



Gifts of Cooperation, Mauss and Pragmatism (Routledge Global Cooperation Series)

By Frank Adloff



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This book focuses on the contribution of Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) to social theory and a theory of cooperation. It shows that Mauss's essay "The Gift" (1925) can be seen as a classic of a pragmatist, interactionist and anti-utilitarian sociology. It critiques the dichotomy of self-interest and normatively orientated action that forms the basis of sociology. This conceptual dichotomization has caused forms of social interaction (that cannot be localized either on the side of self-interest or on that of morality) to be overlooked or taken little notice of. The book argues that it is the logic of the gift and its reciprocity that accompany and structure all forms of interaction, from the social micro to the macro-level. It demonstrates that in modern societies agonistic and non-agonistic gifts form their own orders of interaction.

This book uniquely establishes the paradigm of the gift as the basis for a theory of interaction. It will be of great interest to researchers and postgraduates in social theory, cultural theory, political sociology and global cooperation, anthropology, philosophy and politics.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Frank Adloff's book comes as a reminder as well as an eye-opener. It reminds us not to neglect accomplishments of sociological theory of the 19th and 20th century sometimes forgotten under the impact of postmodern and poststructuralist theories. [...] Let us hope that this book will not only impress the academic community but also readers in the 'real world' of politics on a national and global scale." - *Claus Leggewie, Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI), Germany*

"Frank Adloff's *Gifts of Cooperation, Mauss and Pragmatism* is as a well-argued, ambitious contribution to gift theory as well as sociological theory and social thought at large. It is unique in the way in which it positions itself in close alliance with an expanding current of neo-maussian, anti-utilitarian, convivialist thinking in the social sciences and Alain Caillé's evolving gift paradigm in particular, but also elaborates systematic bridges with the legacy of American pragmatism and the Chicago school. Deftly surveying classical and contemporary theoretical developments in three languages (French, English and German), it succeeds to clear the way for a stance that radically opposes reducing gift action to either exchange or reciprocity, but also calls to better distinguish between types of gifts and explore their implications in the hope of making for better, more creative as well as pacified human relations in either the private or public sphere." - *Ilana F. Silber, Bar-Ilan University, Israel*

"More than anybody before him, German social theorist Frank Adloff succeeds in connecting two discourses that have for a long time coexisted without much interaction: American pragmatism and the French tradition that follows Marcel Mauss's seminal essay on the gift. The result is a creative social theory of the gift that is rich in insights for our time." - *Hans Joas, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany and University of Chicago, USA*

"One might have imagined it was impossible to say something genuinely new about Mauss' Gift. I am delighted to discover this is not the case." - *David Graeber, London School of Economics, UK*

"This book goes far beyond what its title indicates. By bringing together the Maussian legacy and the pragmatist tradition it paves the way to a long expected and a decisive breakthrough in social theory. Enfin!" - *Alain Caillé, University Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, France*

About the Author

Frank Adloff is Professor of Sociology at the Institute of Sociology, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany.

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