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Nicole Sackley

Foundation in the Field

The Ford Foundation's New Delhi Office and the Construction of Development Knowledge, 1951–1970

In 1952, the Ford Foundation consolidated its headquarters at 477 Madison Avenue in New York City, positioning itself at the very centre of an emerging international development regime.[1] Within blocks of Ford's offices lay the Rockefeller Foundation's headquarters and the newly completed United Nations Secretariat building. Out of these headquarters poured a range of plans and proposals for how to define and address the problem of "underdevelopment", from Asia to the Middle East. Meanwhile, the traffic between New York, Washington, DC, and US universities grew ever thicker. Leaders of the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation moved in and out of high-ranking government positions and consulted regularly with US policymakers and university experts. Foundation officers spoke frankly about the geo-political urgency of development in the Cold-War battle against the Soviet Union, even as they believed simultaneously in the libratory power of philanthropic funding and American knowledge to, in the capacious mission of the Ford Foundation, "advance human welfare".[2]

In recent years, historians have uncovered a good deal about the domestic production and circulation of development knowledge between US philanthropies and US universities. They have begun to trace as well the role of US foundations in the formation of transnational epistemic communities of experts that cohered around, and defined, developments such as population control, food production and economic planning initiatives.[3] The voice of the foundation in these histories nevertheless remains largely that of the foundation presidents and senior officers in New York. This article, however, intends to shift our perspective on the foundations and the construction of

1 To accommodate its first President Paul Hoffman (1951–1953), the Ford Foundation made its headquarters near Hoffman's home in Pasadena, California.

2 Berman, *Influence of the Carnegie.*

3 Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University*; Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge*, Ch. 4; Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*; McCaughey, *International Studies*; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*; Cullather, *Hungry World*; Frey, "Neo-Malthusianism".

development from the "centre" in New York to the "periphery" by examining the history of the Ford Foundation's New Delhi office and its representative Douglas Ensminger, who directed the office from 1952 to 1970. As such, it provides the first historical examination of a foundation field office and the critical role such offices played in the making of development knowledge, policy and practice during the Cold War.

The Delhi office was the largest of a network of seventeen field offices that the Ford Foundation established around the world by 1968. In capitals from Jakarta to Bogotá, the foundations' offices operated – along with national planning commissions, research laboratories, United Nations regional economic commissions and statistical centres as well as US Peace Corps offices – as part of the constellation of development institutions "on the ground". The major foundations relied upon their field offices for information, diplomacy and the construction of concrete initiatives. The choices of which projects to fund and how to institutionalise and translate broad foundation missions into local idioms and conditions were often made in the field.

Foundation representatives were the eyes and ears of the foundations, relaying back to New York their portraits of political and economic conditions and assessments of potential grant recipients in receiving nations. They also played a critical role in forging political and institutional relationships and selling the foundation's services to national elites. Central state governments represented the most powerful advocates and engines of development during the 1950s and 1960s; without their assent, US foundations could not function abroad.

Even as field offices represented foundations, their particular institutional roles and geographic positions shaped how they imagined the priorities of development. Field representatives shared with foundation leaders the reflexive anti-Communism and faith in science and expertise that was pervasive among US liberals in the mid-twentieth century. Long-term association with a particular foundation encouraged an "organisation man" ethos, in which foundation officers, cycling between New York and field assignments, became inculcated in the practices and terminology of their philanthropy. Yet, individual field officers held their own programmatic visions, and these could and did change over time with experience in the field. Simply put, the view in Delhi and Bogotá often looked different than in New York. The need to maintain political connections and to insulate the foundation's reputation from potentially controversial or ill-conceived projects meant that field representatives were primed to seek accommodation and discourage projects that smacked of US dominance.[4] As such, the field office proved critical in translating the Cold-War projects originating at the centre

4 Bell, "Ford Foundation".

and in crafting development praxis to reflect the priorities of *both* post-colonial elites and US and European actors.

Historians seeking to explain how foundations projected an image of autonomy and independence from US Cold-War policy (even as they supported broad US geo-political goals) have cited the foundations' reliance on a dual rhetoric of liberal humanitarianism and technocratic social engineering. They have also noted the foundations' relative freedom from the domestic political constraints that shaped presidential and congressional action in such fields as population control and food production.[5] What has been less well understood is the role of the foundation field office and nationalist elites in framing US foundations as apolitical. The case of the Ford Foundation in India illuminates how individual field offices and national elites collaborated to build up foundations as essential players in development practice. This involved critical "boundary work" to distinguish the field office from US state actors and to position its contributions in India as merely technocratic and financial support of India's development priorities.[6]

In Delhi, Ensminger invoked humanitarian and technocratic rationales for the Ford Foundation's raison d'être. A sociologist by training, he believed fervently that the scientific analysis of social problems could lead to better policy solutions. At the same time, Ensminger was a political operator who had been schooled in the politics of knowledge in the US Department of Agriculture during the New Deal and the Second World War. His reading of the political landscape in India suggested to him that the Ford Foundation could not gain influence in India supporting projects that appeared to Indian elites as intrusions on Indian politics and sovereignty. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, he screened expert initiatives originating in the United States for possible dangers they might pose to the Foundation's or to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's position in India. In this way, Ensminger set up the Foundation as a devoted ally to India's powerful Prime Minister at a time when Nehru and US policymakers were clashing repeatedly over India's foreign policy and socialist economic framework.

Demarcating the Foundation from US policy, Ensminger also assisted Nehru domestically by having the Ford Foundation take on projects that Nehru and his advisers deemed too politically sensitive within India. Nehru recognised that drawing on Ford Foundation funding and experts allowed him to promote policies among powerful but potentially sceptical constituencies such as state-level politicians and the Indian civil service without

5 Hess, "Waging the Cold War"; Krige, "Ford Foundation"; Unger, "Toward Global Equilibrium".

6 On boundary work, see Gieryn, *Cultural Boundaries*.

bringing in foreign governments or seeming to pit one branch of Indian Government against another. Nehru's more radical political opposition, notably the Communist Party of India, never accepted the Ford Foundation's pose of neutrality and pushed accusations of American imperialism from the early 1950s onward. As his opposition sought to puncture the pose of Foundation neutrality, Nehru and his advisers supported the Foundation's agenda in India. Like Nehru's own Planning Commission of technocratic experts, the Ford Foundation's field office fit his desires to remove development planning and choices from the contested ground of electoral and international politics and vest more power in his own leadership.

In the 1950s, this arrangement ran quite smoothly and effectively: Ensminger forged a tight working relationship with Nehru and other top Indian officials, and the New York headquarters generally deferred to Ensminger's recommendations. Opened in 1952, New Delhi was the very first field office of the Ford Foundation. Arriving just as post-war international efforts to develop India were beginning to stir, the Delhi office became critical for setting patterns and priorities not only for international development work in India but also precedents for other Ford Foundation projects around the world. Under Ensminger's direction, the Delhi office helped establish community development, public administration, population control and urban planning as Foundation priorities. The Delhi office set the pattern for the Ford Foundation's support of government-led projects over private initiatives and its preference for circulating development knowledge through Foundation-selected consultants rather than projects directed by US universities.

Ensminger sought the transfer of American and European knowledge about development – but always selectively and in negotiation with Indian elites. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Delhi office often resisted the wholesale replication of US models advocated by the New York headquarters. Because of Ensminger's assiduous bureaucratic skills, the strong development plans of India's leaders and the powerful importance that US policymakers and foundations attached to India's success in development, the Delhi office frequently succeeded in setting the terms of the Ford Foundation's development work in India. Between 1952 and 1970, the New Delhi office administered approximately 102 million dollars in grants to Indian institutions or the Government of India, far exceeding the Ford Foundation's or any other foundation's contributions to another nation's government.[7] Working with the Government of India, the field office honeycombed the subcontinent from the Punjab to Tamil Nadu with training centres, university pro-

7 Ford Foundation, *Foundation-Supported Activities in India*; Ford Foundation, *Annual Report 1969*, 59–60; Ford Foundation, *Annual Report 1970*, 59–61.

grammes and government research institutes whose central goals were to produce applied research for the benefit of India's development projects and to train Indians in "modern" scientific and managerial practices.

The special relationship that the Delhi office forged for the Ford Foundation in India, however, began to unravel in the 1960s. The construction of an international network of field offices, built in part on the New Delhi model, required an exponentially larger New York bureaucracy that tended to centralise and systematise Foundation policy at the centre. Ensminger's power in India depended on his ability to deliver funding and projects quickly to the Indian Government. Foundation bureaucratisation slowed and circumscribed that ability. At the same time, New York reigned in the panoply of Foundation projects in India, narrowing development to an intensive campaign to increase food production and decrease India's birth-rate. Indian leaders participated willingly, even eagerly, in the drive to raise agricultural output and curb population with Ford-funded US consultants and Indian research institutions. Yet, as the US government followed the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations into the agricultural and population fields, tying US developmental assistance to efforts to bend India to its policy priorities, Foundation projects became ever more closely associated with US imperial control. By the late 1960s, Indian journalists and intellectuals had begun to regularly accuse the Ford Foundation of setting up projects as fronts for CIA activities. They also tied Ford-funded experts and institutions to a growing transnational, Third-World critique of the use of US social scientists abroad. The Foundation's "academic colonialism", Indian critics charged, dictated intellectual priorities and colonised Indian public discourse.

While Ensminger vigorously refuted such allegations, his own political base of support within India had shrunk. The death of Nehru in 1964 and the subsequent shift in power from the Planning Commission, Ensminger's political base in Delhi, to state and Cabinet ministers shut Ensminger and the New Delhi office out of Indian policy-making circles. In 1970, Ensminger retired from the Ford Foundation. Soon after he left India, the New Delhi office underwent a major restructuring, its programme staff reduced from over a hundred to about ten officers. New York cut its budgets substantially, and the new Ford Foundation representative in Delhi reoriented funding away from large grants to the Government of India and toward modest support of non-governmental organisations.[8] Perhaps more than any other Ford programme, the decline of the Delhi office symbolised the collapse of the alliance that US foundations had forged with the elites of developing nations and the pulling back of the major foundations from the development project.

8 Ford Foundation, *The Ford Foundation, 1952–2002*, 11–12; McCarthy, "From Government", 302.

1. The Ford Foundation Enters India

The Ford Foundation's decision to begin development work in India was guided not by its post-war blueprint, the Gaither report released in 1949, but by the priorities of its first President Paul Hoffman and the context of crises over India in 1951. The Gaither report, an elaborate study to determine the Foundation's guiding principles in the wake of its transformation from a regional charity to the largest philanthropy in the world, sketched a largely domestic programme for "our society" and made only passing reference to "under-developed areas". India was never mentioned.[9] Nonetheless, the report's sweeping call to advance world peace and its robust claims for the importance of applied American knowledge appealed to the ambitions and vision of Hoffman, who assumed the Foundation presidency in January 1951. As administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration from 1948 to 1950, Hoffman had been a champion of the power of expertise and capital to win the fight against Communism. The Economic Cooperation Administration had, in Hoffman's view, failed in China because the United States had come too late to focus on the problem of Chinese rural development. A long-time supporter of "rural reconstruction" work in China, Hoffman was convinced that China had been "lost" at the "village level" and was determined that the United States should not repeat the mistake in India. "What a different story might have been told if this alternative to Communist strategy had been tried a few years earlier," he lamented in *Life* magazine shortly after taking charge of the Ford Foundation.[10] To Hoffman, India was the next critical battleground of the Cold War.

Hoffman was not alone in his assessment. In 1951, an emerging coalition of anti-Communist liberals had begun to view India as possessing simultaneously tremendous problems that threatened US global hegemony and great possibilities to demonstrate the transformative power of US-led development. India lacked capital and faced what US observers saw as dire conditions akin to those that had produced the Chinese revolution: the "staggering, appalling poverty" of "teeming millions" in "700,000 tiny villages" who had "awakened" to the injustice of their destitution.[11] Yet India seemed to be, among the new nations now labelled "under-developed", the one with the greatest potential for economic transformation. Nehru and his top ministers had set up strong political and economic structures, from a national consti-

9 Ford Foundation, *Report of the Study*, 26–27.

10 Raucher, *Paul G. Hoffman*, 75; Hoffman, *Peace Can Be Won*, 105–106; Hayford, *To the People*, 204–224; Hoffman, "Most Courageous", 104.

11 Isaacs, *No Peace for Asia*, 106. See also Vogt, *Road to Survival*, 227; Muehl, *Interview with India*.

tution to a central Planning Commission that had put forward a range of soon-to-be-launched projects in agriculture, population control, urban planning and industrial development. "There is great ferment in the country," Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas reported after travelling around India in 1950. "Every problem is being attacked; new ideas are pouring out."[12] The plans of the "world's largest democracy", moreover, seemed pragmatic and moderate, eschewing land redistribution or collectivisation. US India supporters stressed Nehru's anti-Communism, his faith in science and expertise, the non-revolutionary nature of India's national birth and its rapid ascendance in world affairs as a voice for newly decolonised nations. If India could achieve economic progress with US assistance, they argued, then it would surely blaze a trail for other nations. But if India were to falter – failing to address what Hoffman's Marshall Plan associate Harlan Cleveland in 1950 had termed a "revolution in rising expectations" among peasant peoples around the world – then India and other developing nations would be tempted down Communist paths to economic growth and social welfare.[13]

Despite these stakes and possibilities, the United States seemed to be failing India. Against the massive military build-up of NSC-68 and the Korean War, Truman's "bold new programme" of technical assistance, Point Four, languished, poorly funded and continually attacked by conservatives in the US Congress. Congressional critics of India's policy of non-alignment in the Cold War, moreover, had stalled passage of legislation to ship emergency wheat to India. While the "wheat loan" passed in June, its politicisation drove Indo-American relations to a new low. Publicly and privately, observers like former TVA administrator David Lilienthal wondered, "Are we losing India?"[14] Chester Bowles, Governor of Connecticut and soon-to-be Ambassador to India, warned Hoffman: "India is the key point in the entire East. [...] If we lose India, as we lost China, we shall certainly lose Southeast Asia with the repercussions running all the way through Africa." Bowles challenged the Ford Foundation to "tackl[e] the job".[15] Hoffman had already begun calling on the Indian Ambassador to the United States shortly after joining the Foundation to seek an invitation to Delhi.

The Ford Foundation programme that emerged by the end of 1951 supported US Cold-War aims but also constituted an implicit critique of US

12 Douglas, *Strange Lands*, 301.

13 Cleveland, *Obligations of Power*, 153; Roosevelt, *India*.

14 Lilienthal, "Are We Losing India?"; McMahon, "Food"; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, 47–74.

15 Chester Bowles to Paul G. Hoffman, 14 September 1951; Chester Bowles to Robert Hutchins, 24 February 1951, General Correspondence, 1951, Bowles, Reel 1139, Ford Foundation Archives, New York/NY (hereafter FFA).

progress in South Asia. Hoffman and his senior staff consulted with senior State Department officials such as Dean Acheson and George McGhee. But plans for the nascent programme grew principally out of a collaboration with officials and experts outside the State Department and the White House. Hoffman and his officers turned to a small group of agricultural experts and New Deal-era officials, many of whom had visited India and saw themselves as India champions. They included Douglas; Bowles; former TVA administrator Arthur Morgan; agricultural economist Howard Tolley, who had left the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to join the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation; and Milburn Lincoln Wilson, USDA Director of Extension Work.[16]

The focus on extension work was significant. Although Foundation officers considered a variety of India projects, including intervention in the Kashmir conflict, they soon settled on a programme of "integrated rural development".[17] Hoffman placed Foundation Vice-President Chester Davis, a former official in the USDA in the 1930s, in charge of the India initiative.[18] Advised by Morgan, Tolley and Wilson, Davis and Foundation officer John B. Howard began to see extension as an ideal vehicle for both raising agricultural output and helping to "build up democracy at the village level" through attention to the "medical, social, and cultural aspects of rural village life".[19] The USDA extension method emphasised the demonstration of scientific farming techniques, but the ferment of the rural New Deal had also transformed extension into a broader project of remaking rural communities through applied expertise in civic engagement, home economics and adult education. Morgan had been the visionary behind the TVA model town of Norris, Tennessee.[20] Now Foundation officials imagined bringing American extension techniques to South Asia.

In fact, the knowledge that Ford officials viewed as "American" was not exclusively American at all. The New Deal's rural policies were born of a

16 George McGhee to Paul Hoffman, 9 February 1951, Rowan Gaither Papers, Box 1, Folder 4; New York Office Report, 20 July 1951; Bernard L. Gladieux to Chester C. Davis, 30 July 1951; John B. Howard, Follow-up on trip to India and Pakistan, 24 September 1951, General Correspondence, 1951, India, Reel 1141, FFA.

17 Chester Davis to Arthur E. Morgan, 3 May 1951; Chester C. Davis to Warren R. Austin, 14 May 1951; Program Planning Division Staff Meeting, 15 May 1951, General Correspondence, 1951, India, Reel 1141, FFA; John Howard, Summary Guides for the Use of Ensminger, Moyer, and Howard in India and Pakistan, 22 October 1951, Report 012093, FFA.

18 Robert M. Hutchins to Chester Bowles, 12 March 1951, General Correspondence 1951, Bowles, FFA; John B. Howard, Oral History, 13 February 1973, FFA.

19 John B. Howard, Economic Development Program in India, 25 June 1951, Reel 0910, FFA; Howard, Summary, Report 012093, FFA.

20 Kirkendall, *Social Scientists*; Morgan, *Small Community.*

transnational circulation of ideas and practices about "rural reconstruction" by missionaries, colonial administrators, social reformers and nationalists from Scandinavia to the Caribbean. India had already been a prime site for village experiments in the 1920s and 1930s. Beginning in 1945, a US architect named Albert Mayer had drawn from these inter-war projects when helping the provincial government of Uttar Pradesh to launch a "pilot project" in rural development in its Etawah district. The project hired "village-level workers" (Indian high-school graduates) and trained them in a variety of expert techniques that they would then demonstrate to peasants in an assigned group of district villages. Indian politicians saw the Etawah project as a collaboration with Mayer that drew upon American ideas but remained grounded in Indian conditions and precedents. But Hoffman and other Ford officers who visited India for the first time in August 1951 envisioned it as an American blueprint for rural development which might be replicated throughout India. "We are greatly impressed by the work that is being done at Etawah," Davis told the Planning Commission; Etawah "aims at the crux of India's rural problem by helping the villagers help themselves in overcoming poverty, disease, and illiteracy." Most importantly, in reporting dramatic increases in yields of wheat and potato crops, Etawah seemed to promise that changing peasant practices through the introduction of low-cost techniques such as crop rotation or manure application could raise agricultural production dramatically.[21]

When Nehru met Hoffman and his party in Delhi, the Prime Minister and his senior officials had reason to receive them warmly. First, Hoffman's record of accomplishment with the Marshall Plan had impressed Nehru. Second, in 1951, Nehru and his advisers were in search of international expertise and financial assistance. The network of international development organisations that would soon descend on India had not yet lodged themselves in the field. While the FAO, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation and UNESCO had all sent survey missions to India, the development field was still open, particularly in the area of village-level development. Finally, Nehru shared the Ford Foundation's admiration for the Etawah project and had begun to think about a national programme built in part on its design. Etawah's focus on mobilising peasant labour resonated with Nehru's own enthusiasm for the voluntary labour of agricultural co-operatives; its apparent success in convincing peasants to change their practices appeared to answer the failures of India's current "Grow More Food" strategy to rally village cultivators. Thus, the Ford Foundation and the Planning Commis-

21 Chester C. Davis to N. R. Pillai, 4 September 1951, General Correspondence, 1951, India, Reel 1141, FFA; John B. Howard, Summary Report on Visit to Near East, South Asia, and Far East, 1 October 1951, Report 002576, FFA.

sion came together in 1951 around a strategy of village-level "community development" aimed at raising agricultural production and village conditions.[22] The Foundation would supply funding to train Indian village-level workers in a range of scientific and social scientific methods and techniques.

Foundation officials returned to India in November, with a party that now included the Foundation's new field representative Douglas Ensminger. They left with an agreement to open the first Ford Foundation field office in New Delhi and provide 2.9 million dollars to build and staff regional centres that were to train the first 6,000 village-level workers for what would soon become a nationwide "community development" programme. By this time, Bowles had arrived as the new US Ambassador to India and quickly offered an additional 54 million dollars in Point Four funding to bring hundreds of US experts, primarily in the field of agricultural extension, to India. On 5 January 1952, Nehru and Bowles signed the Indo-American Technical Agreement. Three days earlier, Ensminger opened the Foundation's India field office.[23] With Bowles as Ambassador and Horace Holmes, the agricultural expert at Etawah, now the head of the Point Four extension effort, Hoffman and Foundation officials envisioned little separation between the US Embassy's and the Ford Foundation's efforts in India. While cautioning that the Foundation would "at all times make it clear that it is dealing with the Indians directly and not through or as an agent of any other agencies", they nonetheless imagined that "[r]elations between the Foundation and the responsible US Government mission [would] necessarily be intimate". The Foundation's representative was to be, Davis told Holmes, "someone on the job representing us to work with you in India".[24]

2. Boundaries Against Politics

Ensminger arrived in Delhi ready to work closely with both the US Embassy and India's top policymakers. He set up the Foundation's offices in a two-room suite of the Ambassador Hotel, its rooms filled with US extension agents and their families just arriving in Delhi as a result of the new Point Four agreement. Soon he was consulting with Bowles and key Embassy staff, attending policy meetings and even accepting a desk within the Embassy.[25]

22 Howard, Summary, Report 002576, FFA; Nehru, *Selected Works*, Vol. 16, Pt. 1, 54–55.

23 Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, 79–84.

24 Howard, Summary, Report 012093, FFA; Chester C. Davis to Horace Holmes, 24 September 1951, General Correspondence, 1951, India, Reel 1141, FFA.

25 Lyon, *Just Half*, 274; Douglas Ensminger, Program Letter No. 4, 23 February 1952, FFA.

At the same time, he had begun to meet with Nehru and members of the Planning Commission. Through detailed, bi-weekly letters Ensminger kept the Ford Foundation headquarters abreast of his activities. These included not only work in India but also in Pakistan, where, in the interest of regional balance, the Foundation had chosen to open its second field office. Ford Foundation officials pronounced themselves deeply pleased with Ensminger's progress. His reports were "clear, comprehensive, and intensely interesting. [...] Each one opens another window onto Southern Asia," Davis gushed. Ensminger, and thus the Foundation, was "much in the centre of things" both in Delhi and Karachi where his "energy" and accomplishment were "impressive".[26] With no prior knowledge of India, Ensminger had quickly cemented a reputation as an authority on South Asia who could advise on both South Asian conditions and the possible application of India's programmes to other nations. Davis reported with some pride that during a return trip to the United States "so many people want[ed] to see [Ensminger] in Washington that he [was] under great pressure".[27]

By the end of 1952, however, Ensminger had begun to realise the politics of trafficking across national and institutional lines. Maintaining the Foundation's Karachi office took away from his work in India; it also led to suspicion about the kind of information he passed back and forth between the two foes. In January 1953, the Foundation installed a different representative in Pakistan. Meanwhile, relationships with the US Embassy, and specifically its technical assistance, Operations Mission (USOM), had grown more fraught.

USOM Delhi, encouraged by the Truman Administration, had sold the Indian community programme to the US public as an exclusively American creation for the defeat of communism. India's politicians and press decried the Cold-War hyperbole and the casting of Indians as subalterns in their own national programme. Chief ministers in the Indian states soon threatened to block the US extension agents and derail the entire endeavour. Only Nehru's intervention kept the programme afloat. The incident left Ensminger wary of too close a public association with US foreign policy.[28]

26 Chester C. Davis to Douglas Ensminger, 25 September 1952, FFA; Raymond Moyer to Douglas Ensminger, 28 February 1952, General Correspondence, 1952, India, Reel 1152, FFA.

27 Chester C. Davis to Carl B. Spaeth, 9 June 1952; Carl B. Spaeth to Douglas Ensminger, 12 June 1952, General Correspondence, 1952, India, Reel 1152, FFA.

28 "County Agent"; "Science: Plows and Sacred Cows"; Truman, *Public Papers*, 13; Douglas Ensminger, The Ford Foundation's Nineteen Years of Involvement with India's Community Development Program, 11 July 1972, Box 14, Folder B21, 51–52, 94–96; Ensminger, Relationships with Nehru, 29 November 1971, Box 1, Folder A8, 21, Douglas En-

More substantive conflicts with USOM advisers had also begun to surface. Trained in rural sociology, Ensminger had entered the US civil service in 1939 as a specialist in rural community organisation for the USDA's Extension Service and Bureau of Agricultural Economics. This background led him to see extension as a method with which to inculcate not only scientific agriculture, but a wide range of civic, cultural and educational goals in rural people. It also taught him the vulnerability of both sociological studies and innovative government "think tanks" to entrenched political interests. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics had been attacked and curtailed in the 1940s by conservative Southern US politicians who objected to the questions its social science studies raised about poverty and race in the US South. Marked by this experience, Ensminger encouraged the Government of India to protect the community development programme from institutional and state politics by establishing it as its own agency, separate from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and answerable only to the Planning Commission. S. K. Dey, the administrator of the Indian community development agency, shared Ensminger's views. They soon became close collaborators, with Ensminger securing Ford grants to train a range of social scientific, social welfare and public health experts for the Government of India programme.[29] By contrast, USOM leaders in Delhi saw extension as a targeted delivery of scientific farming methods that should be directed by India's Ministry of Food and Agriculture in co-operation with proposed Indian agricultural colleges that would replicate the US system of land-grant universities. In a March 1953 report, USOM critiqued the community development programme for failing to focus on food production and advised the Government of India to reallocate funds to expand university-level agricultural research and village-level training in agricultural methods. With Ensminger's counsel, the Government of India rejected USOM's recommendations.[30] Ensminger had begun to realise that his vision of rural development accorded more closely with Dey than with the US Embassy's technical staff.

Ensminger's distance from the US Embassy grew with the departure of Bowles as Ambassador and the "tilt" in US policy under Dwight Eisenhower toward Pakistan. The change in US Administration was mirrored within the Ford Foundation by the abrupt dismissal of Hoffman and Davis and the in-

sminger Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. (hereafter DEP).

29 Ensminger, "Diagnosing"; Sanders/Ensminger, *Alabama Rural Communities*; Ensminger, Program Letter No. 4, 23 February 1952, General Correspondence, 1952, India, Reel 1152, FFA.

30 Ensminger, The Ford Foundation's Contribution in the Field of India's Village and Small Industries, 5 November 1971, Box 3, Folder B2, 40–44, 94, DEP.

stallation of Rowan Gaither as Foundation President. Hoffman's public political stances, inconstant leadership, support for controversial domestic projects and focus on South Asian rural development had combined to tax the patience of Henry Ford II and the Ford Foundation's Board of Trustees. While the new Foundation President continued to support the Ford Foundation's India programme, Gaither never championed the "New India" as had Hoffman and Bowles.[31] An "organisation man" who steered the Ford Foundation from domestic political storms, Gaither emphasised American knowledge of the world in Ford Foundation grant-making, ratcheting up Ford Foundation funding for US areas studies programmes and research fellowships in Asia.[32] These US university programmes and overseas fellows presented new problems for Ensminger, as the New York headquarters began to approve projects for India that Ensminger viewed as politically sensitive and thus threatening to the relationships he had begun to build with Nehru's inner circle.

In the spring of 1953, two high-profile grants for political science research on India came up for consideration in New York. The MIT Center for International Studies proposed a group research project to study the relationship between economic development and political stability in India. Political scientists at Columbia and Berkeley envisioned group field studies to examine Soviet techniques of indoctrination and control in India, Indonesia and Iran.[33] The studies reflected an emerging hypothesis among US social scientists that the "transition" from "traditional" to "modern" societies, though critically important, nonetheless opened a dangerous, temporary period of cultural and social dislocation that Communists could exploit.[34] In discussions of the political science projects, the New York senior staff recognised the "delicate nature of [this] research" but concluded that such studies were "greatly needed and should be undertaken". Ford Foundation officer Richard Bissell (who in later years with the CIA would design the failed Bay of Pigs invasion) argued forcefully that the study of economic

31 Bowles, The Crucial Problem of India: A Personal Report, 4 February 1952; Paul G. Hoffman to Chester Bowles, 28 February 1952; Paul G. Hoffman to Chester Bowles, 11 March 1952, General Correspondence, 1952, Reel 1152, FFA; Bowles, "New India"; Sutton, "Ford Foundation", 71–73.

32 McCaughey, *International Studies*, 153; A Survey of Asian Studies Prepared for the Ford Foundation, 1951, Report 001066, FFA; Ford Foundation, *Annual Report 1954*; Sutton, "Ford Foundation", 78–79.

33 Proposal for a Research Program in Economic Development and Political Stability, 13 May 1953, Reel 0115, Grant 52–152, Section 1, FFA; Coordinated Country Studies on Soviet Techniques of Indoctrination and Control, 5 May 1953, Project B-226, FFA.

34 Eugene Staley to Members of the Study Group on Political Implications of Economic Development, 9 April 1952, Box 19, John Kenneth Galbraith Papers, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston/Mass.; Staley, *Future*.

development must "emphasize its relationship to political and social stability or instability".[35]

Gaither, Bissell and other senior officers worried that the Ford Foundation was pouring millions into the development cure – notably the community development programme – without bothering to study the "disease" that made the cure so necessary. Nehru's Congress Party had sailed to victory in India's first general elections, but to those concerned with Soviet incursion there appeared to be ominous signs of rising Communist strength in the Communist Party of India's electoral victories in several states of southern India.[36] CIA and State Department officials urged the Ford Foundation forward. They offered counsel while assuring Ford Director of Research Cleon O. Swayze that they also felt "that care should be taken to avoid any governmental identification with these projects".[37] To Ford Foundation officers in New York, scholarly projects and Foundation funding offered sufficient distance from US foreign policy-making.

From Delhi, Ensminger protested that political science research could politicise the Foundation's work in India and promptly fought back on multiple fronts. First, he successfully lobbied New York for veto power over Ford Foundation overseas fellows whose research projects he deemed too sensitive in India's political climate. Second, he convinced the Planning Commission to establish its own Research Programmes Committee, consisting of leading Indian social scientists who would screen all foreign social science research for the Government of India. Third, he demanded that all US social scientists doing research on Ford Foundation grants in India should partner with scholars at an Indian university.[38] These new requirements altered the goals of the MIT and Berkeley projects. Pressured by Ensminger, the MIT project in India continued, but compared to the interdisciplinary modernisation theories fabricated by scholars in Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT research on the ground in India over the next decade employed only economists and focused largely on technical studies of indus-

35 Excerpt from Draft Minutes of Meeting of 5 May 1953, Reel 0408, Grant 54–14, Section 1, FFA; Richard Bissell to Milton Katz, 9 May 1952, Reel 0115, Grant 52–152, Section 4, FFA.

36 Carl B. Spaeth to Cleon O. Swayzee, 22 December 1952, Reel 0408, Grant 54–14, Section 4, FFA; Richard L. Park, Contemporary India Project, November 1953, Reel 0404, Grant 54–14, Section 1, FFA; Irving Kristol to Carl Spaeth, c.1953, FFA; Park, "Indian Democracy".

37 Cleon O. Swayzee to John W. Gardner, 15 June 1953, Reel 0408, Grant 54–14, Section 4, FFA; Paul F. Langer to Philip E. Moseley, Carl B. Spaeth, and Cleon O. Swayzee, 17 May 1953, Reel 0408, Grant 54–14, Section 4, FFA; Cleon O. Swayzee to Carl B. Spaeth, 26 May 1953, Reel 0408, Grant 54–14, Section 4, FFA.

38 John B. Howard Oral History, 13 February 1973, FFA.

trial and agricultural capacity.[39] The director of the Berkeley project abandoned field research altogether.[40] Ensminger's counsel from Delhi thus remade two projects that US policymakers and Foundation officials had seen as urgent.

Curtailing US social scientists' investigations of Indian politics, Ensminger pushed instead the study of public administration within India. The choice of public administration over political science as a Foundation priority represented both a recognition by Ensminger of the political tensions over development in India as well as an attempt to serve Nehru and the Planning Commission by helping them to insulate development planning from politics. Nehru hoped to use science and expertise to topple what he saw as two forces of the status quo: powerful economic and political interests, on the one hand, and the entrenched British-trained bureaucracy of the Indian civil service on the other. The Planning Commission's elite group of advisers supported by various sub-committees of topical experts (on industry, population, agriculture, etc.) was the first mechanism by which Nehru imagined post-colonial India's political and economic transformation.[41] Now Nehru wished to reform the Indian Administrative Service, making its procedures more uniform, rational and responsive to the directives of the Planning Commission at the top and the will of the people from below.

At Nehru's request, Ensminger secured the services of Paul H. Appleby, Dean of Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and, like Ensminger, a veteran of the USDA. Beginning in 1952, Appleby made three extended trips to India as a private consultant to the Ford Foundation. He worked from a desk in the Delhi offices of Chintaman D. Deshmukh, Minister of Finance and a key Planning Commission member, and remained during his visits in regular conversation with Deshmukh, Nehru and Ensminger. Appleby also journeyed out from Delhi to the Indian states to interview thousands of administrators and civil servants at various levels of government.[42] His reports, published by the Indian Govern-

39 Douglas Ensminger, Report 37, December 1953, General Correspondence, 1953, India, Reel 1163, FFA; Sackley, "Passage to Modernity", Ch. 4; On controversies over, and subsequent implosion of, the MIT India project in the 1960s, see Engerman, "West Meets East".

40 Douglas Ensminger to John B. Howard, 2 June 1954; Richard L. Park to Cleon O. Swayze, 13 September 1955; Richard L. Park, Modern India Project: Semi-Annual Report, July 1954, Reel 0408, Grant 54–14, Section 3, FFA; Douglas Ensminger to John B. Howard, 17 February 1955, Reel 0116, Grant 54–88, Section 4, FFA.

41 Prakash, *Another Reason*; Zachariah, *Developing India*.

42 Appleby's 1954 appointment diary shows frequent meetings with Ensminger and Nehru. 1954 Diary, Paul Henson Appleby Papers, Box 9, Folder 1, Special Collections, Grinnell College Library, Grinnell, Ia.; Chester C. Davis to Carl B. Spaeth, 9 June 1952,

ment, concluded that Indian administrators had too much "consciousness of rank, class, title, and service" and "too little consciousness of membership in the public service". They needed to replace an "academic and intellectual orientation" with rigorous training in both "human-relations" and specific areas of applied expertise. This analysis fit a common American complaint in the 1950s that British rule had left Indians with a lack of appreciation of applied knowledge and the importance of getting one's hands dirty in the field. Yet, Appleby's report also praised India as "AMONG THE DOZEN OR SO MOST ADVANCED GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD". He was careful, moreover, to emphasise that Indian government "must be an outgrowth of its own long history and its own rich culture". American ideas might "stimulate" India but "no practice – certainly none of any importance – can ever be directly copied and simply applied to another".[43]

Appleby's visits to India and recommendations to the Indian Government pleased Nehru and the Planning Commission immensely. The immediate fruit of Appleby's recommendations was the creation of an Indian Institute of Public Administration with Nehru as its honorary chairman. A quasi-government institution, the Indian Institute of Public Administration conducted and published social science research on bureaucracy while also training government officers through the case-study method, a technique popular at the Maxwell School and other US graduate programmes of public affairs and management in the 1950s.[44] But, as far as the relationship between the Government of India and the Ford Foundation was concerned, the effects of Appleby's work in India went deeper. Appleby helped cement in Nehru's mind the Ford Foundation as a source of valuable expertise as well as funding.

For Ensminger, Appleby's work crystallised two models for Ford programming in India: a reliance on consultants placed directly in government offices over US university group projects and a preference for funding government "think tanks" to produce development knowledge. In the 1950s, Ensminger cast his net widely for consultants to bring to India: They included not only US university economists, demographers and agricultural specialists but also furniture designers Charles and Ray Eames, a Danish doll maker, and even the Vice-President of Macy's, then the largest department store in the world.[45] Meanwhile, the Indian Institute of Public Administration became a model for other Ford-funded, Indian Government re-

FFA; Ensminger, Program Letter no. 12, 6 September 1952, FFA; Ensminger, Program Letter no. 42, 10 May 1954, FFA.

43 Appleby, *Public Administration*, 11–12, 1.

44 Braibanti, "Reflections", 6–9.

45 Staples, *40 Years*, 51–2; Ensminger, The Ford Foundation's Relations with the Planning Commission, 21 October 1971, Box 1, Folder A3, DEP.

search institutes during the 1950s and 1960s, from the National Institute of Industrial Design to the National Council for Applied Economic Research, the Institute of Applied Manpower and the Indian Law Institute. Each of these institutes approached development as a technical and managerial problem in which experts brought applied knowledge directly to India's top leadership.

3. Setting Priorities in Delhi

By the mid-1950s, Ensminger had secured a central place in the corridors of power in Delhi. Advice on public administration had shown Nehru, Deshmukh and others the value of Ford Foundation consultants. But it was Ensminger's consistent support of the Indian community development programme and his New Deal experience in rural community projects that embedded the Ford Foundation in the Planning Commission. Ensminger attended Planning Commission meetings on community development, commented on draft policy statements and advised Nehru, Dey and Planning Commission members V. T. Krishnamachari and Tarlok Singh on the subject. In 1956 he even took a six-week sabbatical from the Ford Foundation to draft the Government of India's official guide to community development, writing in the voice of an Indian about "our village people" and "our long struggle for independence". Dey revealed Ensminger as the author of the volume, extolling his "significant contributions" to nearly every aspect of the programme.[46] More often, Indian officials preferred Ensminger's discretion and bureaucratic savvy: He never held a press conference taking credit for the programme and always reviewed the New York headquarters' descriptions of Indian grant projects to ensure that they did not depict Indians as dependent upon American knowledge and largesse. Most of all, Ensminger delivered Foundation funding to Delhi, often in a matter of weeks, for new community development programmes.[47] Perhaps nothing better symbolised Ensminger's new closeness to Nehru and the Planning Commission than the relocation of the Ford Foundation's field office out of the Ambassador Hotel on the outskirts of Delhi and into one of the stately Indian Government bungalows designed by Edwin Lutyens for the British Raj at the very centre of the official city.[48]

46 Government of India, *Guide*, iii, 1; Ensminger, Ford Foundation's Nineteen Years, Box 13, Folder B21, 75, DEP.

47 Ensminger, The Foundation's Image in India, Box 1, Folder A40, 10–12; Ensminger, Foundation's Nineteen Years, Box 13, Folder B21, 1–3, DEP.

48 Ensminger, Program Letter no. 29, 2 July 1953, FFA.

The field office's record of supporting the Indian Government came to matter a great deal in 1954, as the US military pact with Pakistan and Nehru's growing interest in Soviet and Chinese development frayed Indo-American relations. The alliance with Pakistan had infuriated Nehru and provoked him to look more critically at the "increasing activities of Americans" in India:

> [T]here are the Technical Aid people [...] Fellowship Exchanges, professors, students, missionaries, and the like [...] a widespread network of activity which is either directly or indirectly aimed at doing intelligence or propaganda work. [...] This was bad enough at any time, but in view of the new developments connected with the US military aid to Pakistan, this widespread activity in India is particularly objectionable and, to some extent, dangerous. [...] I think that we should take stock of all this and [...] check these abuses.[49]

Although he never followed through on the directive, Nehru contemplated "a basic change in policy" that would end the "inviting [of] American experts to India, except in very special cases".

Yet even as he sought a curtailment of American involvement, Nehru explicitly exempted the Ford Foundation from the prohibition. The Ford Foundation had "done good work in India" and as such stood "on a separate footing", he informed his advisers. "I see no reason why they should not be encouraged to continue their activities here."[50] Writing in September 1955, between his state visit to Moscow and the upcoming visit of Soviet leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin to India, Nehru reiterated his satisfaction with the work of the Ford Foundation in India. "[W]e welcome the assistance and cooperation of friends," he assured Foundation president Rowan Gaither.[51] Soviet-built steel mills and Chinese agricultural collectives offered possible development models, but so too did the Ford Foundation and its consultants on community development.[52]

Ford Foundation officers in New York also recognised the importance of its India programme, though for very different reasons than Nehru. In a confidential memo of April 1955, Foundation Vice-President Don K. Price concluded that despite "strong disapproval" of the "socialistic tendencies in the Indian government", any curtailment in the Ford Foundation's development projects in India would constitute "a blow to India in her deadly race with Red China for national development". The Ford Foundation's particular programmes in community development, public administration and social science promoted "vital" economic development and political stability. Even more important "to efforts of the [US] Government in maintaining

49 Nehru, *Selected Works*, Vol. 25, 489–90.
50 Ibid., Vol. 25, 493; Ibid., Vol. 26, 513.
51 Ibid., Vol. 30, 461.
52 Frankel, *India's Political Economy*, 139–40; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, 117–119.

good relations with India" was the very presence of its Delhi field office. Indeed by 1954, New York officers had begun to see field representatives as "projects in themselves". They could, "far better than any foreign official representative[,] influence the Government in new directions by disinterested advocacy of democratic politics".[53] In New York's formulation, the field office achieved a kind of transnational alchemy, turning US Cold-War aims into disinterested advocacy.

In fact, the Delhi field office in the 1950s functioned just as often as a conduit through which Indian development priorities and models flowed back to New York – and from there to the proliferating Ford Foundation field offices around the world. The apparent success of Indian community development encouraged Foundation officials to press for the duplication of India's village programme elsewhere in Asia and the Middle East. The "demonstration in India and Indian leadership" could "help [...] advance planning on Burma, Indonesia, and the Near East countries", Foundation officers explained in 1954. The Delhi field office's focus on public administration also helped shape Ford grants for public administration in Burma, Egypt, Iran and Lebanon. After spreading the word about Appleby's work in India, even the "hypersensitive Government of Indonesia" had "expressed their interest in Foundation assistance in the field of governmental administration", Foundation officers marvelled.[54]

Perhaps most striking, and little studied by historians, was the influence of the New Delhi field office on the Ford Foundation's decision to enter the population field. As Nehru issued the world's first national policy to limit population in December 1952, Ensminger peppered New York with letters about Nehru's commitment to population control and what he saw as the necessity of immediate Foundation action on "India's Number One Problem". Unless international organisations helped India in its efforts, the production and social welfare gains achieved by India's five-year plan would be "lost in the endless race to keep up with the population increases", Ensminger warned New York in 1953. At Nehru's urging, Ensminger engineered initial funding for Princeton demographer Frank Notestein and New York public health official Leona Baumgartner to consult with the Government of India.[55] Foundation officers in New York put off further funding for

53 Don Price, Overseas Development Program, Confidential, 4 April 1955, Report 13365, FFA; Program for Asia and the Middle East, 1954, Report 002832, FFA.

54 Program for Asia and the Middle East, 1954, Report 002832, FFA.

55 Ensminger, Program Letter no. 8, 19 April 1952, FFA; Idem, Program Letter no. 21, 11 February 1953; Idem, Program Letter No. 33, 21 September 1953; Idem, Program Letter no. 34, October 1953; Sutton, "Ford Foundation", 85; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 168–9; Frank Notestein and Leona Baumgartner, Suggestions for a Practical Program

the domestically controversial subject. But conditions changed in the early 1960s with the growth of a transnational population network, new US domestic support and a third five-year plan by the Government of India that placed population control "at the very centre of planned development". And Ensminger was waiting in the wings with a set of population prescriptions. Working with the Government of India and three US public health consultants, Ensminger crafted one of the largest grants in Foundation history. It supported the creation of four intensive family planning districts with the "extension" of public health workers into the Indian countryside and two new government institutes – a Central Family Planning Institute and a National Institute of Health Administration and Education to train public health administrators, conduct demographic research and conduct clinical trials of contraceptives.[56] Ford Foundation population work in India was thus built from designs that the Delhi office had already constructed in the fields of community development and public administration. Its programmes were then vaunted by the Foundation as models for population control in other developing nations.

By 1959, Albert Mayer referred to Ensminger, only half in jest, as the "second most powerful man" in India.[57] His influence could be felt not only in the construction of India's population programme but in India's five-year plans, national agricultural strategy and large-scale projects to redevelop the cities of Delhi and Calcutta. Ensminger instructed the Ford field office to support the Planning Commission's priorities and couch grant requests to New York in terms of the goals of India's five-year plans. Indeed, Ensminger often defended India's centralised co-ordination of public and private sectors and "socialistic pattern of society" to the New York headquarters and the Ford Foundation's Board of Trustees.[58]

Yet, in grant-making decisions from economic planning to agricultural reform, Ensminger and his staff also used their influence in Delhi to try to reshape the goals of Indian development. For example, Ensminger promoted an alliance between MIT economists and a series of Indian economic and social science research centres, created or expanded with large Ford Foundation grants in the mid-1950s. A conscious effort to steer Indian

of Family Planning and Child Care, December 1955 Ansley J. Coale Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

56 Harkavy, *Curbing Population Growth*, 135–7; Government of India, *Third Five Year Plan*, 675.

57 Albert Mayer to Edward G. Echeverria, 5 November 1959, Albert Mayer Papers on India, Box 21, Folder 17, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago, Chicago/IL.

58 Ensminger, Program Letter no. 77, 12 June 1956, FFA; Government of India, *New India*.

economic research to serve government planning, the project also sought implicitly to de-centre the influence of Nehru adviser Prasanta Mahalanobis and his Indian Statistical Institute over Indian policymaking. Mahalanobis had pushed the Planning Commission toward an ambitious second plan that emphasised industrialisation. Ensminger had campaigned to save the second plan when capital and agricultural shortages threatened its goals in 1957 and 1958. Nonetheless, he hoped that Ford-funded Indian institutions, consultants and grants for Indians to study economics in the United States would produce empirical economic studies that pointed to the importance of agriculture rather than the broad input–output sector model and large-scale industrialisation strategy favoured by Mahalanobis.[59]

Meanwhile, in agricultural policy, Ensminger drew upon his credentials as an ally of community development to convince Nehru, in the late 1950s, that India needed a new strategy for raising food production. The Government of India had leaned heavily on the village-level workers of its community development programme to produce food by changing the practices of peasant cultivators. They expanded the programme exponentially from covering six per cent of India's villages in 1952 to over half in 1957.[60] This rapid-fire growth strained the programme both administratively and philosophically, and community development failed as a targeted instrument for food production. Agricultural yields dropped sharply in 1957 and forced the Government of India to devote precious capital reserves to grain imports. Ensminger took to the field to assess the situation. In 1957, he spent three months travelling around India and reported back to Nehru that the problem in the community development programme was largely one of improving administration and organisation.[61] This reassured Nehru, who did not wish to abandon an endeavour he viewed as central to meeting India's social welfare goals and binding India's villagers politically and emotionally to the nation.

When India's monsoons failed for the second year in a row in 1958, however, Ensminger returned to Nehru with a proposal that the Ford Foundation assemble a team of agricultural specialists to examine India's food situation. The idea had originated with the US Department of State, which had requested that the Ford Foundation sponsor the mission so as to avoid the ire of powerful US farm lobby groups who did not wish to see the US Government giving advice that might curtail the lucrative selling of agricul-

59 Engerman, "West Meets East"; Rosen, *Western Economists*, 88–118; Sackley, "Passage to Modernity", 242–254.

60 Nehru, Letters, Vol. 4, 479, 492; Frankel, *India's Political Economy*, 142–144; Pande, *Village Community Projects*, 173.

61 Frankel, *India's Political Economy*; Ensminger, Relationships with Nehru, Box 1, Folder A8; Nehru, *Selected Works*, Vol. 40, 169–171.

tural surpluses to India. Led by USDA economist Sherman Johnson, the Foundation mission implicitly rejected the broad social welfare goals of community development and its premise that national development should incorporate the whole nation. Its report after three months of investigation, *India's Food Crisis and How to Meet It*, painted a stark picture of a Malthusian race between food and population growth in India and recommended a "package" of intensive applications of extension, chemical fertilisers, hybrid seeds and irrigation in a few districts selected for their promise of agricultural productivity.[62] Nehru initially found the report "exaggerated and unnecessarily pessimistic".[63] But under Ensminger's influence and that of his own Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Nehru eventually came around to implementing its recommendations. With Foundation funding, the Government of India launched a new Intensive Agricultural Districts Programme (IADP) in 7 of India's 320 districts in 1961.[64]

Ensminger never formally repudiated the community development approach. Defending the programme to US Congressman Walter Judd in 1960, he explained that the "first step" of raising "the level of aspirations of the village as a whole [...] through providing schools, roads, some health facilities, and a new outlook" had "opened the village to the knowledge [...] of new methods and ideas". Now that villagers had been "awakened", the Government of India would give "top priority to increased food production" and "responsibility for local development to the people themselves". In Ensminger's fashioning, the shift in strategy represented not a desertion of the social welfare aims of development, but the logical next step of an unfolding modernisation process. What he left out of his explanation was any acknowledgement of the role of the Ford Foundation, and Ensminger in particular, in championing community development as a panacea for Indian poverty. Instead, Ensminger rewrote the script and directed the New York headquarters and Indian and US policymakers to focus on the "revolutionary new program" of the IADP that had "tremendous implications for a fully productive agriculture, and the future of a democratic and progressive India".[65]

62 Government of India, *India's Food Crisis*; Rosen, *Western Economists*, 74–77.

63 Nehru, *Selected Works*, Vol. 40, 256.

64 Brown, *Agricultural Development*, 11–13; Perkins, *Geopolitics*, 179–183.

65 Douglas Ensminger to Walter Judd, 10 March 1960, General Correspondence, 1960, Reel 1386, FFA.

4. Imperial Foundation

The simultaneous expansion of Ford Foundation grant making into public administration, agricultural science, social science research, population control, urban planning as well as legal and managerial education increased the reach of the Ford Foundation within India dramatically. It also spurred a rapid growth in the field office. Given the range of its activities, the Delhi field office remained quite small through its first decade. From fewer than 5 US staff in the late 1950s, by 1966 the Delhi office had swelled to 72 foreign permanent staff members or consultants and 177 Indian administrative, clerical or technical employees. To accommodate this expansion, Ensminger demanded and won funding from New York for the construction of a leafy new Foundation campus in Delhi, including a modern office building, an elaborate guesthouse and a swimming pool surrounded by landscaped lawns and cascading fountains.[66]

In his recollections of his Ford years, Ensminger emphasised the humble nature of the field office and his own dealings in India, pointing out what he perceived as his special rapport with Indian farmers as the son of Missourian tenant farmers. He stressed the demands he made on Foundation staff to visit "village India" and his personal habit of carrying his own bags, making his own bed and contributing "an hour digging a ditch, planting trees, or doing whatever work was in progress" whenever he travelled around to India's community development districts. He imagined himself as understanding "the heart-beat" of India's village people far more than most urban and elite Indians.[67]

Observers of Ensminger and the Delhi office in the late 1960s came away with a very different impression. Along with its palace-like headquarters, the Delhi office kept two jet airplanes on hand to transport Foundation staff to projects throughout India. Ensminger lived on his own grand estate tended to by a phalanx of maids, cooks, gardeners and chauffeurs. Each day he arrived at the field office, according to one Foundation official, in a horse-drawn Victoria carriage from which he dismounted to receive a salute from Indian guards and inspected the premises. A self-confident belief in big projects coupled with an "imperial style" characterised the "Ensminger reign in India".[68]

66 Staples, *40 Years*, 6.

67 Ensminger, Ford Foundation's Nineteen Years, Box 13, Folder B21, 78–79, 153, DEP.

68 Harkavy, *Curbing Population Growth*, 130–131; Ensminger, The "Little People" of India, 6 November 1972, Box 1, Folder A39, DEP.

In fact, Ensminger was never simply an imperialist who overwhelmed Indians with Ford Foundation's resources any more than he was the humble populist of his own imagination. Rather, he and the Ford Foundation field office had operated as collaborators with Indian elites since the early 1950s. Indeed, the elaborate gardens and phalanx of subalterns at the Ford Foundation's campus, although better funded than most Indian Government offices, demonstrated just how integrated he had become into the conventions of caste and class in India. The construction of a new campus expressed the seeming solidity of the relationship between the Foundation and Delhi's principal policymakers. Yet, even as Ensminger built up the size and scope of the Delhi field office, its bases of support in both New York and Delhi were crumbling. Ensminger and the Ford Foundation became "imperialists", as the web of political alliances and shared priorities between Foundation headquarters and field office, field office and Delhi politicians, and the US and Indian governments broke down.

In the early 1960s, Ensminger clashed openly with the Foundation's third President Henry Heald, who had no experience in international affairs and expressed deep suspicions of Nehru, India's non-aligned foreign policy and its centralised planning process. To keep Ford Foundation grants flowing to India, Ensminger relied on the rising geo-political importance of India to US policymakers. He returned periodically to the United States, where he maintained a home outside Washington, DC, to meet with US experts and politicians. He also cultivated the Foundation's Board of Directors and used their influence over the New York headquarters to push his priorities. These efforts worked for a time. For example, Ensminger prevented Heald and his Vice-President for overseas development, Forest "Frosty" Hill, from scuttling the IADP programme. Ensminger favoured an "extension" approach of teaching new technologies to India's farmers; Heald and Hill had begun to orient the foundation toward the international laboratory research of hybrid seeds, which would give rise to the Green Revolution. Ensminger invited the Ford Foundation's Chairman, in India by chance on a tiger-hunt, to tour an IADP district and then threatened to resign if the Foundation did not support the programme. New York acceded to Ensminger's ultimatum and extended the IADP programme for five more years. But as US policymakers and the United Nations backed the laboratory strategy, Ensminger's focus on teaching at the village level lost out.[69]

The very success and proliferation of the Ford Foundation's overseas programmes caused further difficulties for the New Delhi office. While Ford

69 Ensminger, The Interaction between the Ford Foundation's India Field Office and New York Office, 30 June 1972, Box 1, Folder A35, 4–12, DEP; Sutton, "Ford Foundation", 45; Staples, *40 Years*, 19; Cullather, *Hungry World*, 162.

New Delhi had provided a model for other field offices in the early 1950s, decolonisation in Africa and Fidel Castro's victory in Cuba had pushed the Foundation to open a raft of new field offices in Africa and Latin America in the early 1960s. Although the Ford Foundation increased its budgets for overseas projects across the board, new field offices meant competition for attention from New York. Foundation officers preferred seeding new programmes rather than re-investing in established ones which, they believed, should be self-sustaining. To manage a far-flung network of field offices, New York increasingly bureaucratised grant-making, adding new subject desks and organisational procedures. Compared to the early 1950s, when Ensminger could give India's leaders an answer on a grant request within a week or two, now his requests required months of planning and paperwork. Ensminger complained bitterly about New York bureaucracy and in his memoirs even likened himself to a Gandhian resister confronting the British Raj.[70]

To many Indians in the late 1960s, it was Ensminger and the Ford Foundation's Delhi office that had begun to seem more like the occupying imperial power. Cracks in the alliance between the Ford Foundation field office and the Government of India began to form with the death of Nehru in 1964. His towering political presence and the overwhelming dominance of the Congress Party had protected foundation programmes and ensured that they would not face sustained political opposition. Nehru's successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, however, shifted power from the Planning Commission, Ensminger's base of support in India, to the Cabinet and state chief ministers. As a result, the Ford Foundation in Delhi lost the cover of Nehru's mantle and intimate access to development policymaking. This left New Delhi office vulnerable, as increased involvement of US, European and United Nations aid donors in Indian affairs created the perception in India that an interconnected nexus of foreign advisers deployed expertise and funding assistance to bend India to their will. New crises over food shortages, capital reserves and an increased fixation on population control had brought US, United Nations and World Bank missions to India in 1964 and 1965. Their stern counsel and India's dependence on their financial assistance to meet its development targets led Shastri and his advisers to align India's monetary, agricultural and population policies more closely to international prescriptions. In 1966, the US Government under the Johnson Administration increased the pressure on India by tying much-needed grain exports to demands that India should tow the US line in foreign policy from Pakistan to Vietnam.[71] In this context, the careful boundaries that En-

70 Ensminger, Interaction, Box 1, Folder A35, 35, DEP.

71 Ahlberg, *Transplanting*, 106–46; Kirk, *India and the World Bank*, 15–16; Rosen, *Western Economists*, 141–143.

sminger had attempted to erect between the US Government and the Ford Foundation began to crumble.

While Ensminger's influence on India's leadership waned, the number of Foundation consultants stationed inside India's central, state and municipal ministries and offices actually rose. These included several Ford-funded MIT economists working with the Planning Commission, eighteen population advisers in the Central Family Planning Institute and the National Institute of Health Administration and Education, as well as over fifty expatriate experts in the massive Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, charged with redesigning the city of Calcutta. Indian administrators and experts often resented the consultants' high salaries and the esteem that the heads of agencies paid to the "Ford wallahs". Moreover, by the late 1960s, in fields such as economics, demography and regional planning, India had built up considerable indigenous expertise, leaving many to question the continued need for importing foreign advice.[72] Finally, the sheer number of Ford Foundation consultants present in India made it increasingly difficult for Ensminger and the Delhi office to control them. While Ensminger thought first about the preservation of the Foundation's work in India, consultants had other priorities and goals: In addition to advancing their own academic research (many came to India on sabbaticals from US universities), they often imbibed the institutional perspective of the agencies in which they worked. In 1964, MIT economists became embroiled in a political struggle within India over the size of the fourth five-year plan and the relative weight it accorded to agriculture and industry. MIT's computer modelling of the plan pointed toward policy advice favoured by one group of Indian politicians and by USAID.[73] Ford Foundation population advisers assigned to competing bureaucracies took sides in an Indian debate over the relationship between contraception, public health and population control.[74] Ensminger's persistent efforts to wall off technical experts from politics collapsed in the heightened international and national tensions over developments in the late 1960s.

Resentments toward US foreign policy and the role of US experts in India soon cohered around a particular charge: the Ford Foundation and its vast network of grants were operated as a Trojan horse through which the CIA had infiltrated India. Accusations of CIA involvement in India had risen before; Nehru himself had made them following the US alliance with Pakistan.

72 Minkler, "Consultants or Colleagues", 413–4

73 Sukhamoy Chakravarty to Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, 12 September 1964; Louis Lefeber to Max F. Millikan, 18 November 1964; Max F. Millikan to Douglas Ensminger, 4 December 1964, Box 10, Folder 7, MIT Center for International Studies Records, Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT, Cambridge/MA (hereafter MIT).

74 Harkavy, *Curbing Population Growth*, 142; Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 200.

But prior to 1964 they had not been directed at Ford Foundation projects. Indian journalists, politicians and intellectuals developed the accusation in part through greater intellectual interchange with the New Left in the United States. As part of the questioning of US policy in Vietnam, US students and intellectuals began to expose collaborations between US social scientists and the CIA as well as the US Defence Department. Publicity about the MIT Center for International Studies Director's previous ties to the CIA as well as CIA funding for the Centre's Soviet Studies provoked an outcry in India. Although the CIA had never funded MIT's India research, Indian politicians and journalists decried the access of an "extended arm of the CIA" to "highly classified information" in order to "sabotage the country's long-term development programme" and build "Indian planning [...] in the image of their predilections". Ensminger demanded that the project shutter its operations in 1965, so as not to endanger other Ford Foundation projects in India.[75] But the charges kept coming. With revelations of CIA funding of the Asia Foundation and US Defence Department funding of the Berkeley study of the politically sensitive Himalayan region, fresh CIA allegations poured in about the Ford-funded Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur, the Indian Institute of Management and the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation.[76]

Less specific, and in many ways more damaging to the Ford Foundation field office than the unproven CIA charges, were the ways in which many Indian intellectuals began to think about the place of India in resistance to the United States and its institutions. Indian academics charged that US universities and US foundations used their great resources and access to Indian policymakers to push US visions of the world onto India. In 1967 twenty-six faculty members at the University of Delhi, a prime beneficiary of Ford Foundation social science research grants, issued a public statement against "US infiltration in our Universities". Discussion continued at the Conference of Indian Sociologists and in a special issue of the mainstream monthly magazine *Seminar* on "academic colonialism" in which Indian social scientists identified a "colonization of [Indian] mind[s]" by foreign experts and agencies. In the future, Indians would have to shed the "colonial mentality" and their reliance on the "patrons or masters" of "dominant nations".[77]

75 Stephen A. Marglin to Max F. Millikan, 23 November 1964; Louis Lefeber to Max F. Millikan, 18 November 1964; Douglas Ensminger to Max F. Millikan, 16 November 1965, Box 10, Folder 7, MIT; "Indian Plan, U.S. Model?", *Now* (24 December 1964), 3–4; Blackmer, *MIT*, 180–192.

76 Warren, "Uproar"; "Office of Asia Foundation"; Berreman, "Not So Innocent Abroad"; Leslie/Kargon, "Exporting MIT", 116; Hill/Haynes/Baumgartel, *Institution Building in India*, 120–127.

77 Saberwal, "Problem", 11, 13; Kumar, "Servitude of the Mind", 21, 24; Kothair, "Tasks Within", 16.

In 1970, Ensminger retired from the Ford Foundation. After he left India, the New Delhi office underwent a major review and restructuring in 1973 that cut its budget and slashed its core programme staff to about a dozen Foundation officers. The new Foundation representative, Harry Wilhelm, in collaboration with New York, reoriented Ford Foundation funding away from large, direct grants to the Government of India and toward smaller grants to an array of non-governmental organisations. The changes reflected, in part, a response to the particular context of worsening Indo-American relations. With the Government of India scrutinising visas for foreign scholars and requesting USAID to close out its university technical assistance programmes, Wilhelm declared that the era of the foreign consultant was over.[78] Yet the changes in the Ford Foundation's programmes in India also reflected broader patterns of US philanthropic support for international development, from disillusionment with statist planning to an overall pessimism about the possibilities of engineering massive social and economic changes through expert knowledge and US capital. As the decade's oil shocks reduced the Foundation's endowment, Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy oriented the diminished Foundation's resources toward US domestic grant making. From a high of 122 million dollars in 1966, the international division's budget had fallen to 84 million dollars by 1973.[79]

Shortly after leaving the Ford Foundation, Ensminger dictated his memories of his nineteen years in India. "No one looked at me as a foreigner," he asserted. "I shed my foreign cloak, if I ever wore one." Within the Planning Commission he was seen as "Ensminger" and "only rather secondary as [...] the Ford Foundation representative".[80] These comments appear at once deeply naive and self-serving. Indian officials and experts who dealt with Ensminger always remained cognisant that he represented a powerful and wealthy US philanthropy with strong ties to the US Government. Yet, Ensminger's denial of foreignness does capture something important about the nature of the Delhi field office during its first decade in India: While the politics of the Cold War and its differentials of power shaped the Foundation's actions in India, the exigencies of operating on the ground primed Ensminger to accommodate Indian policymakers' visions of development and to shield the Ford Foundation's programme in India from projects and goals he deemed too controversial. In this way, the Delhi field office oper-

78 Drummond, "Ford Foundation"; Drummond, "India Curtails Research".

79 Ford Foundation, *Ford Foundation, 1952–2002*, 2–8; McCarthy, "From Government", 302.

80 Ensminger, Relationships, Box 1, Folder A8, 3; Ensminger, Foundation's Nineteen Years, Box 13, Folder B21, 4; Ensminger, Planning Commission, Box 1, Folder A3, 7, DEP.

ated in the 1950s and early 1960s as a critical institutional circuit for the negotiation of development knowledge between the United States and the Third World.

5. Conclusion

The story of the Ford Foundation's field office in Delhi suggests several ways in which we must revise our understanding of the global dynamics of knowledge circulation in the twentieth century. A neat centre–periphery model cannot account for the multiple sites of decision-making within foundations and other powerful American and international institutions. Through their field offices, the foundations also operated from the periphery – and sometimes clashed with the centre. Field offices adapted foundation priorities to local political, ideological and intellectual contexts. And as such this reminds us that the foundations did not simply impose US ways of knowing onto the world. In India, the production and dissemination of such knowledge constellations as community development, population control and public administration involved an intricate transnational process of knowledge production among American and Indian policymakers, scientists and expert advisers.

Ultimately, the contours of knowledge production were shaped by the priorities and power of US and Indian elites. The Ford Foundation altered its agenda to fit local contexts, but it did so to conform to the goals of Nehru and his government. In the case of India, those who criticised Nehru's vision of development, from US free marketers to India's Communist Party to local people, stood outside the circle of Ford-funded knowledge. Acknowledging this narrowness of vision while simultaneously examining collaborations and contestations between centre and periphery allows us to fully investigate foundation-led knowledge production.