

ABSTRACT

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Interdependence of global foundations: a study of interlocks

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Abstract:

When a firm sits at the board of two different organizations it is said that the organizations are connected through interlocks. Interlocks may reduce uncertainty by enabling the organization to directly obtain information and resources from its environment which facilitates its adaptation. Therefore, interlocks may for example be useful to diminish competition, mitigate the risk of takeover or secure access to debt. While implications of firm interlocks have been studied for decades, research on non-profit interlocks is in its infancy, and research on non-profits of international scope is missing.

The number of foundations tackling global health issues has grown in the last two decades. Their missions are frequently complementary and their organizational structures share some similarities. Their boards may have in common founders (e.g. United Nations, World Health Organization), funders (e.g. governments, foundations, firms) and stakeholders (e.g. civil society organizations and recipient governments). Therefore, it is likely that these foundations are interlocked.

We expect an analysis of the boards will shed light on the nature of foundations interconnections and their implications for foundations' transaction patterns and resource flows. The analysis ultimately shows implications for board governance of foundations and the impact of foundations on global health.

The analysis compares two types of global foundations: global coordination and financing foundations such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), and product development foundations such as the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI). A network analysis is undertaken to examine both the position of board members and the structure of the boards.

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