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PAMALA WIEPKING AND FEMIDA HANDY (EDS.), *THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF GLOBAL PHILANTHROPY*, BASINGSTOKE, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2015.

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The focus of the Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy, edited by Pamala Wiepking and Femida Handy, is on philanthropic donations, defined as “voluntary financial donations provided to nonprofit organizations by private actors including individuals, for-profit organizations, as well as other nonprofit organizations, such as churches and foundations” (p. 4). The editors endeavour to explain why people give their financial resources to non-profits, thus benefiting the public good.

Individual factors of philanthropic giving are well documented in the literature. Wiepking and Handy refer to the eight mechanisms that drive people to make charitable donations: awareness of need, solicitation, costs and benefits, altruism, reputation, psychological benefits, values and efficacy. The influence of contexts on the likelihood and level of individual philanthropic donations is much less researched. This volume strives to provide an explanation for cross-country differences in philanthropic donations.

The Handbook consists of three parts. In the first part, the editors provide an analytical framework for analysing a philanthropic landscape within which individuals make their philanthropic donations. Based on the theoretical framework of the social origins theory and economic theory

of market and government failure, the editors develop contextual explanations for cross-national differences in philanthropic giving. The contextual factors of philanthropic giving are: the roles of different stakeholders such as philanthropic organisations, state, religious organisations, etc. in social welfare provision in a historical perspective, the size and scope of the non-profit sector, government policy related to the non-profit sector including funding, subsidies and fiscal incentives, the legal regulations of the sector, and culture, which includes religion and fundraising professionalism.

The second part of the Handbook consists of contributions on philanthropic giving from 26 countries (25 countries and one region, the Caribbean). In the first section of each chapter the country-specific philanthropic landscape is depicted. The empirical data on the rates and levels of philanthropic donations in each country are provided in the second section.

The third part of the Handbook consists of six chapters that provide the main findings from cross-national analyses of contextual factors and their relationships with the likelihood and the level of philanthropic contributions. The potential to predict philanthropic giving of the social origins theory is analysed in the first

chapter of the third part, where it is tested against the empirical data from the second part of the book. The influence of government support, fiscal incentives, religion and fund-raising professionalism on philanthropic giving is examined in other chapters of the third part. In the final chapter, the editors summarise the impediments and facilitators of philanthropic donations the world over. The eight mechanisms that facilitate philanthropic giving are: “1) a culture of philanthropy; 2) Public trust, issues of transparency, accountability and effectiveness; 3) Regulatory and legislative frameworks; 4) Fiscal incentives; 5) The state of the non-profit sector; 6) Political and economic stability or growth; 7) Population changes; 8) International giving” (p. 610). Thus, the editors’ main aim of explaining cross-national differences in philanthropic giving through referencing philanthropic landscapes is achieved.

However, there are a few shortcomings. First of all, defining individual philanthropic donations as voluntary monetary contributions to non-profit organisations, excludes many voluntary activities done by individuals which are by its nature philanthropic, where philanthropy is seen as “voluntary action for the public good” (Robert L. Payton and Michael Moody, 2008, *Understanding philanthropy: its meaning and mission*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press). This definition of philanthropy includes giving directly to people in need without intermediary organisations. Such practices are well developed in some countries, as it is documented in the example of Mexico provided in this volume.

Moreover, the editors have chosen a rather narrow definition of culture. In this volume, culture is represented by religion and fund-raising professionalism.

Huntington’s definition of culture as “the values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions prevalent among people in a society” (Samuel P. Huntington, 2000, “Cultures Count” in Lawrence H. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (eds.) *Culture Matters. How Values Shape Human Progress*, New York: Basic Books, pp. xii-xvii.) would be much more appropriate for these purposes. The attitudes and beliefs of individuals in regard to the roles that the family, the state and the third sector have in the provision of public good is an important contextual factor for giving. Also, fund-raising professionalism seems to be much more related to the characteristics of the non-profit sector than to the specificities of the culture.

Finally, many countries are left out of the analysis. The initial selection criteria for countries to be included is the availability of national level surveys on philanthropic giving, as the editors explained. For a profound understanding of the complex phenomenon of philanthropic giving and its varieties across the globe, there is a need to include a more diverse variety of countries. However, the conceptual framework developed in this volume, perhaps with minor adjustments, could be applied in the research of philanthropic giving in the countries not included in the volume, which the editors encourage.

To conclude, Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy is the first encompassing comparative study of philanthropic donations that brings in contextual factors in explaining philanthropic giving, thus providing valuable insight into why philanthropic donations are practiced by relatively more people in some countries than in others. It is an indispensable source for all those interested in the field of philanthropic studies.