is an interesting time in Australia to be examining these issues. Changes in funding responsibility for public institutions point to the reconfiguring of relations between the public and private sectors, arguably paralleling an intensified focus on attracting new forms of financial support and courting philanthropic organizations. Examining the legacies of previous philanthropic activity provides an important context for assessing these current directions. The CCNY is commemorating its centenary in 2011, and it is timely to mark this important date, and follow up the discussions begun at the workshop, with a peer-reviewed edited volume of essays on CCNY's influence on Australian public culture.

Workshop website:

http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/research/eesi_research_program/assa_conference/

Summary of Proceedings

Public Culture, Philanthropy and the Social Sciences

This session outlined some of the major legacies of CCNY funding, and of US philanthropy more broadly in Australian public culture. It also focused on the scope of Carnegie initiatives in terms of US-Australian relations, setting up one of the workshop's major themes. Professor Stuart Macintyre (University of Melbourne)

discussed the development of the Australian university and the effect of American educational foundations, including the CCNY, on the emergence of the social sciences in Australia. Associate Professor Paul Walker (University of Melbourne) examined the influence from the 1930s of the CCNY on the formation and reshaping of Australian museums in terms of their design, collections and curatorial practice. He provided an overview of CCNY's ambitious survey of museums in Australia and New Zealand, arguing that its funding of museum programs constituted an influential re-conceptualisation of the museum as a service, rather than a building or place.

International Relations

International Relations and the promotion of peace were among the core missions of the CCNY, and close links were to develop with the establishment of I.R. Studies in Australia. Professor James Cotton (ADFA) argued that although neither the CCNY nor the Rockefeller Foundation had a primary interest in the disciplinary area of 'international studies', these American philanthropic bodies had a major impact on the emergence of the subject in Australia from the 1920s-1960s. This impact was directed through the provision of funding to individuals (often in the form of fellowships) and to organisations, especially the Australian Institute of International Affairs. It was also indirect by virtue of the support given to the Institute of Pacific Relations (a small proportion of which was actually for specific Australian purposes). CCNY money supported the early research of key figures in this field, and helped to develop other social science disciplines. There were obvious and intricate links between academics, American and British philanthropic organisations, and government higher education programs in the mid-twentieth century.

It was also clear that American philanthropic funds, specifically those of the CCNY, were purposely used to support British Commonwealth academic and intellectual connections (Carnegie, after all, had strong ties to Britain). In other words, the transnational relationships that were developed and promoted at this time cannot be reduced to a simple history of competing British and American influences on the social sciences in Australia. Cotton also argued that the most apparent aspect of this US-based funding was to direct the attention of a selected body of Australian intellectuals beyond the British Empire to global concerns, even as it often reinforced the status of the British Commonwealth. Further, there are tantalising traces in this history of the careers of Australian women working in the political sciences in the interwar period, such as Persia Campbell, whose own scholarship was enabled by the Carnegie Institute funding, but only once they had relocated to the US, where their trail in the Australian history of the social sciences disappears. Mr Adam Henry (ANU) looked more closely at the influence of the Ford Foundation on Australian foreign policy in the 1960s, and the close links between the AIIA and the Department of External Affairs. Dr. Alice Garner (La Trobe University) highlighted the overlapping agendas of CCNY and the American government's Fulbright's program exchange of scholars. Together these were part of a revolution in education, which in Australia was characterised by a difficult prying away from British models and a leaning towards American pedagogy and university academic culture.

Cultural Institutions and Cultural Taste

This session considered the impact of Carnegie funding on key cultural institutions in Australia, the formation of 'taste' and of aesthetic sensibilities. Dr Sarah Scott (ANU) focused on a Carnegie-funded touring exhibition of Australian art to the US

and Canada during 1941, demonstrating how it illustrated differences between national and international approaches to Australian art, including the artistic value bestowed on Aboriginal art. The exhibition was also a key moment of Australia-US public diplomacy, and Dr Scott discussed the broader role of cultural diplomacy in cementing links between Australia, the US and the UK. Dr Caroline Jordan (La Trobe University) provided a comprehensive overview of the CCNY's efforts to advance and modernise Australian museums and art galleries. Focussing on the visual arts, Dr Jordan detailed the CCNY's programs in this field. Using the Queensland Art Fund as a case study, Dr Jordan described Carnegie's donated art set program and argued that it was an important gift and useful resource for art education throughout Australia. Dr Paul Fox (University of Melbourne) discussed the influence of the CCNY on Australian cultural and social policy by examining the complex interactions between American visitors to Australia and Australian visitors to America during the early twentieth century. He argued that the exchange of ideas facilitated by this global travel contributed to the spread of knowledge and the re-invigoration of a liberal conservative cultural vision for Australia. He also emphasised the centrality of the often informal role of the Australian women involved in this process of intellectual exchange and conscious internationalism of outlook. Discussant Professor Kate Darian-Smith (University of Melbourne) pointed to the multiple influences of the CCNY in the formation of cultural taste and artistic appreciation in both national and international contexts.

Education and Citizenship

The second day of the workshop examined the impact of the Carnegie Corporation on the public domains of education and health. The funding of educational initiatives is perhaps the CCNY's most widely known philanthropic activity. The CCNY had a significant influence on Australian education, especially but not only during the interwar years, funding numerous educational programs and study tours, and supporting the establishment of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in the early 1930s. Its influence was also felt across a wide range of educational projects, from the dissemination of 'New Education' ideas to the development of psychometrics and expertise in testing and measurement.

We began our workshop discussion with an examination of the educational interests of CCNY in the US, with Dr. David Goodman (University of Melbourne) exploring its involvement in the Adult Education movement. In part this was consistent with the CCNY's wider interest in professionalizing and modernizing practices in fields such as teaching, librarianship and curatorship. Dr Goodman's paper, however, addressed the kind of education being promoted, arguing there was 'a discernible Deweyan, progressive education inflection' in the promotion of Adult Education. Prefiguring more recent and current imperatives for 'life-long learning', continuous immersion in adult education in mid-twentieth century America was conceived as shaping citizens for the modern world, helping to 'train people to deal with constant change by encouraging certain traits – openness, tolerance, empathy prominent amongst them'.

Themes of progressive education and citizen formation were also explored by Professor Bill Green (Charles Sturt University) and Associate Professor Julie McLeod (University of Melbourne). Professor Green examined the spread of 'New Education' ideas, particularly in the curriculum area of English, and the pivotal role of the CCNY in establishing ACER and in supporting the 1937 conference 'The Fellowship of

Education – Education for the Complete Living’. This ‘travelling conference’ brought an array of international speakers, many of whom endorsed New Education ideas, to Australian audiences. In exploring the ‘cultural power’ of CCNY in Australia, Professor Green argued that new conceptual approaches were needed to understand the effects of philanthropy today; influenced by Foucauldian conceptions of power, he suggested the idea of ‘philanthropic power’ was a potentially productive framework for theorizing how philanthropy shapes cultural practices. Associate Professor McLeod also discussed the important role of the 1937 conference in circulating ‘New Education’ ideas beyond the circle of elite educationalists. During the 1930s and 1940s, CCNY funding, realised through the work of ACER and associated projects, helped promote an internationalist outlook for education, urging international friendship as essential for world peace, and emphasising the need for Australian education systems to be more outward looking. At the same time, CCNY funding bolstered a psychological focus on the assessment of child learning, through the sharing of models for measuring normal development. Such models were not only in tension with the child-centred vision of New Education, they located the sources of social inequality in scientifically validated ‘individual differences’ and helped institute new ways of valuing and shaping the ‘good student’ and the ‘good citizen’.

In the next workshop session, Dr. Julia Horne and Associate Professor Craig Campbell (both University of Sydney) discussed higher education, and visits of Carnegie-sponsored US educational experts to Australia in the early- to mid-twentieth century. As Dr Horne observed, prior to these visits, the CCNY was already funding higher education programs in the US, the UK and Canada. This was a logical site of activity’ as Associate Professor Campbell stated ‘universities were the likely sources of educational leadership, and therefore reform, in the dominions’. Dr Horne analysed the visits to Australia of two ‘Carnegie men’ – James Russell (former Dean of Teachers College, Columbia) in 1928 and L.D. Coffman (President of University of Minnesota) in 1931 – whose mission was to assess the state of higher education in Australia, and how the CCNY might fund its development. She argued that as a result of these interventions, the CCNY ‘helped develop new notions of an “Australian university” and an “Australian academic” in an age of increasing internationalism’. These crosscutting themes of internationalism and national distinctiveness also emerged in Associate Professor Campbell’s paper on the Australian visit in 1952 of J. B. Conant (President of Harvard University). Conant’s confidential report to the CCNY expressed strong criticism of Australia’s sandstone universities and their reluctance to engage with ‘industry, government and the community beyond’. Conant’s visit occurred in the context of the Cold War, and the CCNY’s ‘perception of the declining power of Britain to maintain its Empire/Commonwealth’. Associate Professor Campbell argued that while the CCNY’s interests in Australia can be understood in terms of philanthropy, an accompanying ‘imperialist’ interest warrants further attention.

Professor Simon Marginson (University of Melbourne), as discussant pointed out that the work of the CCNY – and other large philanthropic organizations – is an important project for understanding modernity and modernization, citizenship formation, and processes of nation building and transnational politics in the twentieth century. Carnegie-funded study tours, for example, enabled US experts to re-imagine and reconstruct their nation through going outside it. Professor Marginson suggested that in many respects the legacy of Carnegie in Australia is incomplete, noting as an

example the ambitions of the New Education Fellowship to focus on the development of the individual alongside a commitment to social democratic equality –which remains a longstanding tension within education and public culture.

Public Health

The final session of the workshop examined several public health initiatives in Australia funded by US philanthropy, and the associated spread of ideas and practices to do with physical and mental health and hygiene. Dr Katie Wright (University of Melbourne) traced some of the direct and indirect ways in which the Commonwealth Fund and the Carnegie Corporation shaped the development of child guidance in Australia in the 1930s. While the Commonwealth Fund's influence on Australian practices was largely indirect, it was nevertheless highly significant, as projects it underwrote provided models for practices that were emulated in Australia, as in other Western countries. In contrast, the role of the CCNY in Australia was more direct. Through its Commonwealth Program and its funding of ACER, it provided financial support for clinical practice and professional training, funded research and publications related to child guidance, and provided travel grants to Australian educators and psychologists who were exposed to international child guidance practices. Although modest in scope compared with the Commonwealth Fund's major support of child guidance in the US and Britain, Carnegie philanthropy was important for the carriage into Australia of American and British models of mental hygiene for children.

Dr Nikki Henningham (University of Melbourne) looked at the interests of US philanthropic bodies in issues of disease and public health in the tropics, and the racialised and gendered implications of such a focus. In particular, she examined the Rockefeller Foundation's support for hookworm eradication in far north Queensland, particularly on the lives of women, in the early twentieth century. Ms Kate Rogers (University of Melbourne) demonstrated in her paper 'that by facilitating the introduction of intelligence testing to Australia via the Australian Council for Educational Research the Corporation played a central role in legitimising and perpetuating the rhetoric of intellectual sub-normality which has sustained and justified the eugenic decisions associated with these reproductive services'.

Workshop dinner

The workshop dinner was held at University House, and the after dinner speaker, Professor Barry McGaw (President ASSA), presented an engaging address on the topic of educational policy and public culture, drawing on his experiences as Chair of the National Curriculum Board and now Chair of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Agency. He reflected on recent trends and dilemmas in curriculum and school reform and the challenges and responsibilities of public debate on these matters, taking as an immediate and topical case the role of testing and associated protocols for ranking schools and students and attempts to improve public understanding about how schools and education systems are performing.

Implications for policy considerations and further research

It became even clearer over the course of two days intensive discussion that the Carnegie Corporation of New York –alongside other American philanthropic organizations – has had a strong ideological, modernising, and internationalist

mission, with its influence extending well beyond the US. The building of a large infrastructure and a network of experts to determine the kind of projects and personnel worthy of CCNY funding meant this was always much more than charitable giving. Indeed, the provision of CCNY funding also facilitated entry into international networks that extended across the British Dominions and metropolitan centres – and that entry was particularly important to intellectual, institutional and policy elites in Australia.

Philanthropy is not only an educational, financial and cultural resource, it is also a ‘cultural shaper’. The workshop documented some of the ‘shaping work’ of the CCNY’s activities across the twentieth century, and its role in shaping US-Australian cultural and political relations. There is a very contemporary inflection here, as institutions today continue to court philanthropic funding, often as a replacement for receding public funding for educational, cultural and health activities. In relation to current calls for greater engagement with philanthropic agencies, a crucial policy and scholarly issue to address is the kind of cultural and ideological work performed by contemporary philanthropic activity. Does our concern to induce or invent philanthropy in twentieth century Australia blind us to some of the complex questions that arise from a critical historical look at the history of transnational philanthropy, such as that operated by CCNY?

A recurrent theme throughout the workshop was the shifting relationship between private philanthropy and public culture. Many of the papers provided important historical perspectives onto current challenges facing educational and public institutions. For the education sector, this encompasses the establishment or expansion of university portfolios such as advancement, alumni bequests and donations, philanthropic funding of research and community engagement projects. From a policy perspective, these matters point to the challenge of balancing the requirements of donors and recipients, and the importance of making explicit mutual expectations and anticipated mutual benefits. As the workshop papers amply showed, however, philanthropy is not simply a financial transaction and involves a range of non-financial obligations and benefits.

The CCNY represents a particular type of large philanthropic organizations with a broad agenda and internationalist outlook: it continues to fund projects outside the US. But there are other types of philanthropy: smaller scale foundations, family dynasties, and organizations with a more national and domestic focus. It is necessary to distinguish between these types – and their different social missions – when examining the history and effects of international and nationally based philanthropic activity in Australia. The legacy of the CCNY is an important part of that story, but its role must be placed in wider context. The workshop papers showed, for example, how large foundations such as Rockefeller and CCNY sometimes worked together, intervening in and funding complementary activities.

The workshop discussions drew out some of the tensions in developing an account of the legacies of private philanthropy in Australia. On the one hand, scholars can be critical today of the emphasis of CCNY on the training of elites and the cultivation of transnational networks on which cultural interventions or grant making was based. And in retrospect we might see the limitations of and problems with CCNY’s focus on funding and projects in the white British Dominions. On the other hand, there is

much to learn from this history in navigating present imperatives. Australia stands on the cusp of another era when philanthropy looks to become a significant part of the life of public and cultural institutions. The post-war era until the end of the Whitlam government in the mid 1970s marked a high point in government funding for public institutions in Australia. The relative decline of this funding has called into being a new role for philanthropic activity. CCNY activity flourished in Australia in quite different social and political circumstances, but as the workshop demonstrated its immediate effects and continuing legacies provide valuable vantage points from which to consider the social impact and challenges of contemporary philanthropy.

Kate Darian-Smith, Julie McLeod and Glenda Sluga (Workshop Convenors)
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