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**Review of *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science' of Philanthropy*.
Peter Frumkin. Reviewed by Ram Cnaan.**

Ram Cnaan

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Peter Frumkin, *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006. \$ 39.00 hardcover.

The key sign of an original book is that the author asks questions that scholars should have previously asked but did not. The fundamental questions that Peter Frumkin raises in this book are important, very timely, and crucial for any student of philanthropy. Frumkin suggests that,

“Philanthropy translates the private desires of donors into public action aims at meeting needs. It has both public and private functions, enabling communities to solve problems and allowing individuals to express and enact their values. What makes philanthropy at once exciting and perplexing is the strange and at times jarring interaction of public needs and private choices that giving promotes” (p. 21).

To understand this complexity, one can ask the following two simple questions: First, why there is not enough money in the richest country in the world, the United States of America, to offer free national medical care to all people? Then, add the following question: Why can very rich people, like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, dedicate billions of tax deductible dollars to causes that they unilaterally assess as worthy? In Frumkin’s words, “The budgetary squeeze of entitlement programs has increased philanthropy’s market share of domestic discretionary spending” (p. 74).

At the dawn of the 21st century, this is indeed an interesting case of crowding out that can challenge the democratic foundations of our society. But most importantly, Frumkin asks if this is indeed serving the democratic ideal of society and, given that we can accept these donor-society relationships, how can donors maximize their charitable impact? In fact, what Frumkin suggests is that, in a democratic society like the United States, the elected officials are opting out of many areas of care and philanthropists are setting policies with their various foundations and wealth that may or may not be what society as a whole needs and desires. Frumkin sees this reality

as a great opportunity and seeks to chart how big donors and large foundations can maximize their impact.

Frumkin noted that, given the tax deduction aspect of philanthropy and the power of donors, the philanthropic community is challenged to show effectiveness, accountability, and legitimacy. Frumkin suggests that the quest for these three ideals is far from actualization but brought about by the professionalization of philanthropy through foundations, professional staff, academic training, research, and codes-of-ethics. Frumkin, however, is unsympathetic to this new cadre of professionals and prefers a group of enlightened donors who assess their values and potential to make an impact in society. A large part of the book goes into advising such donors how to be strategic and, as such, effective. Frumkin wisely distinguishes between charity that is often small scale, local, and unplanned, and philanthropy that is large scale, planned, and can have major impact on society. The latter leads big donors and foundations to strategic giving, which is large scale giving that impacts society at large.

Frumkin acknowledges that many donors have egoistic motives, ranging from quest for positive publicity to tax deduction, and still he regards individual private donors highly. Frumkin looks at philanthropy as a desired component of our society which offers innovative and diverse responses that neither government nor the public sector can offer. To assure donors' generosity, Frumkin seeks a balance between society's many needs and donors who are often unsatisfied with how their money is used. He rightly suggests that the efficacy of philanthropy is rarely studied, and donors are dissatisfied with the social return for their money. He also points out the tension that exists between donors and nonprofit organizations. While donors want their money to be earmarked to a specific cause of their choice and want control over the designated use of the money, nonprofit organizations see donors as a necessary burden but not as sufficient. Nonprofit organizations want to make independent professional and rational decisions regarding the use of the money once received and, as such, tension may arise.

There are many ways one can answer the questions raised by Frumkin. However, his treatment of the tension between

democratic principles and donors' control and power is incomplete. In an ideal world, Frumkin could have suggested a progressive income tax, which, for example, would tax 70 or 80 percent of all annual income above one million dollars. Such a progressive tax system would be more distributive and would not leave social interventions to the whims of the mega-rich. Such a tax system might be sufficient to afford national health care.

But, Frumkin is a believer in the benevolence of the rich and the importance of making philanthropy work. He raises interesting and provoking questions, but he does not cross the line of his belief in philanthropy and his unquestioned sympathy for big donors. As such, the challenge is not fully met and the focus of the book is on how to make philanthropy more effective without really advancing the democratic challenge. At many times, Frumkin dismisses his own challenges without evidence to be able to advocate for philanthropy, yet, he opens the door for public discourse on the role of philanthropy in our society. Regardless of Frumkin's personal preferences, when the next congressional committee to study the role of philanthropy in the American society convenes, *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy* will be its first and foremost source of guidance. This book is a must for all students of the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, as it covers new territories and opens a plethora of new intellectual challenges.

Ram Cnaan

Sanford F. Schram, *Welfare Discipline: Discourse, Governance, and Globalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006. \$ 64.50 hardcover, \$ 21.95 paperback.

Sanford F. Schram, a professor in the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College, critiques current trends in welfare policy and argues for using new approaches in studying welfare policy and governance. The new approach features a compassionate emphasis on