ILANA F. SILBER

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Repertoires of Public Giving:
Elite Philanthropy in Gift-Theoretical and Comparative Perspective

Tuesday, 9 April, 2019, 2:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
scas, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
www.swedishcollegium.se
ABOUT ILANA F. SILBER

Ilana Silber's main fields of interest are the sociology of gift processes, charity and philanthropy, to which she also adds a cross-cutting interest in sociological theory, interpretative cultural analysis and macro-comparative historical sociology.

She obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and has been a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University, Princeton University and Yale University. Since 2014, she is a Faculty Fellow of the Yale Center for Cultural Sociology, and since 1998, a member of the M.A.U.S.S (Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales).


While at SCAS she will be working at completing a book arguing the benefits of a mutual encounter between the legacy of Max Weber and Marcel Mauss, as well as various strands of contemporary cultural and pragmatic sociology for a better comparative understanding of gift processes in general, and of assymetric forms of public giving in past and present contexts.

ABSTRACT

The aim of my talk will be three-fold: first, to position the study of public giving in relation to current trends of gift research and theory; second, to develop the idea of repertoires of public giving, and consider how it may help raise some new avenues of comparative and historical interpretation; third, to discuss the current rise of elite, or as it is now also often called, mega-philanthropic giving, to a place of increasing prominence yet also highly controversial status in the public arena worldwide. I suggest to approach this lopsided configuration and the accompanying embattled confrontation of stances and emotions, from a combined macro-institutional and cultural perspective. This will mean, in particular, drawing attention to the part played by evolving frames of gift-interpretation and the way in which these combine with shifting characteristics of the public sphere at large.