

INTRODUCTION

Philanthropy in Democratic Societies

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Philanthropy is everywhere.

In the United States and most other countries, we see philanthropy in all areas of modern life. Individuals use private resources to support public benefits of myriad kinds, including poverty relief, education, health care, cultural and artistic expression, international aid, and associational organizations of a thousand different stripes. Sometimes we use philanthropic resources to complement and sometimes to counteract public choices about the allocation of public or taxpayer funds. Philanthropic activity comes in many forms, from large gifts from a few individuals to small donations of money and time from almost everyone, from charitable organizations to private foundations to informal giving circles. Although rates and structures of philanthropy vary by culture and place, people on every continent, from countries rich and poor, democratic and otherwise, give of themselves to benefit others. In the United States, philanthropic activity supports a kaleidoscopic nonprofit sector of well more than one million organizations that accounts for approximately 10 percent of the labor force and that touches the daily lives of most citizens. In 2013, total giving in the United States was estimated to be \$330 billion, an amount larger than the size of the gross domestic product of many countries.

Philanthropy is not just a beneficent activity or a funding mechanism. It can also be a form of power. When Diane Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education, describes Bill Gates as the “unelected superintendent of American schools”¹; or when Stephen Edwards, a policy analyst at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, reports to the *New York Times* that “the practice of science in the 21st century is becoming shaped less by national priorities or by peer-review groups and more by the particular preferences of individuals with huge amounts of money,”² they are referring

to philanthropy as an exercise of private, and yet politically salient, power. When scholars document the shift in American associational life from mass membership organizations to groups managed by professionals who collect donations, rather than volunteer hours, from members, they are describing a significant change in the power wielded by average citizens in civic life.³

As with all forms of power, the practice of philanthropy triggers important questions concerning its typology, emergence, legitimacy, discretion, and distribution. What kind of power—private or political—is philanthropy? How does this power interact with the economic power of market actors and the political power of states? Is the exercise of philanthropic power justifiable and compatible with the fundamental values of a liberal democratic state? What kind of discretion should powerful philanthropic actors possess? What kinds of philanthropic activity should be encouraged, merely permitted, strictly limited, or banned? How is the distribution of philanthropic power affected by and, in turn, how does it affect the distribution of economic resources and political influence across society? These are questions worthy of the attention of scholars across many disciplines.

Yet philanthropy has not received much attention from scholars. Those few who have examined philanthropy have ignored the particular challenges that philanthropy raises in democratic societies. When is philanthropy good or bad for democracy? How does, and should, philanthropic power, which tends naturally to be exercised by the wealthy, interact with expectations of equal citizenship and political voice in a democracy? What makes the exercise of philanthropic power legitimate? What forms of private activity in the public interest should democracy promote and celebrate? What forms should it resist or restrain?

This book arose out of a conviction that philanthropy plays a significant and growing role in democratic societies—in the provision of social services, in cultural activity, basic research, policy advocacy, political engagement, religion, and, of course, in associational life. And yet philanthropic activity resides at the margins of scholarship, a bit player in the overall ordering of human affairs, especially when compared to markets and governments. Our aim in this volume is to make philanthropy the visible object of scholarly scrutiny, to move philanthropy from the margins to the center.

Why, despite its ubiquity and immense practical impact, is philanthropy under-analyzed? We identify three possible reasons. First, many religions extol anonymous giving, and modern legal codes that define philanthropy carry the tradition of anonymity forward. Philanthropy often happens under the radar, unnoticed or unidentifiable by design.

Second, contemporary developments in areas immediately adjacent to traditional philanthropic structures, such as corporate social responsibility, social enterprises, and (in the United States) politically active social welfare organizations, are blurring the lines that once defined the landscape of the philanthropic sector. In seeking earned revenue and in defining measurable outcomes, nonprofit public charities resemble for-profit businesses; and in seeking social as well as financial returns—the so-called double bottom line—for-profit businesses are adopting nonprofit strategies. As a result, the arena of philanthropic activity is expanding while its nature in practice is becoming diluted and fragmented.

Third, when compared to public treasuries or private assets, total philanthropic giving is still very small. In 2013, philanthropic giving in the United States amounted to an estimated \$330 billion, but this is trivial compared to the U.S. federal budget of \$3.5 trillion and total private assets of \$85 trillion. Yet, these data include only forms of monetary philanthropy that can be easily quantified; they exclude other forms of philanthropy such as donations of time (or body parts, such as blood or organs) as well as the endowments of philanthropic corporate entities such as foundations or universities. Further, even if, in aggregate, the *quantity* of philanthropic giving is small compared to taxes and the market, there are important areas, from education, medical research, religion, and the arts, where the *influence* of philanthropy matters a great deal. In these areas philanthropists wield considerable power, especially when markets or the state cannot or will not act.

Although one can find articles and, more rarely, books written on philanthropy within almost all academic disciplines, the way philanthropy is studied and even defined in each is so different that it is sometimes not easy to recognize that scholars are talking about the same thing. Economists call it prosocial behavior, whereas political philosophers refer to it as beneficence or charity. Organizational theorists study philanthropic institutions, including nonprofit organizations and foundations, as distinctive forms of organizations, whereas legal scholars study philanthropy as a behavior embedded in tax codes. Sociologists have been interested in the gift as a distinctive form of human exchange, philanthropy being a species of it. As we will see in the next section, even from a purely conceptual point of view, it is not easy to define what philanthropy is and is about. For all these reasons, providing a systematic analysis of the nature, forms, and limits of philanthropy is no easy task.

The obvious place to begin is by determining how best to define philanthropy and situate it within democratic societies.

Philanthropy and Democracy

From its Greek roots, philanthropy means “love for humankind.” And we generally think of philanthropy as the practice of voluntary donations—donations of money, property, time, and body parts, such as blood—aimed at producing some other-regarding or prosocial benefit. In this respect, philanthropy is generally associated with altruism, charity, and benevolence. But this general and vague definition is far from settling the question of what counts as philanthropy.

Philanthropy can refer both to actions and to institutions. We can think of philanthropy both as a form of individual giving and as a complex economic and policy structure—as the institutionalized practice of privately funding the production of public benefits. If regarded from the first, *agential* perspective, philanthropy stands apart from other forms of giving, such as gift-giving to friends and family, and from spending for private consumption. If looked at from the second, *structural* perspective, it stands apart from alternative, institutionalized mechanisms of finance, such as taxation or market exchange.

Let us start by looking at philanthropy as a special kind of act. What makes an act “philanthropic”? What makes philanthropic acts distinctive and different from other kind of acts, say, gift-giving or spending?

One way to answer these questions is to define the philanthropic act by reference to the subjective motives and intentions of the donor. There are, however, problems with defining the philanthropic act in this way. First of all, we would need a definition of what motives or intentions count as truly philanthropic. Does an act motivated by love toward one’s own children—say, the act of donating money to their current, well-off school so as to increase their educational advantages—count as philanthropic? Certainly children, including one’s own children, are a part of mankind, but many would reject the idea that acts motivated by the particularistic love for those near and dear to us qualify as philanthropic. Second, the presence of philanthropic motives, even when concerned with benefiting strangers or the public at large, seems insufficient and perhaps not even necessary to qualify an act as philanthropic. What if one acts out of “love for mankind” but that act turns out to produce harmful consequences for third parties instead? Would the act still count as philanthropic? And what if, by contrast, one’s act produces very good consequences for mankind—helps to save many lives or send many poor children to school—but it is mainly motivated by what economists call a “warm glow”—a desire to consume the emotional benefit of feeling that one is doing something good? What if the motive for giving is entirely self-serving: by a wish to be praised by others or by the desire for

prestige or social status? Should that act count as philanthropic, in spite of the nonphilanthropic motives? Perhaps motive is not all that matters.

Another option is to define the philanthropic act not only by reference to motives but also by reference to the *form* of the act, as well to the particular means or institutional forms through which the act occurs. According to this view, even if an act is motivated by "love for mankind," it cannot be a philanthropic act unless it comes under the form of a voluntary donation and channeled via specific kinds of institutional arrangements or particular organizations. By this standard, a decision, for example, to buy fair trade products so as to benefit the economy of developing countries and thus to help those living in conditions of need in those countries would not count as a philanthropic act. Similarly, paying taxes out of a strong commitment to support a social safety net does not count as a philanthropic act. Limiting philanthropy to voluntary donations helps us to understand it as a distinctive form of exchange, different from both spending and taxation. Unlike spending, philanthropy is nonreciprocal, at least insofar as there are no immediate returns from or consumable goods purchased with the act of giving. Unlike taxation, philanthropy is voluntary, rather than coercively enforced.

But at this point a further difficulty arises. Does a donation to a pauper in the street count as an act of philanthropy? Certainly this is a voluntary donation and an act of almsgiving, and yet some would object that it is not a philanthropic act. They argue that philanthropy is a legal term, picking out voluntary donations to certain kinds of organizations, such as not-for-profit or nongovernmental organizations, not to specific individuals, however needy. Donations to formal organizations, but not to specific individuals, are frequently offered advantageous tax treatment. According to this legalist definition, a donation qualifies as an act of philanthropy only when it is recognized as such by the law, specifically by the tax code.

Finally, one may consider an act of philanthropy to be unconsummated until some public benefit actually results from that act. Here the focus is not on the motive for or the form of the act but rather on its ends or outcomes. A focus on outcomes avoids the "everything goes" problem. Mere wishes or good intentions are not enough to qualify an act as philanthropic. Results matter as well. And yet, there is a problem with an outcomes-based approach: how should outcomes be defined and by whom? Who should be in charge of defining what counts as the "public benefit" toward which philanthropic acts need to be directed in order to count as fully philanthropic? Should donors themselves decide what counts as public benefit? Should public benefit be limited to whatever is recognized as such by the law or by the tax code? Should an objective, moral theory of value provide the ultimate

criteria that define the appropriate ends of philanthropy? Or should the demos—citizens standing as equals in a democratic community—decide what counts as public benefit and thus as philanthropy?

If we look at philanthropy from a structural perspective, as a part of a society's economic and policy structure—an institutionalized mechanism for privately funding the production and provision of important goods—we face similarly complex questions. First, we need to identify the constituents of this structure—what forms of organization and what kinds of institutions frame and define this funding mechanism, as opposed to other funding mechanisms, such as the market and the state? What is the “space” that philanthropy occupies in the economic structure of a society? Of course, these questions can be answered both descriptively and normatively.

From a descriptive perspective, we can refer to history, organizational theory, and political science to find out how philanthropic organizations and institutions, as well as their social role and power, emerged, developed, and changed over time. Has the role of philanthropy changed throughout history or only its organizational forms, or both? Historically, how have the boundaries between the philanthropic sector, the market sector, and the public sector been drawn? Several contributors to this volume explore how multiple institutional forms shape the very conception of philanthropy, from the for-profit and not-for-profit corporation to the private foundation to mass giving.

From a normative perspective we should ask, what is the appropriate role or distinctive function of philanthropy as an institutional structure within democratic societies? And what is the moral ground of, and what moral limits should be placed on, the exercise of philanthropic power? In order to answer these questions, we need some independent standards. For the purpose of this book, the benchmark will be provided by fundamental political values, including the values of liberty, equality, and social justice. How to specify these values is itself contested terrain. Several contributors to this volume ask whether philanthropy is supportive of, or at least compatible with, these fundamental values or whether, instead, it threatens them. When does philanthropy become an illegitimate exercise of power? Are there things philanthropy should not be expected to accomplish in a democracy? When is philanthropy beneficial to or disruptive of democracy?

Here, by “democracy” we do not mean only a particular system of government characterized by free and fair elections or some appropriate form of representation. We mean, much more generally, a society committed to a fundamental principle of equal concern and respect for its citizens. This principle manifests itself when citizens stand in equal relation to one another, formally equal under the law and possessing equal opportunity for

political influence and participation. This democratic principle implies a society where socioeconomic inequalities are sufficiently limited so as not to threaten the ability of individuals to relate as equals within the public domain, and a society characterized by respect for, protection of, and fulfillment of fundamental basic liberties (such as freedom of conscience, speech, and association). So defined, democracy reflects a concern with both outcomes (e.g., limits on material inequality) and procedures (e.g., equality under the law and equal opportunity for political participation).

Given the complexities involved in defining philanthropy, we did not provide a fixed definition of its role and distinctive features to which all contributors had to conform. Instead we delegated to our contributors the task of providing their own definitions. We emphasized to them only our generic view that philanthropy represents a voluntary donation aimed at providing some other-regarding or prosocial benefit. The individual chapters in this book illustrate how this definition can be operationalized and interpreted in different ways, analyzing for example charitable donations, private foundations, corporate social responsibility, and donor-advised funds.

In addition, rather than offering the definition of philanthropy and its distinctive role within a democratic political system as a premise of the book as a whole, we treat it as an expected outcome of the individual chapters. We think that the plural understandings of philanthropy that emerge from the different disciplinary perspectives represented in this volume are, in and of themselves, valuable contributions to our collective efforts.

Some readers may come to this volume and look for a chapter by a particular author or turn immediately to a topic relevant to their current interests. Each chapter stands alone, so reading the volume in this way, piecemeal, is certainly possible. Still, we believe the volume as a whole provides a genuinely fresh look at philanthropy as a hybrid and ever-changing form of public and private power. It also underscores the enduring importance of philanthropy in democratic life generally, and in American democracy specifically. Moving philanthropy from the margins to the center of scholarly inquiry permits a task at the heart of any inquiry about democracy: understanding the complex division between what is public and what is private, tracing the evolution of that division over time, identifying the public dimensions of private wealth and power, and recognizing when private action supports or, alternatively, threatens the public interest. This volume provides an integrated, multidisciplinary exploration of philanthropy's role and legitimacy in a democratic society, revealing how such a focus can open up powerful analytical vistas or conceptual possibilities for understanding shifts in the pursuit of the public interest and under what circumstances private action and

the public interest are aligned. We are at once appreciative and critical in outlook, motivated by the idea that the broadest understanding of democratic life requires an engagement with the historical development, institutional embodiments, and moral grounds and limits of philanthropy.

Part Introductions

The volume is divided into three parts: “Origins,” “Institutional Forms,” and “Moral Grounds and Limits.” Each part includes a short introduction written collaboratively by its contributors. The following sections are introductory remarks of our own for each part.

Origins

Acts of human kindness are as old as humankind. The modern practice of organized philanthropy, on the other hand, has a much more recent provenance. The social technologies that primarily constitute present-day philanthropy include particular corporate forms, tax affordances, a variety of financial products, governance requirements, and reporting standards. The core set of these—today’s nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations and various practices of corporate, foundation, and individual philanthropy—are well accepted yet remarkably young. Many of the central structures of modern philanthropy are less than a century old.

When considering the evolution of philanthropy, it is useful to recall that in colonial America, philanthropy was tied very closely to religion and was understood as a religious activity. Few questions arose, therefore, about whether philanthropy was private or public, or whether it had an essentially voluntary, associational character or was connected in some way to the state. And of course colonial America was not yet a democracy. Questions about the relationship between philanthropy and democracy do not emerge until the nineteenth century, where part 1 begins, and they become especially fraught following the extraordinary increase in philanthropic resources brought about in the Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century and the emergence of the general-purpose private foundation and the rise of organized mass philanthropy. The shifting dynamic between public funding and private philanthropy reflects some of the larger tensions of twentieth-century economic and political history, including a gradual corporatization of philanthropic institutions, concerns about the political influence of philanthropy, especially large foundations, and punctuated efforts to draw clearer boundaries around philanthropic activities.

Put simply, there is no straight line to be drawn from the practices of an earlier era to those of today. The institutions and practices we possess now are the result of an accumulation of negotiations by states, courts, the U.S. Congress, contracting agents, and the tax authorities with both individual philanthropists and the associations that rely on them. From the *Dartmouth College* U.S. Supreme Court case (1819) to the fight to charter the Rockefeller Foundation (1913), from Lyndon Johnson's determination to keep philanthropy from supporting his political opponents to the *Citizens United* case (2010), and from Andrew Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth* (1889) to the Giving Pledge led by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett today, we continue to redraw the lines between public and private action for the public good.

In part 1, Jonathan Levy traces the concept of altruism through nineteenth-century American social thought and reveals the evolution of the not-for-profit corporate form as one manifestation of a broader debate about ownership and responsibility. Levy roots the creation of the nonprofit corporate form in the states, not the federal government, and reveals a robust story of philanthropic activity well before the creation of twentieth-century tax incentives. Olivier Zunz asks, "Where is philanthropy in American history?" viewing the topic as an overlooked opportunity to examine questions about the relationships between government, the market, and national character. His chapter displays his own curiosity about the oft-untold story of philanthropy in American social and political history and moves us to ask where else in the academy is philanthropy overlooked. Finally, Rob Reich's chapter concludes the section by examining what is perhaps the classic form of American philanthropy, the private foundation. Beginning with a frequently forgotten story about the deep resistance to the creation of the Rockefeller Foundation, he asks what role, if any, private foundations should play in a democratic society. Though he ultimately offers a defense of foundations, he raises a set of probing normative questions about what confers legitimacy and provides accountability to the exercise of private power inherent in foundation activity, questions that recur throughout the other chapters in this book.

Institutional Forms

Philanthropy is embodied in different institutional forms. These forms emerge and develop over time to serve different social purposes, in response to changing economic and political circumstances. Where Levy's chapter provides the background for the invention of the now-standard not-for-profit corporate structure and Reich's chapter for the invention of the private

foundation, the chapters in part 2 examine several institutional forms that diverge from these classic forms, such as the growth of professionalized non-profit firms, the massive growth in donor-advised funds, the moral limits of corporate social responsibility, and the contemporary development of new tools and rules for a digital age of philanthropy.

Consideration of particular institutional forms is important for any general inquiry about the nature of philanthropy and its relationship with democracy. When we consider the different institutional forms of philanthropy, questions arise about which parts of the philanthropic act—for example, the donor's intent, the mechanism for enacting that intent, or the achievement of particular outcomes—we want to recognize or reward. Our current cornucopia of institutional forms may reflect our support for each possibility. Or it might reflect our collective ambiguity about what the philanthropic act is or should be. Today we see nonprofits becoming more like businesses, with an emphasis on earned revenue and a strategic, outcome-orientation. We also see traditional businesses becoming social mission organizations, consciously adopting double or triple bottom lines. We see philanthropists trying to measure the return on their philanthropic investments, and we see investors asking for the social impact of their marketplace activity. Philanthropists are blending business with philanthropy, government and politics with giving. All of this contributes to philanthropy's ubiquity. The regulatory structures built for an earlier time are struggling to keep up with these changes. And the theories that provide support for specific institutional lines are out of sync with these fluid times.

Further, changes in institutional forms may reflect changes in the role that philanthropy plays or is expected to play within a given society. In this respect, in the first chapter in part 2, Aaron Horvath and Walter Powell highlight how the evolution of philanthropy from an informal, face-to-face activity in associational life to a formal, professional activity in incorporated nonprofit organizations and the rise of new modes of philanthropic activity by the extremely wealthy reflect a shift in the role of philanthropic power, from primarily supportive of to primarily disruptive of the public sector. Philanthropy increasingly becomes a rival form of power, private in ownership but public in purpose. Horvath and Powell ask how this shift affects, and is affected by, public expectations about government and different definitions of what public responsibilities attach to what sectors and organizational forms. They worry that current forms of philanthropy, because of their disruptive nature, threaten both the integrity of philanthropy and the health of democracy.

In his chapter on corporate social responsibility, Paul Brest looks at philanthropy as practiced from within commercial enterprises. Focusing on corporate social responsibility provides a helpful lens for investigating the tension between philanthropy and market values. What are the outer limits, he asks, of managerial discretion in pursuing, from within a for-profit organization, social goals that may come at the expense of financial goals? To what extent does shareholder interest in maximizing profit set a limit to corporate philanthropic action? On what basis may corporate managers take a financial haircut in order to pursue socially responsible purposes?

Where the first two chapters in part 2 focus on the complex relationship between philanthropic institutions, government, and market actors, the next two chapters ask how particular institutional forms for giving money away reflect or betray our understanding of what a philanthropic institution should look like and what the role of philanthropy in a democratic society ought to be.

In her chapter on donor-advised funds, Ray Madoff raises a series of challenges regarding the incentive structures built into these financial products. If there is a continuum inherent in the philanthropic act from donor intent to social outcomes, Madoff argues, donor-advised funds are skewed too far to the beginning of that chain in order to qualify as acceptable philanthropic institutions. Whereas Horvath and Powell worry that philanthropy is having too large a public impact on the state, Madoff worries that donor-advised funds deliver immediate tax benefits to donors without any public impact or benefit until some undefined later date.

Lucy Bernholz's chapter connects the origin stories of part 1 to the contemporary development of new organizational models and the need for new legal rules to address digital philanthropy. Using as a case study the Digital Public Library of America, she seeks to understand whether the digital environment offers a chance to reinvent philanthropy or simply move it to a new sphere.

Moral Grounds and Limits

Scholars have long debated the moral limits of political authority and coercive power, including the question of which forms of taxation are legitimate and which are not. Similarly, in recent years, an increasing number of scholars have focused on the moral limits of the market.⁴ They have questioned whether there are things that ought not to be for sale and functions that markets ought not to perform in a democratic society. They have assessed whether

commercializing certain activities threatens to displace valuable norms. And they have asked whether market actors should have full discretion in their exchanges, or whether, by contrast, these exchanges ought to happen according to certain rules (concerning, for example, informational symmetry) or in accordance with certain ethical norms (concerning, for example, individual autonomy).

The question of the moral limits of philanthropy has, however, been largely neglected. Perhaps this is because, one may think, as a form of altruism, philanthropy should not be limited. If philanthropy is a good thing, a morally valuable behavior or character virtue, then the more philanthropy the better. Philanthropy should be everywhere. And yet, this way of reasoning is clearly flawed. First, it is flawed because not everything can be donated. If it is wrong to sell one's right to vote in exchange for money, it may be equally problematic philanthropically to donate one's right to vote to another out of altruism. Sometimes donating certain goods seem to be even worse, morally speaking, than selling them. For example, selling one's own child's labor to a corporation is morally wrong (even if the corporation, by assumption, produces some social good), but donating one's own child's labor to the same corporation seems to be even worse, a fully perverse action. These examples show that there are moral limits to what can be donated through philanthropic giving.

Second, if philanthropy, at least in some cases, is a form of private power that disrupts the exercise of public power, or an alternative way of pursuing and fulfilling the public interest, then philanthropy immediately triggers questions of legitimacy. And questions of legitimacy are questions of moral limits—limits on the exercise of a given form of power. These limits may include limits on the *object* of philanthropy—what roles philanthropy should or should not perform in a democratic society. They may also include limits on the *subjects* of philanthropy—how should philanthropists exercise their power, according to which reasons, principles, or values.

In light of these considerations, contributors ask whether there are functions that philanthropy ought *not* to perform in a democracy. They also ask what are the ethical norms (if any) that philanthropists, whether individual donors or foundations, ought to uphold when making their donations.

Brest and Reich, in earlier chapters, explore certain limits on philanthropic activity. In this final part, Eric Beerbohm, Ryan Pevnick, and Chiara Cordelli push the question of limits to the fore and provide different answers, respectively. Beerbohm's contribution shows how there are certain social functions and public responsibilities that can only be discharged publicly. Delegating these functions and responsibilities to philanthropists is morally

objectionable, *even if* doing so could in principle produce better outcomes. The production of certain goods is for Beerbohm necessarily a public responsibility. Ryan Pevnick, in a similar vein, argues that the functions that philanthropy should be encouraged to perform within a democratic and reasonably just society are limited in important ways. Only certain goods—cultural goods—ought to be funded via philanthropy. Failure to respect these limits constitutes a threat to fundamental democratic values. Finally, Chiara Cordelli focuses on the ethical norms that should limit the reasoning and discretion of donors when deciding how to give—how much and to whom. It turns out, she argues, that the liberty or discretion we typically assign to donors to choose causes as they wish should be significantly curtailed. In current societies, she argues, a good portion of philanthropy must be construed as reparative justice—as a duty to return to others what they have been unfairly deprived of. When deciding how much to give and to whom, philanthropists should enjoy the same discretion debtors enjoy, which is to say almost none.

Process

The process that led to this edited collection is an unusual one. Rather than collecting essays from contributors and ordering them in an edited volume, the essays in this volume emerged from an interdisciplinary, eighteen-month conversation about philanthropy. We brought together sociologists, political scientists, and historians with political philosophers and legal scholars. At the workshops, all held at Stanford University, each contributor read, discussed, and commented on each chapter. Revisions to the essays were made in light of our ongoing conversation and the collective feedback generated by the group.

Our aspiration was to probe the relationship between philanthropy and democracy both from an empirical or descriptive approach—what role has philanthropy actually played in particular democratic societies—and from a normative one—what role *should* philanthropy play. The framing question for our dialogue concerned the origins, institutional forms, and moral grounds and limits of philanthropy in democratic societies.

Our efforts as conveners were driven by the hope that an interdisciplinary conversation would break new ground by opening up novel lines of inquiry and by exposing crosscutting concerns and themes. Such conversations are especially important for the topic of philanthropy, we believe, given its peculiar, multifaceted nature. As our discussions revealed, philanthropy can be regarded as both an institutional arrangement and a moral value, as an economic sector, a tax event, and a personal virtue. Philanthropy is embedded

within societies through the law, organizational forms, and moral codes. The activity of giving money away for a public purpose is as old as humanity, but because the modern practice of philanthropy is shaped by laws as well as norms, we regard philanthropy not as an invention but as an artifact of the laws and norms of particular societies.

The evolution of philanthropy over time and the roles it has assumed across countries cannot be disconnected from the evolution of other sectors, particularly the state and the market. A modern history of philanthropy is thus linked to the history of the welfare state, capitalism, and globalization. As a result, questions about the nature of philanthropy and its relationship to democracy involve normative (value-oriented) scholarship and positive (empirically oriented) social science. Both normative and positive scholars have studied philanthropy, but they too rarely engage one another. Reflecting our commitment to interdisciplinary engagement, we aimed to avoid disciplinary groupings and to dislodge a conventional approach that focuses on intradisciplinary discussions. As a result, the reader will find here interdisciplinary discussion and dialogue across the three major themes that emerged from the workshop participants' discussions: origins, institutional forms, and moral grounds and limits.

During our initial meetings, we worked toward two ends. First, we discussed and refined one another's research questions in directions that would better permit the group to address the framing question about the origin, institutional forms, and moral grounds and limits of philanthropy in democratic societies. Second, we pressed each other to bring core ideas or assumptions about philanthropy and democracy to the surface in our work in order that we might collectively clarify their meanings and relationships. Reflecting our collaborative undertaking, at our final workshop, we grouped contributors together by volume part—origins, institutions, values—and asked each small group to draft a short part introduction. These stand as prefaces for each section and represent, at the same time, the fruit of our integrated, interdisciplinary conversations.

Each individual chapter was also produced through this process, and consequently, their authors do not pretend to address all the questions relevant to philanthropy and democracy. We chose particular scholars, not topics, for our project. Some undeniably important topics go unaddressed here; for example, the growing phenomenon of global giving, the incidence and significance of volunteering, and the recent trend toward strategic or outcome-oriented philanthropy. The chapters do, however, attempt to deliver on the expectation that fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue, as opposed to sustained intradisciplinary focus, can yield greater clarity about the practice

of philanthropy in democracies and the policy choices we collectively face regarding what we ask of its practice.

One final note. Philanthropy is by no means an exclusively American phenomenon. Neither, of course, is democracy. But it is distinctive just how much activity in the United States is organized via nonprofit organizations and philanthropy. Conventional opinion in the United States views this as a positive, and other countries are quite consciously seeking to adapt American philanthropic habits and laws. This led some of our contributors to focus on the United States, but to the extent that the U.S. model is held up to be imitated or envied—as we believe it often is—our exploration about its efficacy and legitimacy may give pause to those who hold the American model in too strong an embrace.