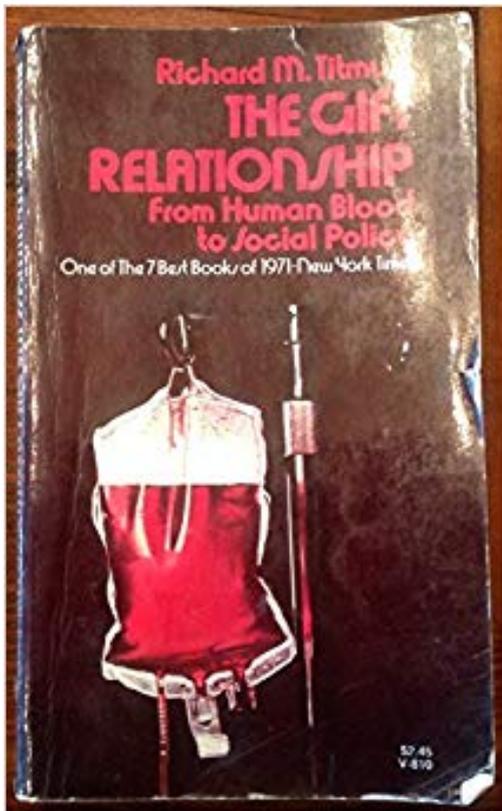


The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy by Richard Morris Titmuss



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Author: Richard Morris Titmuss

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Richard M. Titmuss's *The Gift Relationship* has long been acknowledged as one of the classic texts on social policy. Honored by the *New York Times* as one of the ten most important books of the year when it first appeared in 1970, Titmuss's *The Gift Relationship* is even more topical now in an age of AIDS and changing health care policy. A seemingly straightforward comparative study of blood donating in the United States and Britain, the book elegantly raises profound economic, political, and philosophical questions. Titmuss contrasts the British system of reliance on voluntary donors to the American one in which the blood supply is largely in the hands of for-profit enterprises and shows how a nonmarket system based on altruism is more effective than one that treats human blood as another commodity.

This updated edition contains the original text along with new chapters that: consider the relevance of Titmuss's arguments to the AIDS and current health care crises; outline recent developments in blood donation and transfusion systems; examine the systems for human milk donation; and assess the response to the original edition and make the case for its continuing relevance today. At a time when health and welfare systems are under sustained attack from many quarters, this new edition of *The Gift Relationship* is essential reading for everyone interested in social policy and the future of our society.



Reviews of the **The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy** by Richard Morris Titmuss

Cemav

This classic STILL matters and speaks to us in an age of marketing organs as well as blood.

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Redfury

Ok

Redfury

Ok

Zolorn

I recently came across the work of Richard Titmuss (1907-1973). He was the father of social policy and was known as the 'high priest of the welfare state'.

This is his most famous book. In it, he studied what was the most effective method for people to give blood - the market (i.e. paying them) or altruism (i.e. goodness of their own heart). Luckily for him, he had both systems in place in the real world with the US using the market and the UK using voluntary donations.

What did he find? Well as you'd expect from his leanings, he found that the quantity and quality of blood given was much higher in the altruism/donation system rather than the market/payment system. This he called the gift relationship which was driven by our recognition of the common humanity.

Naturally, there have been various critiques of his work (see Tim Hartford's blog), but I love the idea that giving is better than receiving, so I'll happily go along with the principle!

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Gavinranara

Richard M. Titmuss's *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* has to be the best book that I have read this summer. It is hard to believe that this book was first published half a century ago and still holds true of the social and economical policies of life, metaphorically represented as blood. The first few chapters in this book that has recently been included in this edition illustrate the importance of how the concept of donating a non-substitute fluid of life presents various dilemmas in association with recent outbreaks like A.I.D.S. Originally, when I first purchased this book, I thought I would criticize how such social and economical policies have changed significantly over the fifty years. However, after reading this fascination and quite reflective book on our society and generosity today, I have realized that not much has changed since this book was first written. Yet, Titmuss does not accept or reject certain theories of the concept whether it is right or wrong to get paid to donate blood as opposed to voluntary donation. This book satiates the curiosity of how giving blood originated for the economics, anthropologist, philosopher, as well as for the average individual. Those who seek a challenge in trying to understand our health care system and H.M.O's will find this book as a great source of comparing how the giving of life has changed over the years, in the United States and abroad. Most of what Titmuss describes in his technical language is based on the H.M.S health care in England. However, the reader will hopefully realize the similarities and differences in socialized medicine compared to our managed health care as established today. If you are looking for an intellectually stimulating book questioning what is the gift of life and how much it is worth economically and socially, Richard M. Titmuss's *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* is the prescribed treatment for you.

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Dated, but good

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