

Foundations were major force behind US rise as a superpower

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(PhysOrg.com) -- A 15-year study of Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie foundations has shown how they made powerful contributions to America's rising fortunes as an international powerhouse.

Professor Inderjeet Parmar from The University of Manchester says the organisations have a century-long history of political activity, with connections all the way up to the US State Department, CIA and National Security Council.

His new book Foundations of the American Century published this month by Columbia University Press argues the complex interrelations, shared mindsets, and collaborative efforts of influential public and private organizations in the building of American hegemony.

He said: "Although today they do contribute to society in positive ways, the Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie Foundations' own records show that beneath a glossy, liberal, philanthropic exterior, they sometimes had sinister side.

"This should not really be so surprising when we consider their founders and origins - steeped in the rise of US corporate capitalism, violent anti-unionism, and political corruption, particularly in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

"Their original founders were industrialists and manufacturers, linked to big banks and finance houses like JP Morgan and Standard Oil.

“Their boards of trustees were, and are, normally drawn from a relatively narrow section of society – lawyers, elite university administrators and presidents, corporate executives, press magnates, former public officials.”

According to Professor Parmar, though US [foundations](#) have continued to affect US foreign policy and development of globalisation since the end of the Cold War.

Foundation networks have been central, he says, in elevating and refining what has become the central rationale of US national security strategy since the collapse of the Soviet union.

He said: “Although globalisation appears to have broadened the recruitment of trustees – there are now more women, people of colour, and foreign nationals – they remain elitist, technocratic and top-down, pro-American organisations.”

Provided by University of Manchester

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