

# **The Gift Relationship: reciprocity, community and precarious existence**

by Quintin Bradley

CUDEM Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management

Leeds Metropolitan University

[q.bradley@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:q.bradley@leedsmet.ac.uk)

# **The Gift Relationship: reciprocity, community and precarious existence**

## Abstract

Community organisations crippled by grant cuts in English cities have taken precarious shelter in vacant office blocks at the invitation of commercial property landlords. The development of this gift relationship between the local third sector and urban property companies provides a vivid indication of the extent to which neoliberal economies utilise non-monetary relations of reciprocity in times of market failure. The economy of reciprocity provides a model of precarious labour that is founded on unpaid, typically gendered, domestic and neighbourly care and exported by community enterprise as a subsidy to capital accumulation. This paper investigates the marketisation of reciprocity as precarious existence in a study of 'meanwhile space' or short-notice free lets to the voluntary and community sector in the urban property market. Applying a theoretical framework drawn from the writings of the European precarity movement, the paper argues that the role of the third sector has been transformed in the new norm of market uncertainty, and that non-monetary exchange and unpaid labour are now the coinage of crisis neoliberalism.

## Key words

Community, social economy, precarity, reciprocity, property market

## **The Gift Relationship: reciprocity, community and precarious existence**

### Introduction

Community organisations crippled by grant cuts in English cities have taken precarious shelter in vacant office blocks at the invitation of commercial property landlords. The development of this gift relationship between the local third sector and urban property companies provides a vivid indication of the extent to which neoliberal economies rely on unpaid labour and reciprocity in times of market failure (Jessop 2001; Peck 2011). Voluntary and community organisations provide a model of precarious labour that is founded on an economy of, typically, women's unpaid domestic and neighbourly care, or reciprocity (Vishmidt 2005). This is a non-monetary economy that is hyper-casual, hyper-mobile and totally dispensable, and represents therefore a significant source of growth in the new norm of market uncertainty.

This paper investigates the marketisation of reciprocity as precarious existence in a study of 'meanwhile space' (Locality 2011), or short-notice free lets to the voluntary and community sector in the urban property market. Applying a theoretical framework drawn from a critical reading of the European precarity movement (Neilson & Rossiter 2008), it argues the role of the third sector has been transformed through the installation of non-monetary exchange as an engine of private growth. Women's unpaid domestic and neighbourhood labour has provided a continuous unacknowledged subsidy to capital accumulation and the ascent of the market has seen unpaid labour and non-monetary exchange embedded in the formal economy; evidenced in the expansion of working hours, the promotion of entrepreneurialism and enterprise, and the popularity of communitarian philosophies (Levitas 2000; Wright 2005). While economic downturns are accompanied traditionally by an expansion of unpaid labour and reciprocity (Beneria 1999), the engagement of voluntary and community groups in a gift relationship with the urban property market illustrates how long term expectation of minimal growth has led to the incorporation of reciprocity as the central factor in the production of value.

The paper applies the anthropological economics of Karl Polanyi (1957) to critically reinterpret arguments advanced by the Italian autonomists around the rise of immaterial and affective labour (Lazzarato 1996; Hardt 1999; Hardt & Negri 2000), and the contentions of the European precarity movement (Mitropoulos 2005; Tari & Vanni 2005; Vishmidt 2005) on domestic labour and the growth of a flexible employment market. It begins by introducing the phenomenon of 'meanwhile space' in the urban property market, and draws out its connections to affective labour, and the non-monetary relations of reciprocity. It turns then to examine the role of the voluntary and community sector in attributing value to reciprocity and exporting a model of precarious labour to the formal economy. Returning to the case study of 'meanwhile space', and drawing on interviews with property consultants, arts organisations and community groups, the paper analyses the new relationship between reciprocity and the market, and considers the growing centrality of the gift relationship as the coinage of crisis neoliberalism.

### The gift economy

The market crash of 2008 and subsequent slump in a heavily over-inflated property investment market has left retail, trade and office space empty across English cities. Figures for the last quarter of 2011 showed 16 per cent of all commercial property vacant, with tenant demand and expected rents falling everywhere, even in London where demand had initially remained buoyant (RICS 2011). Allocating empty properties to charitable use has become a popular strategy in the commercial property sector to manage this scale of vacancies and reduce liability to full business rates, since charities receive business rates relief and as tenants become liable for only 20 per cent of the costs. A number of consultancies have emerged offering to put commercial landlords in touch with charities needing accommodation and so reduce the landlord's costs by up to 80 per cent. Short-notice or 'meanwhile leases' ensure the removal of voluntary and community sector organisations when the property is ready for commercial let. The term 'meanwhile' suggests

the indefinite suspension of normal market operations, and stresses still more the temporary nature of the alternative, underlining the increasingly precarious existence of many place-based voluntary and community groups.

This new and unstable supply of free office space was introduced to the community sector by arts organisations, the first client base for 'meanwhile space' and still the preferred tenants for retail and prestige commercial units. The arts have provided property developers with more than a useful source of short-stay tenants; they supplied the images and symbols that sold an urban renaissance. The arts delivered the entrepreneurial edge of property development, initiating gentrification, legitimising the appropriation of space through new visions of place and humanising real estate transactions with their cultural prestige (Zukin 1995). The arts have assumed a symbolic role in the flexible strategies of neoliberalism; serving as the exemplar of immaterial labour, of the transformation to a service economy in western capitalist economies, and the consequent growth of casual labour, short-term contracts, just-in-time ordering, and the normalisation of insecurity or precarious existence (Lazzarato 1996; Hardt & Negri 2000; Tari & Vanni 2005). The interdependency of the arts and the urban property market reflects the increasing value of immaterial labour, and particularly of what Michael Hardt (1999) called 'affective labour' in the strategies of neoliberalism. Affective labour, or the construction of culture, connectedness and community, has been associated chiefly with the economy of care, with health and social services, and particularly with the unpaid caring work traditionally, and still typically, carried out by women in domestic labour and social reproduction in families, friendships and neighbourhoods. Capital has incorporated affective labour as an essential component; Hardt argues (1999: 90): 'affective labour is one of the highest value-producing forms of labour from the point of view of capital.' The role of the arts in introducing voluntary and community organisations to the urban property market indicates the part played by the affective economy in establishing domestic and neighbourhood care as the template for precarious labour and social welfare under 'roll out' neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell 2002).

Neoliberalism may be a strategy that 'seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market' (Harvey 2005: 3) but it has actively fostered the development of non-market economies to soften the rough edge of its expansionist ambitions (Jessop 2001). Narratives of the supremacy of capitalist systems obscure the resilience of non-monetary economies and the support they provide in times of market failure (Gibson-Graham 2006). The political economist Karl Polanyi (1957) argued that the ascent of a self-regulating market necessitated state action to undermine the economies already embedded in social institutions: those economies of reciprocity, redistribution and production for need. These non-monetary relations were not extinguished, but were made subordinate to the requirements of the market. They served an essential role in the 'double movement' that characterised market governance and advanced a seemingly unstoppable commodity process on the one hand, while ensuring, in a 'counter-movement', the retention of a regulatory framework based on socialised relations of production and exchange (Polanyi 1957). The strategies of capitalism effect a separation between the formal economy, where the laws of the market hold sway, and those informal and non-monetary economies that remain embedded in social institutions. The creation of 'the economy' as a distinct sphere led to the demarcation of territories of the social and the 'community' as metaphorical reservations for the economies of redistribution and reciprocity (Rose 1999). The growth of the market was overshadowed by its continued reliance on these non-monetary economies. Redistributive practices of socialisation were engaged to regulate the excesses of free market zeal through social insurance, progressive taxation and welfare services, while relations of reciprocity were applied to compensate for the uneven spatial development of capital and its accompanying cycles of market failure (Williams, Aldridge & Tooke 2003).

The economy of reciprocity, named the 'gift relationship' by Richard Titmuss (1970), has survived principally in the ubiquitous concept of 'community' and in its definition as a relationship of meaningful connectedness (Somerville

2011). The notion of community is overdetermined by this economy of care and its expectation of give and take, exemplified by the informal provision, most often by women, of material and immaterial help through extended family and neighbourhood networks (Williams & Windebank 2000). The working class neighbourhoods celebrated in the community studies literature of the 1950s (Hoggart 1957; Young & Wilmot 1962) were characterised by networks of reciprocity which evidenced the persistence of a pre-market economy identified by anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1954:11) as 'a series of rights and duties about consuming and repaying existing side by side with rights and duties about giving and receiving'. This economy of care has provided a network of exchange that promotes associational ties and bonds of obligation and appears rooted in an ethics of human interdependence. As Mauss commented: 'It is first and foremost a pattern of spiritual bonds between things which are to some extent parts of persons, and persons and groups that behave in some measure as if they were things' (Mauss 1954:11).

The confinement of this economy of reciprocity in the territory of community has enabled an artificial divide to be created between waged and non-monetary labour and has mapped this division onto gendered and globalised power relations (Mitropoulos 2005). It was the substantial exclusion of women from the formal economy that perpetuated relations of reciprocity in low income communities where:

*'Informal care was given by many to others who could themselves give little or nothing in direct return, because the donors had a deep sense of debts of care they had incurred to quite different people in different contexts and often in the quite remote past' (Bulmer 1986: 10).*

The high levels of trust necessary to support this economy of care were founded on predictability and the geographical immobility of women (McCulloch 1997), and developed in the absence of alternative means of surviving 'as an extended subterranean chain' of services enabling delayed, transferred or indirect repayment of good deeds (Bulmer 1986: 112). The

continuance of reciprocity depends on this tradition of a women's inter-household economy where friends are neighbours, and help given in the past is accumulated credit invested in the future. This form of community exchange appears to morph into a more selective 'networked individualism' in neighbourhoods with better access to the formal economy, those places with high population turnover, or with few inter-generational kinship networks (Williams & Windebank 2000; Plickert, Wellman & Côté 2005). Networks of reciprocity exclude as much, if not more, than they include and provide differential benefits dependent on monetary wealth and availability of time (as well as commitment). It is an economy embedded in social institutions, and can perpetuate the inequalities of those institutions while providing its network of aid (Coote 2010).

The boundaries between the reciprocity of 'community' and the formal economy have always been more porous than the gendered and territorial division of labour would suggest. Household domestic labour is essential to the reproduction of labour power and the generation of human resources for capital accumulation. The unpaid caring responsibilities of women in the home and in the neighbourhood have been reproduced and reconstituted by the welfare state to provide an apparently bottomless subsidy to the formal economy (Pierson 1991). Reciprocity continues to be the mainstay of the blood transfusion service (Titmuss 1970) and to support and maintain a residual programme of decommodification (Sugden 1984), while the support networks of community provide entry into the informal economy for unregistered labour (Williams 2008) and family members are commonly deployed as unpaid workers in small businesses and enterprises (Jordan 1998). Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James (1980: 162) identified the reliance of the market on the reciprocal care services delivered by women to family members and neighbours:

*'The community is the other half of capitalist organisation, the other area of hidden capitalist exploitation, the other, hidden source of surplus labour'.*

The unpaid affective labour of women made possible the Keynesian welfare state and the Fordist era of regular, full-time employment that demarcated work from home, paid labour from its leisure time. The value attributed by capital to specific tasks rewarded by the allocation of wages, was paralleled by the exclusion to invisibility of the unwaged labour of reciprocity taking place outside the workplace (Mitropoulos 2005). The identification of reciprocity and domestic work with women reinforced cultural norms and naturalised the power relations of the division of labour (Molyneux 2002). An economy of care, constituting the largest typology of flexible, casualised, precarious labour, was confined to the realm of home and community, or marginalised in low waged and low status work in the formal economy, creating an illusion of stability and security for male waged labour under capital (Tari & Vani 2005; Neilson & Rossiter 2008).

The transformation to a post-Fordist era of insecurity, risk and uncertainty in employment indicates the feminisation of the workforce in the growth of a service economy, causing:

*'a generalised seepage into the working world of the kind of informal and mundane degradation formerly confined to the corridors of labour without value, labour without sociality, labour without end: domestic labour' (Vishmidt 2005: 3).*

The characteristics of work under neoliberalism appear modelled on the gendered economy of care (Huws 2001). The precarious conditions of 'bad jobs' in the lower end of the labour market, of part-time, contract, casual or self-employed work, blur the distinction between work and leisure time, expanding the working day into the domestic sphere, seeking to maximise the time of unpaid labour (Wright 2005). The next section examines the role of the voluntary and community sector in exporting reciprocity to the formal economy, and enshrining precarity, or precarious existence as the new social norm.

## Privatisation by Community

The capacity of domestic and neighbourly reciprocity to support the economies of social welfare has made it a productive dynamic for neoliberal strategies aimed at outsourcing public services. Reciprocity has been embedded as the engine of the self-regulating market (Hardt 1999, Fortunati 2007), and contemporary market regimes are hybrid in their pragmatic application of the gift economy to buttress and regulate an idealist vision of market freedom (Peck 2011). The logic of reciprocity has been territorialised in a landscape of moral order, its flexible productivity developed in area-based programmes and harnessed for capital in the form of community enterprise (Williams, Aldridge & Tooke 2003). Market theorists have come to see reciprocity as the foundation of capitalism, as the social infrastructure on which monetary relations developed (Adams & Hess 2001). For Francis Fukuyama (1995) reciprocity was not only compatible with economic logic but fundamental to the development of a culture in which capitalist economics could flourish. Robert Putnam (2000) pointed to the importance of social networking and membership of associations in developing access to employment, to contracts, and to more efficient distribution. The 'double movement' theorised by Polanyi as characteristic of market regimes is evidenced in the popularity of communitarian discourses among New Labour and Coalition governments and their fascination with voluntary and community associations as virtuous enterprises that can redress the more destructive effects of marketisation (Jessop 2002). As an imagined space where the domestic and the private merge with the public and the political, community has served as a reference point for the neoliberal 'double movement', providing an emotional appeal to an imagined past and to a more moral future (Hoggett 1997; Hughes & Mooney 1998). Community connectedness has been conflated with the civic virtues of honesty, reliability, and responsibility; prerequisites for the formation of a capitalist work ethic and an entrepreneurial spirit (Fukuyama 1995). In its 'double movement' neoliberal discourse appears to alternate between utopian pursuit of a free market and a recoil

back to this domestic territory of community and its harmonious vision of public order. This recoil action does not re-embed the market in social institutions, the condition of humanity which Polanyi argued pre-dated the rise of market theory; rather it embeds the economy of reciprocity in the market (Jessop 2001).

Measurements of the value of reciprocity to the market have been made in calculations of social capital (Little 2002), the adaptable theory that enables the immaterial relations of community to be assessed within a monetary framework, and for an economy based on use value to be awarded exchange value (Portes 1998). The concept of social capital quantifies community connectedness as an economy of 'social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness' that provides the basis for capitalist exchange (Putnam 2000: 19). Reciprocity is thus seen as a note of credit that can be drawn on the collective capital of the community. This social capital has to be amassed by investment in neighbourly relations with the intention of transforming them into 'durable obligations subjectively felt' (Bourdieu 1986: 247). Mobilising this capital is the task assigned to the social economy, the sector charged with spreading or reawakening networks of reciprocity in order to mitigate what Polanyi (1957: 150) called 'the peril of society inherent in the utopian principle of a self-regulating market'.

The social economy has been defined as the activity of formal associations that produce and exchange collective goods on the basis of need and invest their surplus in meeting their social aims (Williams, Aldridge & Tooke 2003). Place-based voluntary and community associations are prized as agents of exchange for their ability to convert the values of the non-market economy of reciprocity into a tradable commodity. In the production and reinvestment of surplus value for community objectives they appear to generate and retain the benefits of social capital and make it available as a public good (Coleman 1988). They have been hailed, therefore, as agents of 'networked governance' (Stoker 2004) and reconstituted as resources for local economic regeneration and models of initiative and enterprise within neoliberal

strategies of localism (Fyfe 2005). As suppliers of social credit, voluntary organisations and community enterprises are assumed to generate entrepreneurial endeavour in neighbourhoods which would otherwise offer little return on capital investment. They have accordingly been allocated responsibility for mitigating the ill effects of the uneven development of capital accumulation. In the spaces of market failure the promotion of self-help and responsibility by the voluntary and community sector has sponsored an uneven geography of partial welfare (Kramer 1981; Amin, Cameron & Hudson 2002). As recipients of outsourced public services and public assets, voluntary and community organisations are expected to operate according to the logic of the market with its commercial imperatives of economy and efficiency, to achieve centrally-determined targets under budgetary constraints, and to implement the cost-benefit calculations of performance management (Fuller & Geddes 2008). The conversion of many formerly contentious organisations into social enterprises, now managing and delivering public services under contractual conditions for a dispersed local state has engaged them in the place-based equivalent of what David Harvey (2005: 177) called 'privatisation by NGO'. Their proficiency in mobilising flexible labour and their association with the boundless productivity of a domestic economy of care has made them the paradigm 'entrepreneurs of the self' (Lemke 2001), packaging and exporting the precarious relations of affective labour to recalcitrant populations as the reluctant 'community face of neoliberalism' (Petras 1997).

Despite the collaboration of community enterprise with the neoliberal agenda of a smaller state, the sector has remained largely reliant on public funding (Amin, Cameron & Hudson 2002; Somerville 2011), and the austerity measures inflicted by the Coalition Government in 2010 sliced £3bn from the budget of the third sector, uprooting many voluntary and community organisations from the networks of governance and undermining their legitimacy as agents of policy. Loss of public recognition has instituted intense competition in the sector for charitable donations and the search for patronage, and has required social entrepreneurs to venture into extremes of

flexibility, juggling short-term contracts with wage reductions and cyclical redundancies (Kane & Allen 2011). The shelter from this financial storm offered by commercial property landlords seeking to reduce their overheads has provided temporary respite to the social economy but enmeshes the sector in reciprocal relations with the private market. Voluntary and community associations are now dependent on the good will of property consultants, migrating between vacant suites of offices, their continually insecure existence made ever more precarious. The impact of this new role for the economy of reciprocity and its resulting effect on subjectivities across the private, public and community sectors is explored in the next section.

### Precarious existence

The global financial crisis has signalled a new direction in the market domination of the gift economy. With opportunities for capital growth restricted in the medium term the non-monetary economy has assumed even greater significance in neoliberal strategies and attention is focused on extracting maximum value from unpaid labour (Coote 2010). In these circumstances the voluntary and community sector assumes a key role as a supplier of reciprocity to the formal economy.

Voluntary and community enterprises are no longer required as role models of precarious labour in the spaces of market failure. The 'double movement' of neoliberalism is now directed to deliver austerity; reducing employment, pensions, wages and welfare transfers across the economy of care. Those abject communities previously the beneficiaries of economies of redistribution and reciprocity have become the exceptional subjects of sovereign punishment (Nadesan 2008). Exhortations to self-help and responsible enterprise have given way to the administration of discipline and punishment. In the casualisation of existence enforced by welfare benefit caps and flexible tenancies these populations are presented with the economic conditions of nonreciprocity, a 'porous domain of hyper-exploitative entrepreneurial atomism' (Berlant 2007: 280). Precarity for them is no longer a condition of

insecure 'bad jobs' but a 'politically induced condition of maximised vulnerability and exposure' (Butler 2009: ii).

In the austerity programme imposed by the UK government, responsibility for social welfare passes from the local state to private patronage and charitable donation, while the voluntary and community sector is harnessed to kick-start the processes of capital accumulation by expanding the role of non-monetary relations in the production of value (HM Government 2011). The direct incorporation of reciprocity in market systems entails the construction of new subjectivities and marks the beginning of a transformed role for affective labour in the strategies of neoliberalism (Hardt 1999; Neilson & Rossiter 2008). The migration of the voluntary and community sector into vacant commercial property, and their developing relationship with the urban property market, has made a significant effect on public agencies, property companies and the charitable organisations themselves. This section explores the construction of these new subjectivities and the changing role of reciprocity through a study of the relationship between the voluntary sector and Hammond Associates, the 'artspace procurement consultants' who have been most active in networking commercial property companies with charitable users across the north of England. Hammond Associates act for the major property companies, among them Land Securities, Towngate, Urban Splash, and St James Securities, and handle the charitable use of, at any one time, around 60 commercial properties in cities across Yorkshire, the North East and the Midlands, including whole office blocks, business parks and retail space (Author's Interview).

The relationship between the urban property market and arts networks and charities was initiated at the onset of the recession in 2008 through council-led regeneration schemes to convert empty shop units into temporary exhibition spaces, stimulated by a mixture of funding from central government and the Arts Council (CLG 2009). Hammond Associates developed this scheme into a private consultancy and expanded it beyond retail, presenting arts organisations with vacant office, industrial and business park spaces for

studio, workshop, production and administration uses. Hammond developed their own short-notice tenancy agreement which provides charities with free office space and a donation towards their costs, while still reducing liabilities for the landlord by 70 per cent. The landlord receives mandatory business rates relief for the properties let to charitable use and pays the reduced rates for the tenant, in addition to providing them with a donation. The landlord continues to market and show the property, while Hammond Associates manage the charitable tenancy, selecting suitable tenants, monitoring the behaviour of tenants and ensuring vacant possession when required, providing the tenants with only 14 days notice of termination.

Public bodies have been quick to seize on the potential opportunities of these developing networks between the private sector and grant-funded organisations in the light of the budget cuts inflicted on them by the Coalition government's austerity spending review. The Arts Council England received a 29.6 per cent cut in its grant aid from the Coalition government, and in March 2011 passed on cuts of 15 per cent to the arts as a whole, withdrawing financial support from over 200 arts organisations (Arts Council 2011). East Street Arts, based in Leeds and leasing around 40 vacant commercial spaces through Hammond Associates on behalf of its membership of individual arts companies or artists, also expected to see its funding reduced. Instead East Street Arts received a 252 per cent increase in its Arts Council funding which was seen as a reward for developing new income streams in private sector partnership. Its ability to offer affordable studio and workshop space to its membership has also boosted East Street Arts income, and the donation it receives from commercial landlords, plus the license fee it charges its members to cover utility bills, insurance and administration costs, has been enough to finance an expansion of membership and employ three new members of staff, fully compensating the organisation for the previous loss of funding from the Future Jobs Fund (Author's Interview). The implications of charitable use of commercial property were not lost on local authorities who in 2011 received an overall 27 per cent reduction in their central government formula grant over four years (CLG 2011), and passed on cuts to the

voluntary and community sector in their areas. In Leeds council officers seconded to the city's local strategic partnership approached Hammond to find office space for organisations in the voluntary and community sector that had seen their council funding reduced, or removed altogether. Community groups supported by regional government which lost their main source of revenue in the abolition of this tier of public administration by the Coalition government also pursued these opportunities. Even voluntary networks with sufficient funding and secure tenancies on their office premises saw opportunities in moving to vacant short-life property.

The voluntary and community sector beneficiaries of patronage are carefully selected by management consultants like Hammond Associates and matched to the properties on offer, thus ensuring that arts organisations seeking exhibition space get the best quality and most accessible sites, while community groups may be allocated to offices needing renovation. An example is provided in the occupation of four vacant floors of West Riding House, a 20 story office block in the city centre of Leeds owned by Moorfield and Holbeck Land. Two floors due for renovation in early 2012 were let to 15 community organisations, including church groups, community development agencies and social enterprises, while two floors that had already been renovated were let as gallery and exhibition space. Sharing a centrally located top floor suite of offices, boasting impressive views across the urban skyline, opened up new opportunities for the community users, introducing them to groups outside of their immediate field, creating the infrastructure for shared initiatives, and presenting the possibilities for nurturing a new counter-culture in a building that symbolised the hegemony of finance capital. One community organisation now running their operations on a mixture of sweat equity and the benefit of free premises commented on this new co-operative atmosphere:

Something was happening that everyone said was a real benefit. We were sharing resources, and we had a shared kitchen and library, and we were beginning to hold a series of seminars, sharing methods and ideas, stuff I'm not certain we would have picked up otherwise. These

are not organisations we would have come across but we have a synergy with them, an interesting synergy because they are not complimentary to our activities and not directly in competition for resources, but we are obliquely connected and have skills and knowledge we can share (Author's interview).

These community organisations were given two weeks' notice to quit after only six months in the premises, but were handed the lease to another vacant building near the city centre where they could continue to explore the potential cultural outcomes of their co-operation. The gift of office space had, in this example, helped to create social ties between a disparate assemblage of community organisations, and encouraged further gifts: the sharing of photocopiers, open access to libraries and information, the formal communication of experience and the exploration of potential joint-working. A rekindling of reciprocity among voluntary and community organisations is a consequence of market failure and it draws attention to the contradictions inherent in capital's reliance on socialised economies. Although its actual implementation may be selective and exclusive, reciprocity operates through 'recognition of the interdependency of self and other' (Komter 2007: 102). It acts therefore in the understanding that it is in the collective interest of all to co-operate and exchange services with each other; it is the kindness of strangers and therefore the basis for human solidarity. The marketisation of reciprocity has breached its containment in the territory of home, family and community and made it a vital ingredient for the restructuring of labour and the production of value for capital. While there appears little hope that reciprocity might still generate a transformational political strategy (Williams 1967), one of the outcomes of this process is that co-operation is made immanent to the labour process, and essential to the expansion of exploitation (Hardt & Negri 2000).

## Conclusion

A new role for the voluntary and community sector appears to have been forged in English cities where the funding cuts of a shrinking state have been replaced by the insecure patronage of commercial property landlords. The reciprocal relationship developed between the urban property market and the third sector provides a non-monetary dispensable service suitable to the continued uncertainty of market conditions. Reciprocity, the gift relationship founded on the unpaid labour of domestic and neighbourhood care, has provided an unacknowledged subsidy to the market economy; its confinement in the territory of community has enabled domestic labour to be excluded from any account in the production of value, while providing a justification for low-waged and flexible working conditions in the formal economy. The expansion of a feminised service sector that has characterised the ascent of neoliberal strategies of accumulation appears to have incorporated the economy of reciprocity as the engine of growth, extending the working day into leisure time, promoting entrepreneurial subjectivities that extract value from unpaid labour, and harnessing voluntary and community organisations to institute precarious enterprise in neighbourhoods of market failure. The new gift relationship between urban property companies and the voluntary and community sector signals the further embedding of unpaid labour and non-monetary service as subsidies to capital accumulation. It marks the extension of the role of the third sector from purveyors of enterprise to neighbourhoods excluded from the market, to providers of dispensable reciprocity to market-leaders. The failure of markets, and the acceptance of continued market uncertainty, has made the gift relationship a central component of 'roll-out' neoliberalism.

## References

Adams, David & Michael Hess (2001) Community in Public Policy: fad or foundation? **Australian Journal of Public Administration**. Vol. 60. No. 2: 13-23

Amin, Ash, Angus Cameron & Ray Hudson (2002) **Placing the Social Economy**. London. Routledge.

Arts Council (2011) **National portfolio funding programme**. London. Arts Council England.

Berlant, Lauren (2007) Nearly Utopia, Nearly Normal: post-Fordist affect in *La Promesse* and *Rosetta*. **Public Culture**. Vol.19. No.2: 273-301

Berneria, Lourdes (1999) The Enduring Debate over Unpaid Labour. **International Labour Review**. Vol.138. No.3: 287-309

Bourdieu, Pierre (1986) The Forms of Capital. In: Richardson, J.E. (ed.) **Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education**. Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press

Bull, Michael (2008) Challenging tensions: critical, theoretical and empirical perspectives on social enterprise. **International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research**. Vol.14. No.5: 268-275

Bulmer, Martin (1986) **Neighbours: the work of Philip Abrams**. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Butler, Judith (2009) Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics. Lecture given at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. **AIBR. Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana**. Vol.4. No.3: i – xiii [Internet] Available at <<http://www.aibr.org>> Accessed on 20 February 2012

CLG (2009) **Looking After Our Town Centres**. London. Communities & Local Government.

CLG (2011) **Local Government Finance Settlement 2011/12**. London. Communities & Local Government.

Coleman, James (1988) Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. **American Journal of Sociology**. Vol. 94. Supplement: Organisations and Institutions: Sociological and economic approaches to the analysis of social structures: S95-S120

Coote, Anna (2010) **The Great Transition: social justice and the core economy**. London. New Economics Foundation.

Dalla Costa, Mariarosa & James, Selma (1980) The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community. In: Malos, Ellen (ed.) **The Politics of Housework**. London. Allison & Busby. Chapter 11 pp.160-195

Fortunati, Leopoldina (2007) Immaterial Labour and its Machinisation. **Ephemera**. Vol.7. No.1: 139 – 157 [Internet] Available at <<http://www.ephemeraweb.org>> Accessed on 20 February 2012

Fukuyama, Francis (1995) **Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity**. London. Penguin Books

Fuller, Crispian & Mike Geddes (2008) Urban Governance Under Neoliberalism: New Labour and the restructuring of state space. **Antipode**. Vol.40. No.2: 252-282

Fyfe, N. (2005) Making Space for Neo-Communitarianism? The third sector, state and civil society in the UK. **Antipode**. Vol.37, No.3: 536-557

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006) **The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)**. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press.

Gough, Jamie (2002) Neoliberalism and Socialistaion in the Contemporary City: opposites, complements and instabilities. **Antipode**. Vol.34. No.3: 405-426

HM Government (2011) **Giving White Paper**. Norwich. The Stationery Office Limited

HM Treasury (2005) **Exploring the Role of the Third Sector in Public Service Delivery and Reform: A Discussion Document**. London. The Stationery Office.

Hardt, Michael (1999) Affective Labour. **boundary 2**. Vol.26. No.2: 90 – 100

Hardt, Michael & Antonio Negri (2000) **Empire**. London. Harvard University Press

Harvey, David (2005) **A Brief History of Neoliberalism**. Oxford. Oxford University Press

Hoggart, Richard (1957) **The Uses of Literacy**. London. Chatto & Windus.

Hoggett, Paul (1997) **Contested Communities: experiences, struggles, policies**. Bristol. Policy Press.

Hughes, Gordon & Gerry Mooney (1998) Community. In: Hughes, Gordon (ed.) **Imagining Welfare Futures**. London. Routledge & Open University

Huws, Ursula (2001) The Making of a Cybertariat? Virtual work in a real world. *Socialist Register*. Vol. 37. [Internet] Available at: <<http://socialistregister.com>> Accessed on 20 February 2012

Jessop, Bob (2001) Regulationist and Autopoieticist Reflections on Polanyi's Account of Market Economies and the Market Society. **New Political Economy**. Vol. 6, No. 2 213-232

Jessop, Bob (2002) Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State-Theoretical Perspective. **Antipode**. Vol. 34. No.3:453-472

Jordan, Bill (1998) **The New Politics of Welfare**. London. Sage.

Kane, David & James Allen (2011) **Counting the Cuts: the impact of spending cuts on the UK voluntary and community sector**. London. National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Komter, Aafke (2007) Gifts and Social Relations: the mechanisms of reciprocity. **International Sociology**. Vol. 22. No.1: 93-107

Kramer, Ralph (1981) **Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State**. London. University of California Press.

Lazzarato, Maurizio (1996) Immaterial Labour. In: Hardt, M. & P.Virno (eds.) **Radical Thought in Italy: a potential politics**. London. University of Minnesota Press: 133-147

Lemke, Thomas (2001) The Birth of Bio-Politics: Michel Foucault's lecture at the College de France on neo-liberal governmentality. **Economy & Society**. Vol.30, No.2: 190-207

Levitas, Ruth (2000) Community, Utopia and New Labour. **Local Economy**. Vol.15. No.3: 188-197

Little, Adrian (2002) **The Politics of Community: theory and practice**. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press.

Locality (2011) Meanwhile Project. [Internet] Available at <<http://www.locality.org.uk>> Accessed on 16 February 2012.

Martin, Deborah (2003) 'Place-Framing' as Place-Making: constituting a neighbourhood for organising and activism. **Annals of the Association of American Geographers**. Vol. 93. No.3: 730-750

Mauss, Marcel (1954) **The gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies**. Translated from the French by Ian Cunnison. London. Cohen & West.

Mitropoulos, Angela (2005) Precari-Us? **Mute**. Vol.29 [Internet] Available at <<http://www.metamute.org>> Accessed on 16 February 2012

Molyneux, Maxine (2002) Gender and the Silences of Social Capital: Lessons from Latin America. **Development and Change**. Vol. 33. No.2:167-188

Nadesan, Majia Holmer (2008) **Governmentality, Biopower and Everyday Life**. London. Routledge

Neilson, Brett & Ned Rossiter (2008) Precarity as a Political Concept, or Fordism as Exception. **Theory, Culture & Society**. Vol. 25: 51-72

Peck, J. & A. Tickell (2002) Neoliberalising Space. **Antipode**. Vol. 34, No. 3: 380-404

Peck, Jamie (2011) Beyond the Neoliberal Zombieland. **Antipode Lecture** Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), August 2011. London.

Petras, James (1997) Imperialism and NGOs in Latin America. **Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine**. Vol. 49. No. 7: 10 – 16

Pierson, Christopher (1991) **Beyond the Welfare State?** Cambridge. Polity Press.

Plickert, Gabriele, Barry Wellman & Rochelle Côté (2005) It's Not Who You Know, It's How You Know Them: who exchanges what with whom? In: Blokland, Talja & Mike Savage (eds.) **Social Capital on the Ground**. Oxford. Blackwell

Polanyi, Karl (1957) **The Great Transformation**. Boston. Beacon Press.

Portes, Alejandro (1998) Social Capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology. **Annual Review of Sociology**. Vol. 24: 1-24.

Putnam, Robert (2000) **Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of the American community**. London. Simon & Schuster

RICS (2011) **UK Commercial Market Survey Q4: Sentiment in the commercial market eases further**. London. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Rose, Nikolas (1999) **Powers of Freedom**. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

- Somerville, Peter (2011) **Understanding Community**. Bristol. Policy Press.
- Stoker, Gerry (2004) **Transforming local governance: from Thatcherism to New Labour**. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sugden, Robert (1984) The Supply of Public Goods through Voluntary Contributions. **The Economic Journal**. Vol. 94, No.376: 772-787
- Tari, Marcello & Ilaria Vanni (2005) On the Life and Deeds of San Precario, Patron Saint of Precarious Workers and Lives. **Fibreculture Journal**. Issue 5 [Internet] Available at <<http://journal.fibreculture.org>> Accessed 20 February 2012
- Titmuss, Richard (1970) **The Gift Relationship: from human blood to social policy**. London. George Allen & Unwin.
- Vishmidt, Marina (2005) Precarious Straits. **Mute**. Vol.1. No.29 [Internet] Available at <<http://www.metamute.org>> Accessed on 16 February 2012
- Williams, Colin (2008) Repaying favours: unravelling the nature of community exchange in an English locality. **Community Development Journal**. Vol.44. No.4: 488-499
- Williams, Colin & Jan Windebank (2000) Helping Each Other Out? Community exchange in deprived neighbourhoods. **Community Development Journal**. Vol. 35. No.2: 146-156
- Williams, Colin, Theresa Aldridge & Jane Tooke (2003) Alternative Exchange Spaces. In: Leyshon, Andrew, Roger Lee and Colin Williams (eds.) **Alternative Economic Spaces**. London. Sage Publications: 151-168
- Williams, Raymond (1958) **Culture and Society**. London. Chatto & Windus.
- Wright, Steve (2005) Reality Check: are we living in an immaterial world? **Mute**. Vol.2. No.1 [Internet] Available at <<http://www.metamute.org>> Accessed on 24 February 2012

Young, Michael & Peter Wilmot (1962) **Family and Kinship in East London**. Harmondsworth. Penguin.

Zukin, Sharon (1995) **The Culture of Cities**. Oxford. Blackwell