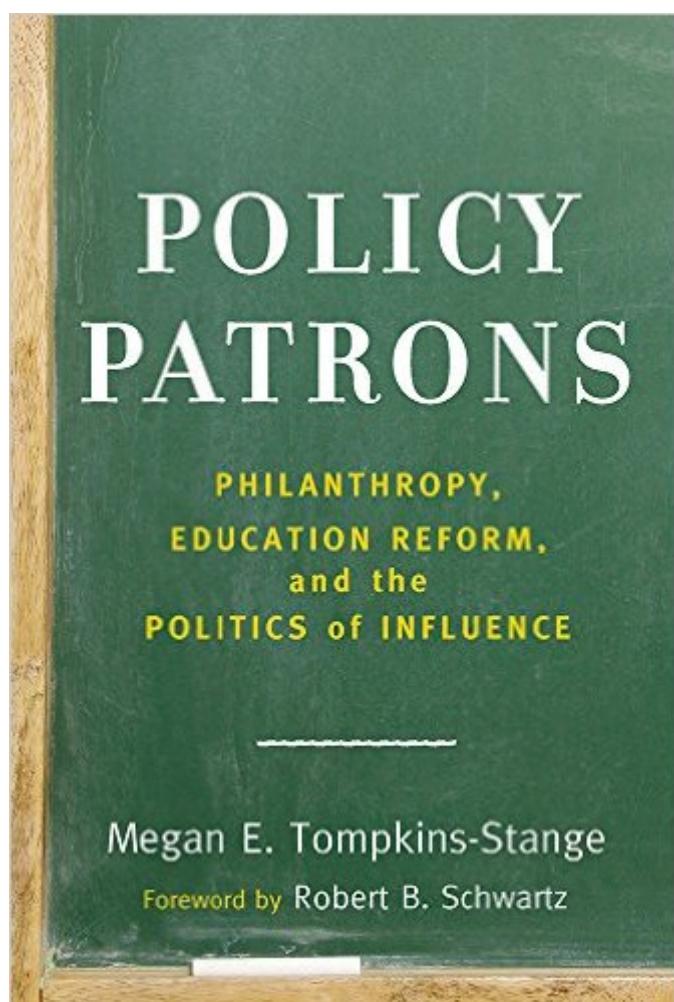


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# Policy Patrons: Philanthropy, Education Reform, And The Politics Of Influence (Educational Innovations Series)



## **Synopsis**

Policy Patrons offers a rare behind-the-scenes view of decision making inside four influential education philanthropies: the Ford Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. The outcome is an intriguing, thought-provoking look at the impact of current philanthropic efforts on education. Over a period of several years, Megan E. Tompkins-Stange gained the trust of key players and outside observers of these four organizations. Through a series of confidential interviews, she began to explore the values, ideas, and beliefs that inform these foundations' strategies and practices. The picture that emerges reveals important differences in the strategies and values of the more established foundations vis-à-vis the newer, more activist foundations—differences that have a significant impact on education policy and practice, and have important implications for democratic decision making. In recent years, the philanthropic sector has played an increasing role in championing and financing education reform. Policy Patrons makes an original and invaluable contribution to contemporary discussions about the appropriate role of foundations in public policy and the future direction of education reform.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The highest praise for a book is: "it made me think." This one certainly was stimulating and insightful. The provided history is fascinating, as are her model of the two different kinds of

foundations, and her analysis of the big four philanthropic funders of public education reform and how their values and strategies differ and converge. She conveys a clear sense of the Gates, Broad, Ford and Kellogg foundations through the many excerpted interviews. By the end of the book each reader is likely to have a favorite - perhaps different from anticipated. I came away with a clear understanding that there may be inherent tension in the idea of private funders acting to create public policy without an elected mandate to do so. But I am nonetheless grateful that in a political, electoral culture that is currently gridlocked, there are generous private foundations experimenting with different strategies to improve a core institution in our democracy: K-12 education.

With *Policy Patrons*, Megan Tompkins-Stange delivers a thorough, thoughtful, and fair analysis of these foundations' approaches to philanthropy and policy in education. While the book will be useful for anyone in education who has a close-up view of the approach of these foundations (and others like them), anyone interested in policymaking, democracy, and education will likely find this book to be interesting and thought-provoking. A worthwhile read, and a great discussion-starter!

Revealing analysis of philanthropy in education. The author interviewed officials at Gates, Broad, Kellogg, and Ford. Fascinating to hear inside perspective showing how foundation officials describe their work and involvement in policy. Must read for people in philanthropy, ed reform, and policy.

The author develops a useful framework for categorizing foundations' work. The historical background and insider perspectives are interesting. One gets a sense that there is regression toward a more common, slightly shifted perspective on grant-making. A stronger conclusion would have strengthened the argument.

Great inside view of four big foundations (Gates, Ford, Broad, and Kellogg) and how they have shaped education policy over the past decades. It's interesting just how different their approaches have been, how these have evolved, and some of the tradeoffs of the different approaches. Though this wasn't the book's main aim, I also learned a lot from the concise overview of the major education reforms in the U.S. over the past few decades. Really thoughtful and accessible analysis for anyone interested in education policy, philanthropy, or civil society.

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