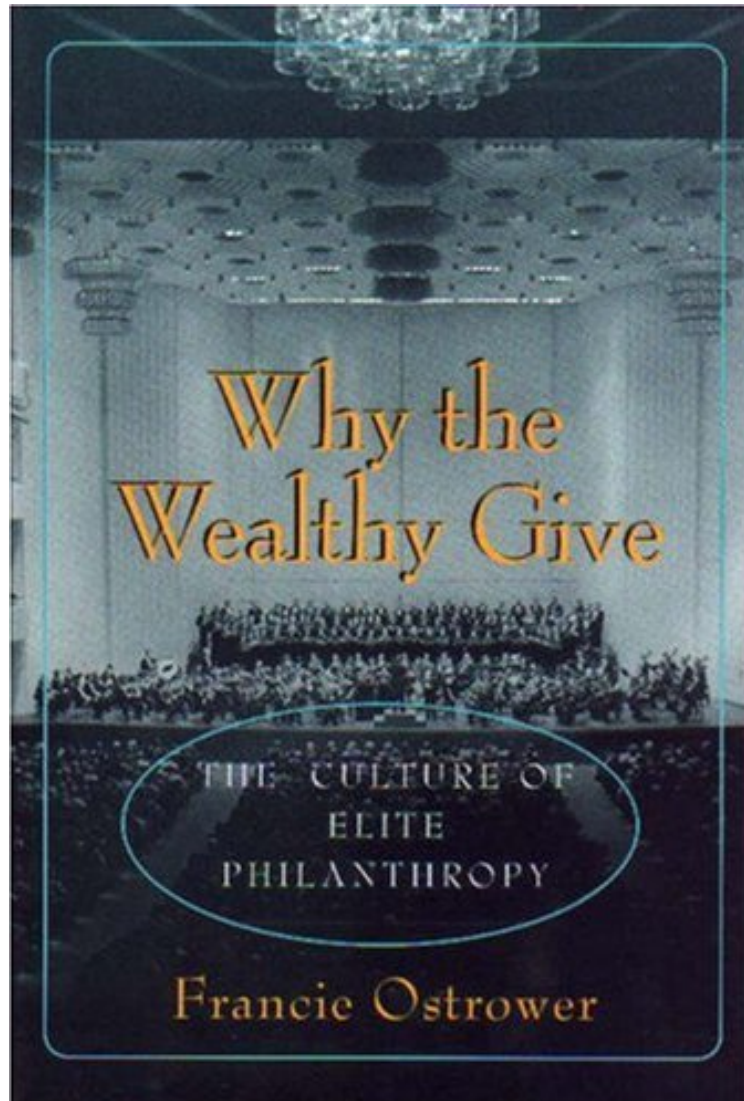


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## Why the Wealthy Give

*Francie Ostrower*

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**Francie Ostrower : Why the Wealthy Give** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why the Wealthy Give:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Had to get it for class... HATE IT! By D. J. C. Its not a bad book, but it is not a good book either. Spends a lot of time talking about Jews v. Protestants v. Catholics. I guess I would say that it is nothing like what I thought it would be. But hey, I needed it for class so either way I was going to be buying it. For the record... I NEVER used it! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Charity, Philanthropy and Clarity By J. Meyers Ostrower does a great job exploring the topic of giving. This book highlights real life examples of 'big' givers

around the New York area and it is a great resource for fundraisers and development offices to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Top-notch sociology with practical value for nonprofits By GskFn Francie Ostrower brings the scholarly discipline of sociology to bear on understanding the perspectives and motivations of high-level philanthropists in America, seen in a larger societal context. The book rests on 88 in-depth qualitative interviews with donors to prominent New York City institutions. I read this at the beginning of my career - fresh off my graduate studies in sociology. And I re-read it later as my fundraising career put me in closer contact with high-level donors. I recommend this book enthusiastically both for students of philanthropy and career fundraisers. It's also a fine piece of sociological scholarship that draws together people and institutions involved with the arts, education, religion, wealth, and families.

Through a series of candid personal interviews with nearly one hundred donors, *Why the Wealthy Give* offers an in-depth look at the world of elite philanthropy. Francie Ostrower focuses on the New York City area, with its high concentration of affluent donors, to explore both the motivations of individual donors and the significance of philanthropy for the culture and organization of elite groups. In so doing, she offers an account of why the wealthy give that also provides insight into the nature of elite culture, status, identity, and cohesion. Emphasizing the diversity of philanthropy, the book also shows how and why different types of donors support different causes. It further demonstrates how, in the face of considerable change, elite philanthropy has adapted and therefore endured. A timely discussion explores the ways in which elite donors view the respective roles of government and philanthropy. *Why the Wealthy Give* shows that elite philanthropy involves far more than writing a check. The wealthy take philanthropy and adapt it into an entire way of life that serves as a vehicle for the social and cultural life of their class. This is reflected in the widespread popularity of educational and cultural causes among donors. At the same time, Ostrower finds divergent patterns of giving that reflect alternative sources of donor identity, such as religion, ethnicity, and gender, and explains why certain kinds of donors are more or less likely to diverge from the prestige hierarchy of their class in their philanthropy.

From *Scientific American* I have found *Why the Wealthy Give* fascinating reading. Anyone involved in philanthropic foundations should read this book. From *The New Yorker* Ostrower's book is one of the finest pieces of social science research to emerge from the new academic field of philanthropic studies.... This important book demonstrates that the most professionally rigorous forms of social science analysis can be presented in lucid prose and easily comprehended ideas. From *Booklist* Harvard sociology professor Ostrower explores elite philanthropy's nature, sources, and results--and the functions it performs within upper-class culture--based on interviews with nearly 100 New York City area donors during 1987-88. Elites, she argues, justify philanthropy in terms of widely shared American beliefs about pluralism, individualism, and distinct spheres for governmental and private action but structure their philanthropic involvements in ways that strengthen class cohesion and maintain exclusivity. At the same time, analysis of factors other than class (like ethnicity, religion, gender) suggests that, within the elite, "philanthropy grows out of the donor's sense of identity." Exploring the effect of the 1980s explosion of wealth on New York City philanthropy, Ostrower demonstrates that although the city's social elite accepted newcomers on prestigious institutions' boards, the elite's traditional values--especially the exclusivity of donors' interactions with the groups they support--"have been universalized and institutionalized within the larger elite." Provocative insights for fund-raisers--and for readers interested in the significance of class in the U.S. Mary Carroll