

# **Philanthropy, patronage, and civil society: experiences from Great Britain, Germany, and North America [ed. by Thomas Adam]**

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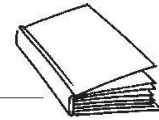
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ne citer que les plus significatives). J'ose espérer que ce livre suscitera de nouvelles études sur la philanthropie helvétique.

*Thomas David (Lausanne)*

**THOMAS ADAM (ED)  
PHILANTHROPY, PATRONAGE,  
AND CIVIL SOCIETY: EXPERIENCES  
FROM GREAT BRITAIN, GERMANY,  
AND NORTH AMERICA**

SERIES PHILANTHROPIC AND NONPROFIT STUDIES,  
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS 2004,  
228 P., \$ 37.95

The editor of and contributor to this volume, Thomas Adam, rightly claims that, to date, in spite of the extensive research that has already been carried out on German 19<sup>th</sup> bourgeoisie (“Bürgertum”), the role of philanthropy in the process of this group’s ascent has never been thoroughly acknowledged and investigated. Though this has been done to some extent on the British and quite extensively on the US social elite, there is an even greater lack in comparative approaches that include both the Old and the New World. In providing a first survey of this kind, the contributors to this volume are challenging a number of stereotypes hitherto rarely put into question. On one hand, it has mostly been taken for granted that Germany, on its “Sonderweg” that separated it from other Western countries, industrialised and modernised without democratisation, along with a traditionally authoritarian state and a severe lack of civil values. On the other hand, the United States, having grown out of a revolutionary event, is usually considered a nation that is very egalitarian in social relations and democratic in politics. To date, the civil virtue of philanthropy has even “been widely seen as an American invention”. Yet the case studies gathered here demonstrate that, at least until the turn

of the 20th century, philanthropic projects launched by members of German urban and rural elites were studied by American and British philanthropists, and vice versa. The discussion, adoption and adaptation of models originating from the far side of the Channel or the Atlantic, and their impact on the development of a modern civil society, testify to what extent the sea was “less a barrier than [...] a connecting lifeline”, as Daniel Rodgers has already pointed out in his book *Atlantic Crossings* (1998). Instead of repeating themes on each nation’s distinctiveness and uniqueness, this book emphasises the shared common values and attitudes within a “transatlantic bourgeois culture”. (2 f.) It is structured in three parts: “Philanthropy in the Transatlantic World”, “Between Market and State: Philanthropy and Social Elites”, and “Jewish Philanthropy and Embourgeoisement”.

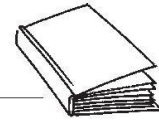
In Part One, Thomas Adam’s essay deals with the surveys that US and Canadian 19th-century philanthropists carried out on German and British social housing projects, demonstrating that philanthropy in fact was a European invention. Karsten Borgmann, in turn, claims that in the field of art museum philanthropy, US institutions enjoyed far more private initiative and independence from municipal or state interference. Yet this also protected German museums from the personal whims of wealthy sponsors. In showing to what extent 19th-century financial and agricultural co-operatives on both sides of the Atlantic had initially been conceived and popularised among the working class by well-off citizens, Brett Fairbairn points out how intermingled the theoretically separate concepts of co-operative and philanthropy actually are. David Hammack examined the assumptions about the US elite’s exertion of influence and power through their domination of philanthropy, educational in particular, only to conclude that even in the

20th century, US philanthropic institutions are increasingly relying on subsidies from the public sector, that they are regulated and controlled by the governments, and that diversion and fluctuation within the elite avert a consistent control of large non-profit institutions by a few donors.

Part Two examines the border lines that separate the public sector, voluntary engagement, and the free market, and how these sectors interacted, competed or co-operated in the fields of scientific research, cultural sponsorship, and social housing. In their account on the 1887 creation of the “Physikalisch-Technische Reichsanstalt” (Imperial Institute for Physics and Technology) and the subsequent development of the prestigious research and research funding institution “Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft”, Eckhardt Fuchs and Dieter Hoffmann highlight the role of the industrialists Werner von Siemens and Leopold Koppel as initiators and major sponsors, and they trace a related academic exchange relationship with the Rockefeller and Carnegie research institutions that lasted until 1938. What a “Serious Matter” of the “True Joy” of music can be has been investigated by Margaret E. Menninger, in her long view (1780s–1930s) of the established urban elite of Leipzig, and their prestigious semi-private “Gewandhaus Orchester”. The essay illustrates how the burghers used the orchestra for their self-representation, and how they excluded social climbers and the lower and middle classes from a prestigious sector of cultural and social life. Susannah Morris faces the problem of the definition of philanthropy, both in the past and in its current use in economic and historical research. Her model, built on the example of British social housing, recognises the public, the market and the voluntary sector. For the actors, it considers their goals, their input of money and other means, the output, and their relationship with the markets and the

public sectors, thus providing a clear-cut grid of parameters that allows for comparison across a wider timeframe.

Part Three starts with Maria B. Baader’s study on Jewish women’s philanthropy, which proves that previous assumptions about the exclusion of women from the public sphere are wrong, at least in the case of the Jews, who seem to have been far more active than their Christian counterparts, certainly since the 1760s. Like Fairbairn (and contrary to the approach adopted by Th. Adam and the below mentioned author Simone Lässig), Baader underlines that philanthropy is no privilege of the rich, but – for example through mutual aid – a social practice including all strata of society. Tobias Brinkmann illustrates how in Germany, characterised by a homogeneous “dominant ‘majority society’” (non-existent in the US), Jewish philanthropy tended to become a stumbling block to full integration, whereas in the more open and heterogeneous US society, philanthropy contributed to integrate Jewish communities – to the point that the Jewish Hospital in Chicago not only welcomed non-Jewish patients, to be treated by a mostly non-Jewish staff, but did not even offer kosher food. Simone Lässig’s lucid essay reminds us that German Jewish philanthropists, too, and their actions, deserve to be considered as bourgeois German, in the first place. In doing so, she demonstrates to what extent only substantial philanthropic engagement (and the “cultural and social authority” attributed to it) could buy the bourgeois the prestige that “quickly earned money” simply could not do. Just as Thomas Adam is convinced that “philanthropy has always to do with power and the shaping of the future of society”, Lässig, too, emphasises the uses of charity and patronage in the constant struggle of the elite with Leftist approaches to industrialisation and urbanisation, and as a means to draw social distinctions even



among the elite, (29, 203) for example between the established bourgeoisie and the *nouveaux riches*.

All the contributors succeed in linking methodological and terminological considerations and reasoning with concrete stories of individuals, institutions and ideas which made their way across the oceans, like Friedrich W. Raiffeisen's model of agricultural-financial co-operations, first conceived in the impoverished 19th-century Westerwald, a rural area southwest of Cologne, then disseminated in India by British civil servants, and there adopted in 1907 by the Boston businessman Edward A. Filene, who, finally, participated in the creation of the US credit union movement. (63, 68) The collection offers a range of definitions of "philanthropy" and "patronage", which enriches our own understanding. A particularly valuable achievement is the inclusion of smaller places like Dresden and Leipzig, or the rural American Midwest, whereas most of the existing studies focus on larger cities like London, Frankfurt and Hamburg, or the big cities on the American East Coast.

The book's introduction does not make explicit why one part is specifically focusing on "Jewish Philanthropy". The contributions, though, agree that Jewish engagement was remarkably strong. By the sheer number of their institutions alone (many of them targeting a clientele beyond their ethnic/religious community), Jews were clearly over-represented, relative to their portion of the overall population. Yet, as Simone Lässig shows, this may be explained rather by the overwhelming number of Jews within the new bourgeois elite (also stated by Fuchs & Hoffmann, 112 f.) than by a specific Jewish inclination to charitable engagement. (214 f.) In any case, the essays of Part Three certainly encourage a comparison with other faith-based approaches to philanthropy, of

which Hammack already gives vivid examples. (88–90) Useful preliminary considerations to such a wider approach have already been provided by: Olaf Blaschke and Abigail Green (Olaf Blaschke (ed.), *Konfession und Konflikt. Deutschland im zweiten konfessionellen Zeitalter*. Göttingen 2001; Abigail Green, «Rethinking Sir Moses Montefiore: Religion, Nationhood and International Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century», *American Historical Review* 110/3 (2005), 631–657.

The essays of this book, including both theory and empirical research, will offer a stimulating read and open new perspectives to anyone working in this and in related fields.

*Klaus Weber (London)*

**ALICE O'CONNOR**  
**POVERTY KNOWLEDGE**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCE, SOCIAL POLICY,**  
**AND THE POOR IN TWENTIETH**  
**CENTURY U. S. HISTORY**

PRINCETON, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2001,  
373 P., \$ 50.–

La recherche scientifique sur la pauvreté contribue-t-elle à la réduction de la misère et des inégalités sociales? Quelles sont les relations entre sciences sociales, politique sociale et le pouvoir? Voici deux des questions auxquelles Alice O'Connor tente de répondre en suivant le parcours centenaire de la «connaissance de la pauvreté» (*poverty knowledge*) aux Etats-Unis, pays qui ne cesse de redécouvrir, de manière quasi cyclique, le paradoxe de la «pauvreté au sein de la prospérité».

Depuis les *social surveys* produites par des enquêteurs progressistes arpétant les quartiers ouvriers des grandes métropoles américaines, jusqu'aux polémiques de Charles Murray contre la «dépendance» produite par l'Etat social