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"Don't look at me": anonymity, philanthropy and UK universities

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Abstract

Donor anonymity in philanthropy is minimally researched, yet it continues to form part of the
range of contemporary philanthropic landscapes, posing operational and governance
dilemmas for receiving institutions.UK universities form one such group of institutions,
seeking to balance privacy, autonomy and transparency needs and demands , while
maximising income. Freedom of Information (FoI) requirements, to which UK universities are
subject, is providing opportunities to examine how universities are responding to public
questions concerning their donation profiles and sources, with donor identity a particular
focus of interest. This paper reports on work in progress to review this field, presenting
selective, qualitative extracts from FoI responses to illustrate universities' defences of
anonymous giving and their various rationales. The literatures on anonymity in philanthropy
and are considered briefly, showing that anonymity purposes are a focus, but that the
downstream effects on organisations receiving anonymous gifts, both advantageous and
problematic, are rarely touched. Freedom of Information issues are also examined. The work
is set in the context of a recent, unsuccessful attempt by some UK universities to gain FoI
exemption; and wider public expectations concerning increasing transparency in giving.

Please note: This paper reports work in progress:
            it is not for citation.

Introduction

Many consider that the 'philanthropy of tomorrow' must contrast with current or past philanthropic practice, as with disruption or change rejecting outdated rationales for or forms of giving . Cunningham (2016,42), nevertheless, argues that stratas of philanthropic giving accumulate over one another over time in societies, the present adding " topsoil to the latest projects, but the lower layers continue to exercise their influence". A very present feature of the current 'topsoil', is the imperative to publicise and thus capitalise on donor identity, creating that form of philanthropic role modelling, whose imperative is ,*"hey, look at me"* .(Karlan and McConnell, 2014). Visibility of donors, whether among traditional or new elites provides a philanthropic motivation in its own right (Pharoah, 2016, 78), expected leverage among other would-be donors and degrees of beneficiary and donor transparency. Its converse, donor invisibility, is a longstanding part of the philanthropic stratum. Expressed through donor anonymity, the withholding or cloaking of the giver's identity (Nissenbaum, 1999), this stratum ideally emphasises donor humility as integral to the virtue of generosity , itself a disposition rather than a behaviour (Sablosky, 2014).Pragmatically however, donor anonymity also serves to shield donors from unbidden requests and deflects or protects from criticism, where donors fund contentious causes, or seek hidden policy influence (Boyd and Field, 2016); suggesting multiple rationales for the alternative assertion of *"don't look at me".*

Yet donor anonymity, despite having once been the morally preferred position of the giver, is becoming for many its least acceptable form, part of a developing frame of mistrust of philanthropy itself, whether peopled by 'shadowy' donors, whose social agendas may, at worst, clash with those of the majority of citizens ((Barkan, 2013; Horvath and Powell, 2017), or in receipt of illegitimate or tainted money (Dunn 2010). Through the active seeking of donor anonymity in institutional giving , tensions arise, between accountability on the one hand, and privacy , discretion and autonomy on the other; creating operational dilemmas where institutions are trying to balance privacy and transparency concerns, while maximising income.

UK higher education provides one such group of institutions, facing contradictory pressures

of attracting resources in the face of declining or absent public funds while demonstrating responsiveness to transparency demands (Hunsaker,2010, Jones 2014). The focus of sustained governmental encouragement to grow philanthropic giving (Pharoah and Zimmeck 2015), UK universities are now also bracing for major projected funding losses, consequent on EU departure. (Begg and Featherstone,2015,13, for example assess a hitherto net gain to the UK of £2.7bn from the EU Framework Programme ; see also House of Commons, 2017). Meanwhile, as predominantly public authorities , subject to Freedom of Information (FoI) legislation, external scrutiny of universities' philanthropic development is both possible and growing, through FoI   questions. How then is anonymous giving being treated in these major institutions, where transparency demands also dominate ? How important does anonymous giving appear in UK higher education ?   How prominent is the *"don't look at me"* stance and to what extent, are universities deferring to growing transparency demands or prioritising the privacy of their philanthropists? To what extent is the public good served by anonymity in giving?

In this paper, we explore these questions, following Skopek (2015,725), defining anonymity as "the condition of being unidentified at a given time and place" , rather than being the condition of being unidentifiable. We are reporting work in progress, and frame our paper using literatures from three perspectives which intersect: the nature of anonymity in philanthropy settings, the environments of universities' philanthropic fundraising; and the extent of scholarship on Freedom of Information developments and interpretation. We then report and discuss illustrative and selective research findings on the extent of and the treatment of anonymous donors in UK universities, as revealed from our current (ongoing and wider) study of the content of UK universities' philanthropy disclosures, arising from Freedom of Information requests , 2014-2015. (Different FoI legislation pertains to Scotland on the one hand and the rest of the UK on the other.[i]

Using data in the public domain, we are approaching donor anonymity from the perspective of the receiving institutions, rather than from the donors; and from governance and knowledge sharing perspectives rather than from donors' motivations for anonymity. We report emergent findings showing universities' clear support for the anonymity giving principle and practice, and their pushback on questioning 'beyond names' , e.g. to

nationality, fields, departments and activities funded, tending towards the case for university exceptionalism . Against the background of leading UK universities' recent, failed attempt to gain FoI legislation exemption (Independent Commission, 2016) , our discussion may suggest that philanthropy development, in all its facets, needs to become increasingly central to universities' governance debates. Our focus on this (limited) example of what may be viewed as 'enforced knowledge sharing' forms one aspect of our wider argument that previous collegiality within fundraising and among fundraisers in increasingly likely to collapse.(Harrow and Jung, forthcoming.) Finally , in considering 'public good' questions (Jung and Harrow 2016), our paper reflects on anonymity in giving's alternative futures and its place in the task of theorising philanthropy.

Research design and method

Our research concerns the discovery of patterns of donorship in UK universities from the perspectives of donor identity and anonymity and university governance issues, as revealed in UK FOI documentation, 2014/15. We are compiling a database across all UK universities subject to FOI legislation; undertaking web searching , using the public interest non-profit website, founded by the UK non-profit mySpace, collating freedom of information questions on public bodies across the topic spectrum, and provides a search facility for questions to universities.(www.whatdotheyknow.com.) Within this , we have been able to search for 'donations', 'income', 'philanthropy; 'giving' and 'funding'; and are backing up this data on by a university-by-university web search for FoIs.. We are working solely with documentation in the public domain. In particular, we are not asking questions ourselves, as part of a research or other investigative process. This paper is reporting only on those aspects of anonymity which appear in relevant content, providing illustrative material, in a qualitative format, and is a work in progress.   We are also progressing literature for anonymity and freedom of information , and material from these precedes our findings.

The anonymity literatures

Skopek's argument   (2015, 725) , not defining anonymity as the condition of being unidentifiable, "but rather as the condition of being unidentified at a given time and place" is important - anonymity presupposes a knower. For Nissenbaum (1999, 141) , remaining

nameless is then "conducting oneself without revealing one's name" ; a situation seemingly highly dependent upon the equal will of others to sustain confidentiality, as well as the donor's, to remain unrevealed. Complete donor anonymity seems hard to ensure, and at major giving levels ,some 'leakage', from anonymity or quasi- anonymity, to fully-fledged openness also occurs. (For example, Atlantic Philanthropies, whose founder-donor began anonymously in 1982, with his philanthropy unknown "except for a very small circle of advisers", not "an easy secret to keep"., Bridgespan, (ND). Marx (1999) defines anonymity as one polar value of a broad dimension of identifiability versus identifiability, relating it to privacy, confidentiality and secrecy, while emphasising that being 'not known' (as in name or location) is not the same as being 'unknown' (for example, where anonymous donors with a history of giving in predictable ways become 'known' to charities.)

Nissenbaum argues that "where we judge anonymity (to be) acceptable, or even necessary, we do so because anonymity offers a safe way for people to act, transact, and participate without accountability, without others getting at them, tracking them down, or even punishing them." Anonymity may be achieved "through layers of cloaking" (ibid, 144). In philanthropy, these layers may be to donor or beneficiary advantage; as in strategies for accepting or declining gifts from tainted sources (Dunn 2010, Harrow 2016). Acting anonymously also offers a duality of expectation and response, lauded and protected on the one hand and capable of creating abuses of power on the other.

Problematising or challenging aspects of anonymity ranges from the practical disadvantages to the extent of ambiguity around whether anonymity is in fact the better moral position. Jaworski for example (2013) confronts the issue directly "Is anonymous philanthropy really the most virtuous?" citing the extent to which anonymous giving can overly sanitise an authentically human connection, and whether charity is seen as an individual or culturally-based activity. On balance he draws attention to the visibility case and the loss occurring when opportunities for attracting new funds through donor identity is denied. Similarly, Abbe (2015,76) reports , in the context of university giving, that research by "the Women's Philanthropy Institute and its founders …reveal that women philanthropists prefer anonymity, which unfortunately results in a dearth of female role models for generations of

women." The privacy afforded by museums, where donors "are given the opportunity to hide their identity for their own reasons so that good can be achieved", is seen as hiding "questionable behaviour" (such as tax fraud) with "these donations ….hailed by nearly everyone as philanthropic"(Yates, 2016, 173).

Much of the literature concentrates on the 'why' and the 'who' of anonymous giving , such as wariness of self –indulgence (Gach, 2015), and responsiveness to religious and socio-cultural norms. Lambarraa and Reiner (2102) for example, observed in field experiments in Morocco the positive effect of anonymity on donation incidence and a clear effect on the distribution of giving for religious people when religion is salient. "Although charitable giving is a crucial pillar of Islam, the explicit social norm of the value of charitable giving depending on anonymity, outweigh that benefit of giving itself"(ibid.24). Schervish's classic exploration of anonymous giving identified rationales including allowing the receiver to 'pursue their mission with less encumbrance' (Schervish, 1994,5),'to deflect the embarrassment of being a philanthropist' , 'to disguise the fact that one is wealthy' and 'to transcend the corrupting lures of wealth and philanthropy' (ibid, 8). In contrast, though with "less to report", anonymity was seen by Schervish's respondents as incompatible with a hands-on approach to funded organisations, while recognising the need for inducements among some donors , especially where a lack of recognition would lead to neglect of unconventional but important causes("if he wants a plaque, give him a plaque" ibid., 16). As a landmark paper, this work also emphasises the research challenges of the field, not least through its reliance on self-reporting (in this case 'intensive interviews' in the research programme with '130 millionaires'.)

Importantly, philanthropy history does not present a unified view of anonymous giving as previous 'golden age' activity, nor one in which anonymity's centrality in society and its socially-sanctioned status was extensive. In periods for example, when voluntary giving was a hallmark of a society willing to make significant voluntary social provision in communities, such as the 17th- 18th century Dutch Republic, anonymous giving was not at its centre. Teewen (2012,) describes how giving for networks of local institutions was in principle both voluntary and anonymous, with alms boxes enabling the most anonymous and voluntary charitable act possible; yet these boxes usually yielded relatively small sums of money. In

17th and 18th century Delft on average only 6.4 per cent of collection revenues came from poor boxes, in Zwolle, this figure was about 3.6 per cent. Unlike the situation with collections in churches and in the streets, Teewen assesses "when donating to alms boxes every form of social pressure was absent, and this may explain why so little was given this way"(ibid, 277.)   Again, pressure from the press to move away from anonymous giving, at a time of emergency is recorded in Kudlick's analysis of giving during the 1832 Parisian cholera epidemic, which she entitles 'Giving is Deceiving' (Kudlick, 1993). Here in the earliest days of the epidemic the *Moniteur universel* started taking note of charitable contributions, printed daily, and reprinted by other newspapers, the lists contained the name, sometimes the address, and always the amount of the contribution, with a series of more descriptive notes discussing specific good deeds. Critically, the paper encouraged contributors to "make their names known."

Flew (2015)however examining anonymous giving in nineteenth century Victorian society, argues for its importance in highlighting the personal and private aspects of charitable giving, including the philanthropist's relationship with God and their deeply felt connection with the charitable cause. In a study to unveil the identities and motivations of some anonymous philanthropists through entries in charity minute books and through the pseudonyms and initials (following contemporary literary usage and conventions), Flew examines examples of donors using alternative approaches, sometimes named and sometimes not, and of large anonymous donations indicating the importance of the cause. For Flew, anonymity, therefore, can be viewed as a tool that can be used both to hide identity and to communicate identity.

In contemporary studies of practice, it can be suggested that anonymous giving complicates if not challenges market-based exchange theories of charitable action, whereby employing a market model-based 'exchange theory' assumes that giving is a series of reciprocated 'purchases' by donors seeking maximum utility.(Hanson 2015). If , following Hanson (ibid) relinquishment of wealth is a declaration of power, then anonymising the wealthy giver is a lessening of not abandonment of that power; or indeed an alternative expression of power altogether. In their account of the Bavarian State Opera's 2006 mailout seeking donations for a social youth project Bassi et al (2016) are exploring 'charitable giving by corporates and

aristocrats' , and describe the mailout's (truthful) use of anonymous donors to lever in funds. (Letters indicated for example that "A generous donor who prefers not to be named has already been enlisted. He will support "Stück für Stück" with ε60,000. Unfortunately, this is not enough to fund the project completely which is why I would be glad if you were to support the project with your donation…" or that "A generous donor who prefers not to be named has already been enlisted. He will support "Stück für Stück" with up to ε60,000 by donating, for each donation that we receive within the next four weeks regardless of the donation amount, another ε20. In light of this unique opportunity I would be glad if you were to support the project with your donation.") Here, the implied power of the anonymous donor is shown, the quality of project signalled, and no evident 'exchange' is offered, since new donors would also not be named. Signalling charity project quality is also central to Peacey and Sanders' 'masked heroes' research (2014), studying a large set of donations associated with London Marathon runners, finding that not only are anonymous donations likely to be larger than public ones, and that "donations following a large anonymous donation are larger than those following a large public donation" (ibid, 4.). Again, these studies challenge those for whom the naming of donors is the ultimate quality signalling (and not deterrent.)

Equally complex is the question as to whether anonymous giving is more likely to flow from close connections to or sharing a cause or situation, (see Osella and Widger 2017) , where it is not relevant to be seen as a public benefactor (and when signalling itself may not be a motivator, but empathy or compassion); or whether anonymous giving occurs , being valuable precisely because it does not rely on any close connection between donor and recipient. In the latter case, as fundraising communication becomes more varied and technologically driven, the questions of closeness and distance and those of privacy, become more intertwined. For example, Gleasure and Feller (2016, 499) consider that "for charities, crowdfunding presents novel donation behaviors, including those where donors may proactively seek out causes and give (often anonymously) to help others with whom they share little social connectivity." Moreover, Gach (2015, 16) records the co-founder of a pro-social crowdfunding company reporting "pushback for only offering visible donations when they launched " they had no option for anonymous contributions, moving under pressure to change this.

Taken together therefore, this brief review of the literatures on anonymity makes clear that anonymity in giving is not going to go away; and indeed, where it is absent, it may be making something of a return. While associated with very significant 'large' donations of the 'HNWs', it is to be found continuously among the 'LNWs', both deliberately or in situations where names were never collected (say in street collections) or simply never offered. The paradoxes of anonymity rationales and purposes continue to receive scholarly attention (as in the enduring study of 'why give') but the downstream effects on organisations *receiving* anonymous gifts, both advantageous and problematic seems barely touched.

These effects may be time-consuming and variously easy to manage, for example, investigative-journalism type inquiries, seeking to discover or guessing 'the name'. They may be worrying, especially if public attention is gained, and if organisational guidelines on anonymity are not developed or unclear. (The most recent England and Wales Charity Commission guidance to trustees on charity fundraising (2016, 6.6) incorporates the arrival of 'large' anonymous gifts to a charity within its consideration of "suspicious donations'.) They may also be liberating; giving increased attention to the resulting work, especially if the 'close up and personal' attentions of, for example, social entrepreneur-donors (Ostrander 2007) are avoided or minimised. For large institutions in the public eye - hospitals, schools, universities, whether wholly private or public bodies, able to receive charitable funding – anonymous giving raises governance challenges , often of new kinds, for which they need to be prepared and for which they need explanatory narratives at hand. It is this group, specifically the universities, to which we now turn.

Higher education and funding issues
The pressures on higher education funding globally are such that philanthropic gifts are increasingly central to their work, or have always been the bedrock of their work, status and achievements. Literature on alumni giving is prominent. This is especially so in North American contexts, but see, for example work on modelling alumni loyalty in German and Russian universities. (Ishakhova et al, 2016), while any focus on anonymity in giving seems absent. Pressures on universities' espoused values when seeking, receiving and deploying philanthropic gifts are increasingly open to external rather than simply internal concern and

commentary (Hunsaker, 2010, Jones, 2014). Questions arise too concerning universities' ability to meet donors' expectations (Farley 2016) . On the wider scale, these developments impact upon universities' evolving and communicated identities (Macdonald 2013, discussing US state universities) while from European perspectives, Mampaey, Huisman, (2015) argue that stakeholder management literature must be extended by theorizing defensive strategies in response to stakeholder criticism. In a single case study they explore defensive strategies in the mass media by one research-intensive European university , demonstrating that those strategies vary according to the type of criticism. Reverting back to funding issues Chan (2016) finds that the range of university personnel roles involved in obtaining major organisations and private gifts result from conformity, imitation and institutional isomorphism. Meanwhile in the UK context , Warren et al (2016, 837) find that professional networks for university fundraisers " provide both open spaces of learning and a means of achieving competitive advantage".

The absence of extensive examination of anonymous giving in universities, whilst combined with documenting the increasing external scrutiny they are receiving or need to prepare for, does not mean that anonymous is giving is not occurring; nor that it is or is no longer on a large scale. In June 2017 when this paper was being completed, two press announcements, in the US and New Zealand captured large scale events, as box 1 below indicates:

Box 1: anonymous giving of major gifts to NZ and US universities, June 2017

> **Anonymous donor gives $3.4m to university, http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/332350/**
>
> An anonymous donor has gifted Massey University $3.4 million, thought to be the largest single donation it has received in its 90-year history. The donor, who asked for complete anonymity, requested the money be invested in a way that supports postgraduate scholarships.
>
> **MIT Gets $140 Million Pledge From Anonymous Donor Melissa Korn ,The Wall Street Journal,** 7.6
> Unrestricted gift of such a size rare in higher education as donors often want say in how money is spent.

Also on June 2017, the (US) Chronicle of Philanthropy (2017) published 'Major Private Gifts to Higher Education', 1967- 2017', listing predominantly US-receiving institutions over this period, with tiny numbers for Europe and Australasia. Appendix A presents these in tabular form.

From the perspective of public scrutiny, and specifically from freedom of information perspectives, what are the developments in UK universities? The following sections examine freedom of information issues and FoI scholarship, followed by an account and discussion of our research to date.

Freedom of Information issues

In those seventy plus countries with freedom of information laws (Relly, 2012), citizens and organisations, broadly , in a given jurisdiction, have the right to request access to records held by various levels of government or public bodies. Where universities are held to be public bodies , the range of such requests may include the publication of information on universities' donations levels, sources and size; with potentially unpredictable results for a number of parties. The United Kingdom is one such country, where universities are 'public authorities', and subject to such legislation, whereas "private industries engaged in research are not" (Wilson, 2011,107). (Different legislation pertains to Scotland and the remainder of the UK .Such a situation necessarily places pressures on universities' development and fundraising professionals as they compete for funds ; while questions raised and answers given, are themselves subject to interpretation. Such questions however take on particular salience in the UK, with the creation of a government Independent Commission to review the workings of the FOIA 2000 in July 2015 . The universities' 'Russell Group' lobbied for exemption , on grounds of 'unfairness'; and the "creation of competitive imbalance in the higher education market" (Bradshaw 2016,29) . The 'Universities UK Group' , asserting that " as regulated charities, all universities also publish annual reports and financial statements providing a wealth of information about individual institutions' activities", called for "universities to continue to make information available, while allowing for appropriate and common-sense exemptions." (Dandridge 2016,np).

Despite some media expectations of lobbying success, the Independent Commission (2016) made no such exemption recommendations in its March 2016 report , and further reported finding these universities' evidence of competitive disadvantage "unpersuasive".   Yet Worthy and Bourke (2012, 19) looking at FoI impact on universities , and changes around

HR, research and contracts, reported findings including "concern about the effects of competition in the future as the university landscape changes." Burt and Taylor (2010, 119) see delivery of FOI generally as "infused by political behaviours and constrictions", while John (2011, 22) observing early users of FoI access in Scotland comments that "public trust and transparency do not always flow from increased access" , Cherry and McMenemy, (2013) nevertheless suggest that in relation to local government (again in Scotland), increasing numbers of requests for information "suggests that it has been successful in opening up councils to public scrutiny. "

Such variations confirm Mitchener and Worthy's (2015, 1) case that scholarship on transparency and freedom of information "conveys an overwhelmingly 'political' narrative'; citing cite White's (2007) metaphor for the political framing of FOI questions as the "iceberg effect", (a few requests attract controversy, while the majority go unnoticed). Alongside the case for legally-based information discovery, Ntim al (2017, 65), studying UK HE annual reports,   find that in UK universities "the level of voluntary disclosure by UK HEIs remains low." Further, "the varying level and selective basis of the disclosures across the surveyed HEIs suggest that the public accountability motive is weaker relative to the other motives underpinned by stakeholder, legitimacy and resource dependence perspectives" (ibid.)

Our research interest lies in the content of FoI questions and answers and whether and to what extent universities' answers extend our understanding of philanthropy's role within UK higher education. As such, we lack a theoretical framework with a university-specific concentration (although communication theory and identity theory have relevance). However we have drawn on Mitchener and Worthy 's (2015) 'information –gathering matrix' , although designed to categorise motivations of FOI requests, rather than requester-respondent content, this matrix has helped examine possible ways to cluster universities' responses and their content.

Mitchener and Worthy propose two axes for consideration . Firstly 'public/private', where the motivation is seeking the public interest, and is 'other regarding' or is concerned with private use, and is self-regarding, on behalf of an individual or group. Secondly, 'political-

nonpolitical' motivations – the former motivated by a desire to influence and check 'who gets what, when and how'; the latter by a desire for information, personal or collective. Four quadrants follow:

table 1, the FOI information gathering matrix adapted, from Michener and Worthy op. cit.

Quadrant 1: Publicly –oriented political information gathering: *'keeping government accountable'*	Quadrant 2: Privately-oriented political information gathering *'ensuring fairness'*
Quadrant 3 Publicly –oriented nonpolitical information gathering: *'informing to empower*	Quadrant 4 Privately-oriented nonpolitical information gathering *'securing benefits'*

Michener and Worthy recognise that distinctions between quadrants can be hard to make; and that "the dividing line between political and nonpolitical, public and private is likely to remain contested"(ibid, 17). They go on to consider "the existence of a gap between what information gathering suggests in theory and what happens on the ground".

Preliminary research findings regarding anonymity in university philanthropy

Using our search terms, 395 FoI questions relating to donations and funding (where this

included philanthropy) ,were identified for the period 2014/15, for 134 universities. The median number of information requests was 3, with 80 universities receiving this number. Request figures range from 0 to 9. At least one request was received by 128 universities , with 21 receiving 4 or more requests. Of these 21, half were Russell Group members, with three Russell Group members showing the highest numbers of requests (Cambridge 9, Oxford 7, Glasgow 5.)

Whilst some questions were made to number of universities, others were not and appeared tailor-made; some appearing to recognise the complexities of universities' multiple financial sources , others not. University responses are contrasting, from minimal (such as providing the university's 'development brochure') to the maximal. This extent of variation mirrors closely Richter and Wilson's finding (2013) that among local authorities and other public bodies of the north east of England, there was considerable variance in the ways and means of responding organizationally to the FOI Act; with consequent implications for meeting the legislation's aims of increased transparency and public engagement with the processes of public bodies.

Questioners were keen to attach names to all donors , individual and organisational; rather than seeking information about the nature and extent of anonymous giving only. In this sense, requesters either were not asking specifically about or did not expect to need to ask about anonymous giving; rather the anonymity issue was raised by the universities. Linking names to geographical or regional identity made appearances; with some regions (such as the Near and Middle East) a particular focus. Conflation of requests for information on donations for research with information on other resources gained for research, e.g. through 'partnerships' ,demonstrates, if unwittingly, the complexities of 'knowing' about universities' funding sources, when and if funds from philanthropic and non-philanthropic (or quasi-philanthropic) sources are integrated.

Box 2 provides selected illustrative examples of FoI questions' content and approach:

Box 2 : extracts from FOI requests to UK universities on donations and funding ,2014-15 illustrative examples (Requester and university not identified)

'..the donations, broken down by donor name, alumni (yes or no), amount given , whether given for a specific purpose'

'a list of all donations made to the University or specific faculties in the University, broken down for the academic years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14; the name or organisation that made the donation, the amount donated, the date (at least mm/yy) when the donation was made, and whether the debate was made to a specific department or the university as a whole'

'the value of donations or partnerships received for research in the area of Wind Energy, 2001-2015, the year they were received and who funded the grant'

'total of donations made by named governmental and non governmental organisations and to which departments'

'all sources of funding either by donations or research grants from nationals or organisations based in the following country: Bahrein, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Turkey, Israel, Palestine, Yemen"

*(*Using the same 'countries' list above)
'what is the total of donations made by nationals, by governments and by NGOs;
what is the total made to courses (postgraduate, graduate, undergraduate) with significant Oriental Studies/Islamic (Arabic) Studies/Jewish(Hebrew) Studies elements?

How many research and teaching positions are funded in part or solely by respective governmental, nongovernmental or nationals of the above list? And what is the breakdown in terms of department, subject area, school etc?

"the value of any donations or partnerships received for research in the area of hydraulic fracturing between 1 January 2011 and 2 December 2001, the year they were received and who funded the grant'.

Among the institutions receiving on average three questions within a year on philanthropy and donation issues, responses indicate named donations outweighing strongly those given anonymously. Responding universities were nevertheless resolute in defence of anonymous donations, refusing to 'name names', while acknowledging their levels of giving (none of the scale of those in appendix A.) Universities' responses largely asserted their actions in detail , as protective of donors' interests ; suggesting growing awareness of the kinds of scrutiny on philanthropy that is coming universities' way. As such, these responses raise further and especially governance, issues. Two detailed responses concerning naming departmental level donor funding, illustrate this. One noted the necessary exclusion in its reply of any gifts received through its US-based tax-exempt foundation. The other recorded, fairly, if alarmingly, that "*there may be other philanthropic gifts to the (university) that are not known to the Development Division.*"

Box 3, below, provides illustrative examples of university responses.

Box 3 : extracts from responses by UK universities to FoI requests on donations and funding ,2014-15 : illustrative examples (Requester and university not identified)

> "*the names of donors to the University's annual fund are listed in the attached donor reports in the public domain. Other donors have not given their permission for their names to made public and therefore these cannot be supplied. Please note that section 40(2) of the FoI Act 2000 states that information is exempt if its disclosure to a member of the public would contravene any of the data protection principles. In this case, the University is satisfied that disclosure of the names of donors would breach (Principle One)…because the individuals concerned would have a reasonable expectation that this information would be treated confidentially*"
>
> "*Information on the dates of donations is confidential and is not supplied*"
>
> "*given our research strategy, we are increasingly dependent on additional sources of income. We feel that breaking down the information to the level requested would impact significantly on our funding and on our commercial activities. We consider this to be commercial information and so we are unable to release this under (legal exception quoted)……where such confidentiality is*

> *provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest".*
>
> *" (regarding request on donations or partnerships for research in area of Solar Energy)… we can confirm that we hold the following information : In 2013, XXX received a total of £43,177 from company Y, as part of the company's commitment of £85,261 to fund a PhD studentship for researching renewable energy (PhD project details follow).*
> *Funding of £10,500 was received in 2011 for a consultancy project funded by the XXX Foundation for research into the utilisation of solar resources in deserts worldwide."*
>
> *"….Some of the information you requested is refused under section xx of the act , because its release would breach the first data protection principle……..This applies (i) to donors who wished their gifts to remain anonymous and were given explicit or implicit guarantees of confidentiality- breaching these duties of confidence manifestly would be unfair to those donors and (ii) to donors who gave less than £10,000 – these individuals would not reasonably anticipate that the University would release their identities into the public domain..".*
>
> on numbers of offers of donations which have been rejected: *"this information is not held"*

Discussion

Our content examination in relation to anonymity issues to date suggests that perceptions of a university's own institutional identity affect the ways in which the donor identity questions are answered. Questioners are able to 'dig deep' on a range of donor-related questions, including alumni giving levels , giving's depth and breadth; and staff giving, but 'the naming names' questions are mostly declined with the alternative principle of privacy presented, as that by which universities see themselves constrained. Although donor protection rather than university protection appears the standard rationale, the cited example of the university asserting its own (commercial) interests as the non -disclosure rationale stands out. Here, the university rather than the donor is seen as at risk. Although this was in response to a question, regarding research funding related to a particular business area, that included 'partnerships' *and* donations, it seems possible that such a stance could increasingly come to be seen to apply, *de facto*, to philanthropic donations in

their own right.

Some more detailed rationales create more uncertainties , for example concerning what constitutes an 'implicit' guarantee of anonymity. The non-naming of those giving *under* certain sums suggests different interpretations .There is a common sense aspect of not documenting publicly tiny sums for external scrutiny. However, the perspective that some donors of smaller sums would expect and require require confidentiality,(perhaps lest their giving levels were regarded as embarrassing) is intriguing; a kind of 'Giving Pledge in reverse'. (This prompted further discussion as to whether 'mean' donors might routinely seek anonymity, in order not to be 'called out' or shown up.) Largely robust rejection of data on donor nationality is aided, not only by its being 'not kept' (arguably a questionable defence in the 'numbers of rejected donations ' case), but by the roles of intermediaries (who may themselves cloak the donor, legitimately or not) as well as universities' willingness to challenge questions on donor citizenship in its own right. Centrally, though, the question remains as to the extent to which and whether the anonymous donor is – and is always – deserving of protection. Even though as researchers we are working with 'the hand we have been given', it was perhaps inevitable that we have started thinking about the questions that so far have *not* been asked (for example those concerning universities' codes of contact or ethical guidelines on gift acceptance.)

The complexities of the anonymity literature were reflected in the response content, notably that while universities were defending donor anonymity on the basis of privacy, it was possible from the approach of the questions to assume that questioners are expecting secrecy, especially where replies concerned 'data not kept'. The intriguing question over time whether anonymous giving can also create signals of institutional worth as well as the publicly celebrated (or criticised) donor remains. It is however the case that one of the two the UK university gifts in the megagift 'category 3' report (appendix A) , which fell in our study period was not an anonymous gift. Questions of power raised by anonymous donors, who by no means guarantee a 'leave alone policy' but may seek to exert great influence , for which their anonymity is essential, cannot be addressed from this study and at this stage. Since FoI questions are 'requester blind' (their purposes do not have to be revealed) we can only surmise that some questioners remain very unsatisfied; not least where holding out on

anonymity may cause suspicion where there is no cause,. This remains a change for university governance, both around bringing philanthropy further 'in' to its leading considerations, especially as other areas of voluntary disclosure have proved very limited.

Michener and Worthy's quadrant has been influential in moulding our expectations of the tenor of university responses, for example, when questions are capable of multiple interpretation. However, attempts to analyse content of HE replies as falling clearly within the quadrants have not been successful .Any number of examples we have cited suggest dual rationales of questions aiming to '*keeping government accountable*' and '*informing to empower'.* Meanwhile, those responses reflecting some accountability can also be argued as '*ensuring fairness*' – but fairness for the university, not the FoI inquirer. With all the pressure on the responder side, this is also a debate worth having more openly within university governance boundaries. Universities might indeed argue that they need protection from a variety of questioners, who may in the future even include development professionals from other universities, for whom the FoI information could well have value.

Conclusions

Rosemary Deem's reflections on ' *a future for higher education'* fourteen years ago (2003, 78) were wary of the UK government plan that "money will flow into the universities from all directions". That this has indeed been the case is showing in the work in progress we describe, but is bringing new consequences for universities' thriving, governance and standing. Probing questions are tending less to clarify and more highlight what further is not known .Data made public is not easily seen as revelatory but demonstrates just how very differently universities are currently responding while continuing to give primacy to privacy over accountability. The debate and dilemma as to whether sustaining anonymity for donors is sacrosanct or risks a disservice to institutional ethical practice and transparent behaviour may be a price that universities are paying for the 'money flowing in'.

Our work has important limitations, as well as not yet being complete. It takes FOI information content at face value, and raises challenges regarding philanthropic giving 's position within universities' finances, as ring-fenced or increasingly pooled with other

sources . It also lacks universities' responses to the impact of such donation FoI questions; the next stage of our study. As a stand-alone work , it would gain from parallel study of universities' ethical guidelines on funding sources.   For the moment however , universities' support for the primacy of donor privacy seems characterised by a requirement for questioners to avert their gaze, as in *"don't look at me";* but in some cases also by a somewhat aggressive *"who are you looking at?"* response. It is possible that the scholarly advocacy of universities developing clearer defensive strategies towards stakeholders is already taking root. Such a route to exceptionalism by universities, especially if other charitable forms in the UK find themselves impelled to increase disclosures regarding anonymous gifts, (see CFG,2016, 15) , carries further risks; not least those of yet more unwelcome scrutiny of their economic well-being. While university giving offers an evident 'public good' , within hybridised universities; finances), anonymised giving especially expresses philanthropy's discretionary and preferential nature. (Jung and Harrow, 2016) It follows that such discretions and preferences will offer this sector flexibility but will hamper equity between universities and increase the distance between them.

As such, it is certain that Carnegie's dictum (1901) that supporting a university is the best use to which millionaires can put their philanthropic resources, is taking on new complexity.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A
'Major Private Gifts to Higher Education', 1967- 2017
Source The Chronicle of Higher Education's 'Almanac of Higher Education;.
Published online 7 June 2017, http://www.chronicle.com/article/Major-Private-Gifts-to-Higher/128264

Category 1 Gifts over $101million,

102 gifts recorded, 96 in USA, 1 in Germany, 2 in UK, 1 Israel, 1 Singapore,1 Taiwan.

Of these 102 gifts, 4 are recorded from anonymous donor

Institution	Donor	Amount of gift	Date
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	anonymous donor	$360million	2001
		$150 million	2007
University of California at San Francisco	anonymous donor		
		Estimated £200million	2010
Baylor University	anonymous donor, pledged bequest		
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	anonymous donor	$140million	2017

Category 2 Gifts of £100 million
91 gifts recorded, 89 in USA, 2 in Israel
Of these 91 gifts, 6 are recorded from anonymous donor

Institution	Donor	Amount of gift	Date
Cornell University	Anonymous donor	$100million	1999
		$100 million	2007
University of Chicago	Anonymous donor		
		$100 million	2007
Washington and Lee University	Anonymous donor		
		$100 million	2009
Amherst College	Anonymous donor		
		$100 million	2014
Oregon Health & Science University	Anonymous donor		
		$100 million	2014
Dartmouth College	Anonymous donor		

Category 3 Gifts of $99.9million to $50.1 million

107 gifts are recorded, 103 in USA, 1 in Switzerland, 2 in UK, 1 in Australia

Of these .16 are recorded from anonymous donors

Institution	Donor	Amount of gift	Date
Cornell University Medical College	Anonymous donor	$50million	1983
Carnegie Mellon	Anonymous donor	$54million	1997

University			
Iowa State University	Anonymous donor	$80million	1999
Cornell University Weill Medical College	Anonymous donor	$50million	2003
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas	Anonymous donor	$50million	2003
Creighton University	Anonymous donor	$50million	2004
Middlebury College	Anonymous donor	$50million	2004
University of Tennessee at Knoxville	Anonymous donor	$50million	2006
Westmont College	Anonymous donor	$75million	2006
Dartmouth College	Anonymous family donor	$50million	2009
Purdue University	Anonymous bequest	$65 million	2013
College of William and Mary	anonymous donor	$50million	2015
University of California at San Francisco	anonymous donor	$50million	2015
Wellesley College	two anonymous alumnae	$50million	2015
Yale University	Anonymous donor	$50million	2016
Iowa State University	anonymous couple	$93million	2017