



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
THE DELHI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

# **SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM**

Date: 30 January 2026 | Time: 3:00 PM | Venue: M N Srinivas Hall

## **Emancipation through gift-giving: The circulation of donations in territorial societies**



### **Speaker Paulo Henrique Martins**

Paulo Henrique Martins holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne (1988-1991); Professor of Sociology at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE); Postdoctoral studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (1995) and the University of Paris-Nanterre (2001).

#### **Abstract**

This presentation is inspired by my recent reflections on the theoretical and practical uses of gift-giving in contemporary society, focusing particularly on the particularities of exchanges in systems in the Global South. I seek to explore the possibilities of gift-giving, as revealed by Mauss, as a strategic resource, both theoretical and practical, in the process of liberating new meanings, understandings, and emancipatory practices in territorial societies. To do so, it is necessary to understand gift-giving as a dynamic of open reciprocity that is constantly updated 'between' the system of circulation of material and symbolic goods, on the one hand, and the manifestation of the vital phenomenon of donation, or gift-giving with creative drive, on the other. This dynamic of permanent and uncertain circulation of donations hides a complex web of social, cultural, moral and linguistic motives that broadens the idea of modern reason to embrace the pluralism of rationalities. The circulatory approach to gift-giving, articulating its manifestations as a system and as a phenomenon, releases new collective signifiers that unfold as networks of face-to-face and virtual solidarity according to the specificities of environmental and cultural contexts.