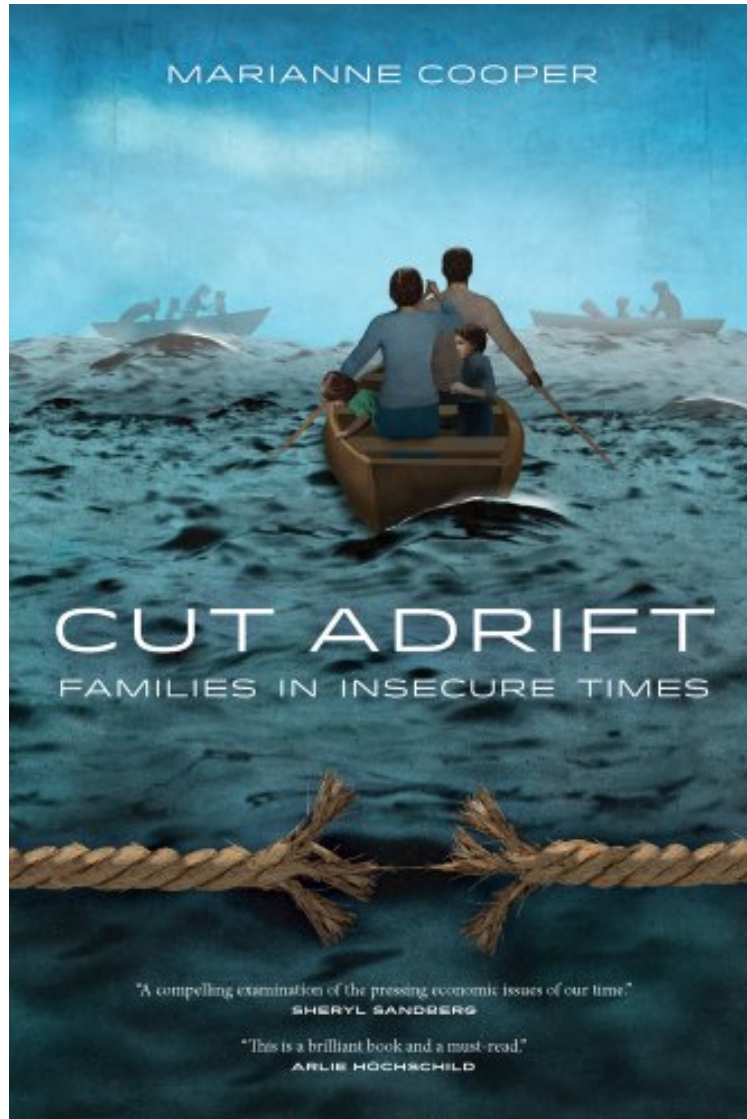


(Free and download) Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times

## Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times

*Marianne Cooper*

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**Marianne Cooper : Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating, but broader perspective lacking By FaceI had mixed feelings about this book. On the one hand, as a Silicon Valley native, so much of this rang true. I recognize all of the stories told by the study participants, and absolutely recognize the economic and class insecurities they describe. It's been pretty shocking to watch the abject economic stratification that has taken place here over the past 3-4 decades. The standard of living for a lot of middle class folks has either fallen off a cliff or is being propped up by levels of debt

that are frantically hidden behind fragile facades. All that being said.... I couldn't help but feel irked by the author's indirect implication that somehow the problem is entirely the fault of "government" or "the system". I got an uncomfortable sense of implied entitlement from some of the stories. Yes, much of the situation is beyond any individual's control, but at the same time, many of those who are in sketchy economic shape did a lot to get themselves there through their own poor choices. I felt that the author lacked a broader sense of the human economic condition over the course of history. The period of prosperity in the US following WWII was just that--- a PERIOD of prosperity. However, the generations just now emerging from the end of that period haven't quite come to grips with the fact that that period is ending. History marches on, and Americans cannot expect to have the same degree of financial security that their parents or grandparents (after the Depression ended) enjoyed. Certainly we would like to, and there was always the myth of having one's children enjoy a higher standard of living than one's own, but the fact is that economic history evolves. Time moves on, the world changes, and economies and nations react to events beyond any one government's control. The prosperity of the last half of the 20th century lulled Americans into a false sense of economic complacency--- "Wouldn't things ALWAYS be this good?" Of course, at the opposite end of the spectrum you have the wealthy folks who also participated in the author's study, who obviously have done quite well and yet STILL feel insecurity on behalf of their children. There's a lot to be said for the fear instilled by the "flattening" of the globe. These folks aren't wrong to be concerned--- the playing field has become a lot more crowded as globalization has robbed the US of its economic hegemony. Competition for the best jobs (and the best standard of living) has become fierce at the top. And the people at the top have no doubt seen how many of their own peers have so easily slipped down the socioeconomic ladder. The picture that Cooper paints is indeed troubling, and the issues are very real. The times are indeed insecure.... but was there ever REALLY any true security? Just how much economic security do any of us have a right to expect? The programs instituted by Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930's did indeed begin knitting a financial safety net for the American people that had an enormous impact on the national economic psyche.... but remember, if WWII had not come along, we have no idea how well those programs would ultimately have fared. It was the War that sent America on an economic rocket ship that only began sputtering 50 years later. New times present new challenges. And the events and measures that improved economic security for Americans in the last century are behind us. So this is an interesting read, but it does feel as though the perspective is a bit narrow.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. this is an important book  
By M. Josephson  
Marianne apparently helped Sheryl Sandberg on her near-masterpiece *Lean In*. This book by her goes farther. Up and down the income scale, there are new and constant sources of insecurity. No one is prepared, no matter how rich or poor. Some books like this I just skim. On this one I read every word. It helped me think about my job. This book helped me know the world in which I work and I am thankful to this author for helping me understand it. And, with very clear normal-person-writing. She sets up her scientific sociological lingo and then sticks with it. No mumbo jumbo academic stuff! Mj0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars  
By Cari Stoltz  
Definitely written in an "academic" writing style, but FASCINATING!

*Cut Adrift* makes an important and original contribution to the national conversation about inequality and risk in American society. Set against the backdrop of rising economic insecurity and rolled-up safety nets, Marianne Cooper's probing analysis explores what keeps Americans up at night. Through poignant case studies, she reveals what families are concerned about, how they manage their anxiety, whose job it is to worry, and how social class shapes all of these dynamics, including what is even worth worrying about in the first place. This powerful study is packed with intriguing discoveries ranging from the surprising anxieties of the rich to the critical role of women in keeping struggling families afloat. Through tales of stalwart stoicism, heart-wrenching worry, marital angst, and religious conviction, *Cut Adrift* deepens our understanding of how families are coping in a go-it-alone age—and how the different strategies on which affluent, middle-class, and poor families rely upon not only reflect inequality, but fuel it.

"Accessible, elucidating, and grounded in real stories. . . . Cooper offers a robust analysis of gender dynamics, with sharp insights about the heavy burden on women to manage the family's anxiety. Cooper's necessary and timely study is a discomfiting reminder of the human cost of the recession." STARRED REVIEW