



Philanthropy in Democratic Societies: History, Institutions, Values

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Philanthropy is everywhere. In 2013, in the United States alone, some \$330 billion was recorded in giving, from large donations by the wealthy all the way down to informal giving circles. We tend to think of philanthropy as unequivocally good, but as the contributors to this book show, philanthropy is also an exercise of power. And like all forms of power, especially in a democratic society, it deserves scrutiny. Yet it rarely has been given serious attention. This book fills that gap, bringing together expert philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, historians, and legal scholars to ask fundamental and pressing questions about philanthropy's role in democratic societies.

The contributors balance empirical and normative approaches, exploring both the roles philanthropy has actually played in societies and the roles it should play. They ask a multitude of questions: When is philanthropy good or bad for democracy? How does, and should, philanthropic power interact with expectations of equal citizenship and democratic political voice? What makes the exercise of philanthropic power legitimate? What forms of private activity in the public interest should democracy promote, and what forms should it resist? Examining these and many other topics, the contributors offer a vital assessment of philanthropy at a time when its power to affect public outcomes has never been greater.

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