

**The transactional gift-exchange: a morphogenetic analysis of unpaid internships.**

MORRISON, Andrew <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6700-6875>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31917/>

---

This document is the Published Version [VoR]

**Citation:**

MORRISON, Andrew (2023). The transactional gift-exchange: a morphogenetic analysis of unpaid internships. Journal of Critical Realism. [Article]

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>



## The transactional gift-exchange: a morphogenetic analysis of unpaid internships

Andrew Morrison

**To cite this article:** Andrew Morrison (2023): The transactional gift-exchange: a morphogenetic analysis of unpaid internships, Journal of Critical Realism, DOI: [10.1080/14767430.2023.2217055](https://doi.org/10.1080/14767430.2023.2217055)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767430.2023.2217055>



© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 05 Jun 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# The transactional gift-exchange: a morphogenetic analysis of unpaid internships

Andrew Morrison

Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK

## ABSTRACT

This paper combines the use of gift theory and the metatheory of the Morphogenetic Approach as a framework for the proposal that the relationship between unpaid interns and 'employers' may be conceptualized as a form of transactional, but asymmetrical, gift-exchange. The article begins by applying insights from gift theory to the findings of a range of studies into unpaid internships. It is argued that, while interns are the initial gift-givers in delivering unpaid labour, 'employers' often demonstrate weak reciprocation in terms of offering paid work. Following that, the article combines gift analysis with the Morphogenetic Approach. This framework offers ontological depth to the substantive propositions of gift theory, and provides conceptual tools to study the interplay between structure/culture and agency that form the intern-'employer' relationship. The contribution of this article lies in the combined use of two key theoretical perspectives to a problematic not previously examined through such concepts.

## KEYWORDS

Internships; gift-exchange; morphogenetic analysis

## Introduction

In recent decades unpaid internships have become an increasingly significant part of the UK's graduate labour market (Montacute 2018). This paper proposes that unremunerated internships may be conceptualized as a type of transactional, but asymmetrical, gift-exchange between intern and 'employer'. Following a brief discussion on how unpaid internships may be defined, the article builds up its central argument across three key sections. The first section unites theories of gift-relationships with empirical, sociologically-informed investigations into unpaid internships. It is suggested that Mauss' ([1954] 2002) three-part temporization of gift-relationships into the elements of gift-acceptance-reciprocation offers a useful framework for locating the respective roles of interns and 'employers' as social actors. It is argued that, while interns fulfil the role of ordinary gift-givers by providing free labour, many 'employers' exhibit weak levels of reciprocity where that is understood to mean the eventual offer of paid employment.

**CONTACT** Andrew Morrison  a.morrison@shu.ac.uk  Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, Arundel Building, Sheffield S1 1WB, UK

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

The second main section outlines key concepts of Margaret Archer's Morphogenetic Approach (Archer 1995, 1996, 2007). It is argued that the realist ontology of the Morphogenetic Approach, and its practical methodology as a tool for studying the social world, complement the explanatory potential offered by gift theory and the empirical literature on unpaid internships. The third main section puts this into effect by relating the frame provided by Mauss' ([1954] 2002) three-part gift-relationship to concepts from the Morphogenetic Approach outlined in section two. The application of the Morphogenetic Approach here supports the article's central argument by its attention to questions of structure/culture and agency, and of the interplay between them, that underlie the intern-'employer' gift-relationship. A concluding section reflects upon the value of both gift theory and the Morphogenetic Approach to the study of unpaid internships. The contribution of this paper lies in its application of two theoretical resources – gift analysis and the Morphogenetic Approach – to a social problematic not hitherto analysed through such a conceptual lens. Finally, while this present paper draws from UK and North American sources, unpaid internships are a feature of labour markets across advanced economies and consequently this discussion has wider international applications.

## Defining unpaid internships

Before discussing unpaid internships, it is first necessary to try to define what an internship is. However, as Owens and Stuart (2016, 679) observe, arriving at a definition is rather problematic. The word internship comes from the USA where it was employed from the early twentieth century to refer to a period of postgraduate hospital training of doctors during which they worked for relatively low pay (Owens and Stuart 2016). Since then, the word has been applied to a wide range of different work arrangements. A useful definition of internships for the purposes of definition is that offered by Grant-Smith and McDonald (2018, 559) for whom the term denotes a period of time lasting from six weeks to 12 months, which a student, graduate or job-seeker spends within an organization, undertaking any mixture of productive work, work-shadowing, or performing low-level tasks for more established workers within the profession. The distinction between paid and unpaid internships is not an entirely binary one. Jacobson and Shade (2018, 325) offer a useful typology whereby internships range from the paid, the underpaid and the unpaid. While an underpaid internship may pay less than the minimum wage and may be given in the form of ex gratia payments, an unpaid internship is entirely unremunerated in any form (Jacobson and Shade 2018, 325). It is with unpaid internships that this present paper is concerned.

Estimates of the number of graduates in the UK engaged in internships vary considerably. Hunt and Scott (2020, 468) use data from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) statutory survey to arrive at a range of 23–31,000 interns or 2.5% of the graduate workforce. At the other end of the scale, however, the Sutton Trust indicate a possible total of 70,000 at any time (Montacute 2018, 1). The headline figures, however, mask considerable inter-sectoral variations. In certain highly competitive, 'elite-level' areas of the graduate labour market, such as the media, law, digital, and cultural and creative industries (CCIs), unpaid internships have come to be a normalised route of entry, as many UK-based academic studies have documented (Siebert and Wilson 2013; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Randle, Forson, and Calveley 2015; Samdanis and Lee 2019;

Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020). These findings are echoed in academic research based on North American contexts where unpaid internships are an even more prominent element of the graduate labour market (Frenette 2013; Shade and Jacobson 2015; Jacobson and Shade 2018; Jaffe 2022). Unpaid internships are not, though, limited to 'high prestige' sectors. They are also to be found in higher education (Forkert and Lopes 2015) museums and galleries (Holmes 2006) environmental and conservation organizations (Vercammen et al. 2020) and in 'Third Sector' voluntary organizations (Weghman 2015; Leonard, Halford, and Bruce 2016).

It is important to view the position of unpaid internships within the wider context of unpaid labour of which there are many forms. Unpaid overtime and discretionary work, the 'extra' efforts that individuals put into their work tasks, are two of the most prominent of this type (Standing 2016; Fairwork UK 2021; Kmec and Gorman 2010). There is also the phenomenon of what Standing (2016) terms 'work-for-labour': all the activities (the 'work') which workers have to undertake in order to be able to perform their paid jobs (the 'labour') but for which they receive no remuneration. Examples of this include commuting, social networking or homeworking outside office hours. In certain circumstances, where individuals provide such free labour for transactionally strategic purposes, these may also be considered gift-exchanges in the terms employed here. However, unlike these forms of unpaid labour, the interns' labour is entirely unwaged rather than being extracted additionally to their paid labour. Consequently, it may be concluded that their unpaid labour is foundational to their status as unremunerated workers and not incidental to it. On the other hand, unpaid internships share some of the features of the formality of paid employment and, moreover, working for free is not a 'pure' gift. As Roberts (2017) reports some sectors now have more internships available than permanent entry-level positions, meaning that free labour has become a strategic necessity for some graduates. Consequently, it is argued that interns' donation of free labour within the site of waged employment represents a form of *transactional*, but *asymmetrical*, gift-exchange: a concept that captures intern agency and exploitative employment relations. The following section will make the case for this argument by drawing together literature on gift-relationships and studies of unpaid internships.

## The gift-relationships of unpaid internships

To understand the nature of gift-relationships, it is first necessary to examine the different constituent elements of what may be meant by a gift. The concept of reciprocity, its relationship to altruism and its role in the fomenting of social relations, has long been a key point of contention among scholars trying to define what is meant by gift-giving. By general consent, the seminal discussion on this point, and the work with which all contemporary thinking about gift-giving must engage, is that of Marcell Mauss (Elder-Vass 2020; Osteen 2002; Cheal 1988; Sahlin [1972] 2017). As an anthropologist and sociologist working in the middle of the twentieth century, Mauss ([1954] 2002) made a study of what he termed 'archaic', that is, indigenous societies whose exchange practices of goods or services were quite different to those of industrially complex capitalist societies. His central argument was that what may appear, on first view, to be an act of disinterested or altruistic 'pure' gift-giving is, in fact, a highly strategic part of social relations which demands reciprocation. Mauss ([1954] 2002) uses the North American 'potlatch' ceremony

– wherein one group hosts a festival of feasts and fairs for another – as an illustration of this thesis. Here, the act of giving is decomposed into three closely inter-related elements: for a first party to give (extend an invitation), for a second party to accept, and for that second party to then reciprocate in at least equal measure (Mauss 2002, 51). Each stage of this chain of relations may appear voluntary but is in fact very much obligatory and carries the threat of private or public conflict if it breaks down at any point.

For Mauss ([1954] 2002), the gift-giving of the potlatch, and other forms of indigenous exchange that he draws upon, are essentially about power: the initial gift-giver wins social prestige and economic leverage over the recipient. Until the gift has been repaid, the recipient remains in the donor's debt. Here, then, Mauss ([1954] 2002, 5) is clear that gift-exchange is economic exchange in terms understood within indigenous communities, since 'archaic' societies '... are not, as has been claimed, devoid of economic markets – since the market is a human phenomenon that, in our view, is not foreign to any known society – but whose system of exchange is different from ours'. On this reading, gift-giving is a form of *exchange* that entails economic and symbolic resources and which is premised upon reciprocation. Indeed, it is the obligation to reciprocate that is a constituent part of the social relations of the gift-exchange within these accounts (Mauss [1954] 2002, 5).

Another writer who follows this emphasis upon the defining nature of reciprocation is Cheal (1988). Here, though, the obligation to reciprocate is not seen as a function of economic or symbolic dominance as with Mauss. Rather, Cheal (1988) highlights the role of altruistic gift-giving in cementing harmonious social relations. His starting point is that the extension of market relations in contemporary capitalist societies has actually made gift-giving more rather than less important. He contends that a gift is something that is transferred between individuals or groups of individuals and which serves to institutionalize social ties by creating a moral economy, by which he means, '... a system of transactions which are defined as socially desirable (ie moral), because through them social ties are recognized, and balanced social relationships are maintained' (Cheal 1988, 15). A moral economy thus serves a powerful symbolic function in social relations: interpersonal dependence between social actors creates expectations of reciprocity which, in turn, make social interaction possible (Cheal 1988, 11). This is of key importance because in modern, complex societies, trust is an acute problem and consequently a moral economy is a way of trying to instil trust by the creation of common norms and values (Cheal 1988, 15).

The focus upon the role of altruistic gift-giving as a means to create or maintain social bonds is also to be found in the work of Richard Titmuss. In this case, however, Titmuss ([1970] 1997) offers an insight into non-reciprocal gift-giving in advanced capitalist societies. Titmuss ([1970] 1997) focused chiefly on comparing the blood donation system of Britain, a wholly unpaid voluntary system, with that of the USA, which at that period employed a combination of unpaid voluntary donations with commercially funded blood banks whose supplies were usually provided by the poorest socioeconomic classes. Titmuss ([1970] 1997) favoured the British system over that of the USA because he believed that an entirely voluntary, unremunerated system of donation was much more conducive to the release of what he termed 'creative altruism': the bestowing of social gifts and undertaking of actions that entail no explicit or implicit individual right to a return gift. Titmuss ([1970] 1997, 281) recognized that what he termed 'stranger

relationship' gift-transfers of this type are by no means unilateral as both donor and recipient may benefit in different ways; he argued, however, that the benefits may not be clear cut and only accrue incidentally or in the long term.

This brief review of the literature thus indicates the cross-cutting places of reciprocity, altruism and social relations in gift-giving: the obligation to reciprocate can be a function both of relations of domination and competition (Mauss [1954] 2002) and serve more altruistic purposes of social solidarity (Cheal 1988). By contrast, in some areas of social life, 'pure' altruism becomes the key variable and reciprocity does not feature or at least not directly (Titmuss 1997). This range of perspectives is captured by Sahlins' ([1972] 2017) ideal type forms of reciprocity.

As with Marcell Mauss, Sahlins' ([1972] 2017) work is anthropological and his discussion of reciprocity derives from his studies of hunter-gatherer societies. Again, like Mauss, the influence of Sahlins' work has extended far beyond anthropology to influence thinking about exchange relations in fields such as sociology, history and political theory. For Sahlins ([1972] 2017) reciprocity is a whole class of exchanges or a continuum of forms. At one end, there is the 'pure gift' where no reciprocation is openly expected and if made would be considered unsociable (Sahlins [1972] 2017, 173). At the mid-point, there is 'balanced reciprocity' which refers to '... direct exchange. In precise balance, the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay' (Sahlins [1972] 2017, 176). Balanced reciprocity covers much of what may be termed 'trade' or economic exchange in hunter-gatherer societies – the stipulation of returns of proportionate value or utility within a limited and narrow timeframe (Sahlins [1972] 2017, 176). Finally, at the other end of the continuum lies 'negative reciprocity' or the 'unsociable extreme', which is '... the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity, the several forms of appropriation, transactions opened and conducted toward net utilitarian advantage' (Sahlins [1972] 2017, 177). This is the most impersonal sort of exchange and the most 'economic' in contemporary capitalist terms since participants encounter each other as opposed interests with the aim of maximizing utility at the other's expense (Sahlins [1972] 2017, 177).

What though can these perspectives on gift-giving – some of which originate in anthropological studies of societies quite different from advanced capitalist ones – contribute to understanding unpaid internships as gift-exchanges? A gift-exchange approach directs us to look at transactions of unpaid labour and to consider questions of social actors and social agency: who the donor may be, their motivation for providing free labour, who the recipient may be, and where (if anywhere) a burden of reciprocation may lie. It is suggested that Mauss' ([1954] 2002) three-part temporizing of gift-exchanges offers a framework for this relationship. Thus, it is suggested that the intern may be located as the originary gift-giver, the first party within Mauss' ([1954] 2002) three-part exchange; following that, the 'employer' then accepts the gift of free labour; and the final stage is reciprocation (or not) on the part of the 'employer' towards the intern. Locating the intern as the originary gift-giver in the relationship with the 'employer' then raises the question of their motivation for assuming this role. It will be recalled that, for Mauss ([1954] 2002), gift-giving was a social and economic *obligation*. Literature on unpaid internships indicates a similar sense of obligation on the part of interns, albeit within a very different set of cultural and economic contexts to those that Mauss ([1954] 2002) studied.



Studies into unpaid internships reveal that a key motivation for many interns is to gain a 'foot in the door' into high-competition sectors of the labour market in anticipation of eventual paid employment (Jaffe 2022; Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020; Randle, Forson, and Calveley 2015; Jacobson and Shade 2018). However, gaining such a foothold is seen to *require* the provision of free labour. For example, Percival and Hesmondhalgh (2014) discuss the resignation of younger workers in the audio-visual industries to having to work for free in order to gain entry to that sector, a phenomenon they term 'sacrificial labour'. Similar findings are reported in other studies within the creative and cultural industries in the UK (Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020; Randle, Forson, and Calveley 2015). The same picture emerges in a North American context where researchers report unpaid interns feeling that they need to 'pay their dues' before being 'entitled' to paid work (Jacobson and Shade 2018; Shade and Jacobson 2015). Evidence of such a sense of obligation is not, though, limited to such sectors, it is also to be found in Third Sector organizations (Leonard, Halford, and Bruce 2016; Weghman 2015), in museums and galleries (Holmes 2006) and in environmental organizations (Vercammen et al. 2020). The sense in which the promise of longer-term paid work has to be 'earned' by providing free labour in the short term is well summed up in Jaffe's (2022) characterization of unpaid internships as 'hope labour'.

However, if paid work is located as the mode of reciprocation to the interns' gift of free labour, evidence suggests that the sense of obligation on the part of organizations is quite weak. In the UK context, Purcell et al. (2012, 106) report that graduates who undertake unpaid work experience after graduation are actually less likely to obtain paid, graduate-level employment, and indeed more likely to be unemployed, than graduates who did not do unpaid work after graduation. A later study, also within the UK context, which analysed data from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) statutory survey, drew very similar conclusions (Hunt and Scott 2020). Weak reciprocity also appears to pertain in the North American context. In their survey of unpaid interns working in the US music industry, Siebert and Wilson (2013, 715) found that only forty-five percent of their respondents had found paid work after their internship. This finding is also echoed by Jaffe (2022, 247) who reports that less than half of unpaid interns in the United States receive offers for paid work. If reciprocity is viewed in these terms, we appear to be erring towards Sahlins' ([1972] 2017) 'negative reciprocity': the attempt to get something for nothing on the part of many (although not all) organizations that accept the free labour of unpaid interns. Thus, this sense of reciprocity points clearly to the asymmetrical nature of the gift-relationship referred to earlier within the article. It might also seem to point to the limits of (Mauss [1954] 2002) anthropological model, wherein the first gift-donor occupies a dominant position in an exchange which demands reciprocation, in explaining gift labour under conditions of advanced capitalism. However, it should not be assumed that a direct reciprocation in the form of paid employment is the only or even prime motivation for all unpaid interns.

The literature points to a range of motivations for interns beyond that of paid labour, with the consequence that reciprocation for their free labour can take different forms. Hunt and Scott (2020, 472) report that unpaid interns are more likely than paid interns to indicate that they have taken up the internship as a way of gaining experience or of trying out work within a particular sector to see if they like it. In highly competitive sectors such as the media, digital, and cultural and creative industries (CCIs) entry-



routes tend to be unstructured and to depend upon the individual's ability to develop social networks (Frenette 2013; Shade and Jacobson 2015). The motivation for unpaid internships may thus be less about a direct reciprocation in the form of paid employment and more about experience or the accumulation of social capital (Frenette 2013; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Samdanis and Lee 2019; Randle, Forson, and Calveley 2015). This relative degree of freedom from immediate material compulsion towards paid labour on the part of some interns appears to be a factor in the subjective sense of intern agency and control that is reported in some of the literature (Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020; Leonard, Halford, and Bruce 2016; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Shade and Jacobson 2015).

Finally, it should be noted that a significant proportion of unpaid internships are undertaken in 'third sector' organizations such as charities (Williams and Nadin 2012). Studies reveal that a central motivation in interns' decision to work for such an organization will be related to an altruistic desire to further the purposes of the charity. For example, Leonard, Halford, and Bruce (2016) and Vercammen et al. (2020) note their participants' strong commitment to the aims of the non-profit environmental organizations they worked in. In neither case did this preclude some aspiration for eventual paid employment; rather, the motivations for the interns' undertaking of unpaid work were related at least as much to the objectives of the organization as to the hope of individual career advancement. There is some sense here of the role of gift-giving in building associational or co-operative social ties of the kind that feature in the work of Cheal (1988) and Titmuss ([1970] 1997) as opposed to the more economic or competitive view of gift relations that characterizes Mauss ([1954] 2002).

To summarize thus far, it has been suggested that a gift analysis prompts us to examine the role of social actors and social agency in transactions of unpaid intern labour. It directs us to identify a first donor, their motivation for providing free labour, a recipient, and ultimately where (if anywhere) a debt of reciprocation may lie. In sum, a gift analysis offers what Sibeon (2004, 12) terms a 'substantive' theory: one which comprises propositions that aim to provide information about the social world. By applying a gift analysis to a review of the literature on unwaged internships, it has been argued that the provision of unpaid labour from intern to 'employer' is a form of transactional but asymmetrical gift-relationship weighted in favour of the 'employer'. In more directly sociological terms, this relationship (as with all social relationships) is a product of the interaction between structural and cultural relations, and agential reflexivity and action. To understand further the interplay between these constituents of the social world, it is necessary to go beyond substantive theory to metatheory and to examine issues of social ontology.

The metatheory to which this paper now turns is Margaret Archer's morphogenetic analysis. Archer's approach is cast firmly within a Critical Realist social ontology. However, as she argues, although an ontology may serve to include or exclude certain concepts, it is not an explanatory programme in itself (Archer 2020, 140). Rather, that is the function of the Morphogenetic Approach which Archer (2020, 140) describes as the 'methodological complement' of Critical Realism's social ontology. As discussed in the following section, Archer's analytical framework, with its three-part temporal cycle, provides a set of practical analytical guidelines that the theorist can apply to substantive areas of interest. In this respect, it will provide both an ontological and methodological underpinning for the substantive theoretical propositions of gift theory, as I seek to demonstrate

when I later draw together the two levels of theory. Given the breadth and complexity of Archer's methodology, the following discussion of the Morphogenetic Approach is necessarily somewhat schematic, but key points will be elaborated on in the later discussions of gift theory and unpaid internships.

## The morphogenetic approach

Archer's (1995) Morphogenetic Approach is three-stage temporal cycle which provides the social investigator with the methodological tools with which to analyse processes of social change (morphogenesis) or social reproduction (morphostasis). The cycle begins at (a) in which structural and cultural relations form the conditions for; (b) present-day social and cultural interaction where both individual and collective social actors seek to realize their interests under conditions formed in stage (a); (c) structural and cultural elaboration where social actors and agents both consciously and unintentionally reproduce/transform the conditions at stage (a).

The central plank of this conceptual schema is that of analytical dualism: an understanding that structure and agency are ontologically and, thus, analytically separable social phenomena characterized by distinct properties and temporalities (Archer 1995, 165). The concept of antecedence is key to this perspective. As Archer (1995, 165) argues, all individuals are born involuntaristically into a society that pre-exists them and which, in the form it is then encountered by present-day social agents, is an 'unintended consequence' of prior socio-cultural relations. As Archer (1995, 166) goes on to note, however, to contend that the form which society assumes at any given historical time is an unintended consequence is not tantamount to saying that all things in the social order are simply a matter of contingency. Although the existence of particular social structures may be contingent in the sense that they are only historically specific and of relative endurance, so long as they do endure as the consequence of prior social interaction, they have the power to exert systematic effects on present-day social action (Archer 1995, 167). For the social realist, however, the existence of observable effects is not in itself an explanation of the origins of social phenomena. It cannot simply be assumed that social agents are determined by the structures they encounter (Archer 1995, 167). Rather, it is necessary to examine the interplay between structure and agency – or what Archer (1995) has termed the 'parts' and the 'people'. I shall begin with the 'parts', and the concept of structural emergence.

For Archer (1995, 167), structural relations are constituted by their emergent properties. The concept of a structural emergent property (SEP) proceeds from the critical realist position that social reality is stratified. Thus, a SEP '... is held to be something quite different from an overt and relatively enduring pattern in social life. That is, in the structural domain, they are something other than observable features such as ... "socio-economic classes"' (Archer 1995, 172). SEPs are complexly linked structural relations which are relatively enduring and possess causal powers over social life. What distinguishes a SEP is the 'natural necessity' of the relationship of the different elements to each other, whereby that relationship cannot be made reducible to its individual parts (Archer 1995, 167). For example, the relationship between class location and income distribution is both a necessary and internal one in the sense that neither can be understood without reference to each other. It is this homogeneity – the internal and necessary rather

than merely contingent relations between the elements – which makes them the ‘real sources of phenomena’ that are observed at the level of events (Archer 1995, 172).

Archer (1995, 175) goes on to observe that the social order is constituted by a variety of emergent properties – structural, cultural and agential – each of which are characterized by their irreducibility to each other, their relative autonomy from each other and their relative endurance. The defining feature of a structural EP is that it’s necessary and internal relations are dependent ultimately upon material resources, both physical and human, rather than ideational ones (Archer 1995, 175). And, as Archer (1995, 178) goes on to note, the most significant social stratifications, those of class, status and power, are the outcomes of SEPs – the internal and necessary relationships between collectivities of social agents and institutions such as the mode of production or market relations. The same basic analysis applies to the cultural domain which is relatively autonomous from the structural (Archer 1996, 284). For Archer (1995, 180), culture is taken to mean all ‘intelligibilia’, any ‘... item which has the dispositional capacity of being understood by someone’. As with structure, anteriority, the pre-existence of cultural items in relation to any present-day individual, means that they have an objective existence – not in the sense of being right or wrong but in being independent of any individual’s knowledge of or interpretation of them (Archer 1995, 180). Put slightly differently, each generation inherits a set of ideational resources, which are the product of prior human interactions, but which have since escaped their progenitors. Again, as with SEPs, the ideational resources of Cultural Emergent Properties (CEPs) will be characterized by their internal and necessary relations to each other, their relative endurance, and their causal powers which exert a conditioning, though never determining, effect upon present-day social agents (Archer 1995, 180).

The emphasis here upon ‘conditioning’ rather than ‘determining’ directs us to Archer’s (1995, 165) important point that, ‘Society is not like a language with an orderly, enduring syntax whose components are mutually invoking’. Rather, it is an ‘open system’ because it is composed of people, and people have the capacity to change and develop and so, by extension, does society (Archer 1995, 166). The consequence of this is that SEPs and CEPs can condition human agency in different ways depending upon their configurations and, given their autonomy from each other, the nature of the relationship between them. The emergent powers of SEPs and CEPs, which may dispose social agents towards one course of action or another, are termed ‘directional guidance’ and they are experienced by those agents as ‘situational logics’ (Archer 1995, 218). Archer offers a typology of four institutional configurations and four cultural configurations with associated situational logics. For the purposes of this paper, discussion shall be limited to one institutional configuration and one cultural configuration and to some reflections on their relationship with each other, as the paper will return to these matters in the later Discussion section.

The institutional domain of the social system may be configured by ‘necessary incompatibilities’ which occur when, ‘... two or more institutions are necessarily and internally related to one another yet the effects of their operations are to threaten the endurance of the relationship itself ...’ (Archer 1995, 222). As will be later discussed, the relationship between Labour and Capital is an exemplar of this institutional configuration. The inherent conflict within configurations of this type holds the potential for its own transformation, as Archer (1995, 222) observes. However, because society is an open system, change is by no means inevitable. Vested interests within the relationship may perceive

continued mutual benefit and the value of co-dependency and, consequently, this may direct social agents towards a 'situational logic of compromise' (Archer 1995, 224). The essential incompatibility will remain, though, and the stability of the compromise may come under threat if the balance of power between the vested interests alters (Archer 1995, 225).

As indicated previously, SEPs and CEPs enjoy a degree of relative autonomy from each other. From a morphogenetic viewpoint, the two domains intersect in the middle stage of the cycle indicated above, the interactional phase, although they move to their own morphostatic/morphogenetic dynamics (Archer 1996, 282). The relationship between the two is thus a contingent rather than necessary one. Nevertheless, the Cultural System (CS) can provide ideational resources that buttress and promote morphogenesis in the structural domain (Archer 1996, 284). As Archer (1996, 285) observes, though, once a group with particular vested material interests has endorsed or promoted a theory or ideology in furtherance of those interests, it not only becomes committed to upholding the theory or ideology but must also contend with the fact that the theory or ideology will occupy some place *within* the situational logic of the cultural domain. And, as Archer (1996, 229) notes, at any particular time, many items within the cultural system will be in a position of relative contradiction to other items. For example, notions of tolerance and inclusivity will compete with racist or misogynistic discourses. There are, though, different configurations of contradiction within the CS. In the Discussion section, the paper shall examine how the situational logic of 'competitive contradictions' (Archer 1996, 239) marks the neoliberal ideologies that have proceeded from the breakdown of the situational logic of uneasy compromise between Labour and Capital. Culture, it will be argued, is playing a relatively autonomous, contingently related role in processes of structural morphogenesis which have conducted to casualised employment relations of which unpaid internships are a feature.

At this point, it is important to reintroduce agency into the discussion since, as Archer (1995, 184) insists, the socio-cultural conditioning effected by prior structural and cultural relations is only able to apply its effects *on* people and is only effective by means *of* people. Thus, while structure and culture represent emergent powers, so too do agential relations and Archer (1995, 184) terms these powers People's Emergent Properties (PEPs). These have two distinguishing characteristics. Firstly, they are able to modify the capacities of social agents in the sense that they can affect their consciousness or the goals to which they commit themselves; secondly, they exercise causal powers over social relations themselves, that is, the ways in which agents relate to other agents, for example, in associating with them or opposing them (Archer 1995, 184). At any point in the first stage of the morphogenetic/morphostatic cycle (that of socio-cultural conditioning) these agential properties are the result of previous interaction between agents in past socio-cultural contexts. In consequence of this property of anteriority, each generation of social agents will be 'pre-grouped' into different collectivities, such as those of class or racialised groupings (Archer 1995, 184).

As Archer (1995, 184) observes, agential 'pre-grouping' is the corollary to processes which occur within the structural domain and which effect a pre-distribution of material resources, and those within the cultural domain which lead to a pre-constitution of cultural resources. All three processes are dynamic and, when morphogenesis ensues, each will experience a re-grouping, re-distribution and re-constitution respectively

(Archer 1995, 184). This will occur over different sequential periods of time, with structural and cultural relations always forming the prior conditions for agency. The outcome of agential re-grouping, which is the transformation of agential relations wherein agency acquires new emergent powers, is termed the 'double morphogenesis' (Archer 1995, 257). However, from a realist perspective the recognition of agential emergent powers also entails the position that agency itself may be viewed at different levels.

The 'positional level' refers to how collectivities of agents become pre-grouped in terms of prior structural distributions (Archer 1995, 185). If these collectivities organize and promote their interests, they become 'corporate agents', if they remain grouped but organizationally inchoate, they continue to be 'primary agents' – a 'class in itself' not a 'class for itself' (Archer 1995, 185). The level of 'roles' refers to the micro-level of agency. Individuals will occupy social roles that are necessarily and internally related to others, Archer (1995, 186) offers the example of the doctor-patient relationship. The enactment of each role will be relatively autonomous in relation to the role itself, because each role will be occupied by a different incumbent who will undertake a different 'performance' of that role (Archer 1995, 186). As Archer (1995, 186) goes on to note, it is one of the problems of micro-level analysis to examine how different performances of the same role may lead to its re-definition and to the development of that incumbent's own emergent powers through the process of double morphogenesis. This, then, takes this discussion to the key role that reflexivity plays in agential relations.

For Archer (2007, 2) human reflexivity derives from the fact that people are able to talk to themselves inside their own heads – to have 'internal conversations'. She goes on to note that the capacity to engage in such internal dialogues is itself a defining emergent personal power of individuals, and they are important to understanding action because they mediate the roles that SEPs and CEPs play (Archer 2007, 5). Internal conversations make social agents into what (Archer 2007, 6) terms 'active agents' – people who can reflect upon their desires and aim to direct some control over them. Being an active agent entails pursuing 'projects': courses of action that individuals intentionally undertake to promote their aims (Archer 2007, 7). In engaging in a project, an individual will be exercising their own causal powers but, in doing so, they will also cause the automatic activation of the causal powers of wider structural and cultural properties which form the conditions for the individual's project (Archer 2007, 7). The interplay between the two sets of emergent powers will necessarily involve a range of constraints and/or enablements in relation to the individual's project (Archer 2007, 9). The salient point here is that subjects have to react to these conditioning factors by using their personal powers of reflexive deliberation – and that includes anticipating constraints or enablements of social properties that have not yet been activated (Archer 2007, 12). Thus, reflexivity is key to individuals' courses of action and this, in turn, is foundational to social conditioning itself since, 'For any objective structural or cultural property to exercise its causal powers, such powers have to be activated by agents' (Archer 2007, 12).

Having outlined key elements of the methodology of the Morphogenetic Approach, the following section will relate them to gift theory and the problematic of unpaid internships.

## Discussion: the morphogenetic approach and the gift labour of unpaid internships

The discussion begins by returning to Mauss' ([1954] 2002) three-part temporizing of the gift-relationship into gift-acceptance-reciprocation, and the notion, discussed previously, that the intern becomes the originary gift-giver in the relationship by providing free labour for the 'employer'. In the review of literature on unpaid internships, the question of intern motivation was considered and analysed through the gift-theory concept of reciprocity. It will be recalled that the literature indicates that for many interns the reciprocity they aim for is either a move directly into paid employment or the opportunity to develop forms of social and cultural capital that may facilitate this over a longer period (Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020; Randle, Forson, and Calveley 2015; Leonard, Halford, and Bruce 2016; Weghman 2015). Archer's (1995) concept of roles, and of social agents' performances in those roles within the process of the double morphogenesis, offers a valuable underpinning to gift-theory in furthering this explanation.

In Archer's (1995) terms, interns' attempts convert their unpaid role into a paid one is an endeavour to convert the properties of that role and thereby change it into a different role. It will be recalled that, in the earlier discussion which considered how unpaid internships may be defined, the point was made that being unremunerated was foundational to the status of unpaid interns. On first view, this assertion may appear somewhat tautologous, but from a morphogenetic analytical perspective, the word 'foundational' is really another way of pointing to the emergent properties bound up in the status of unpaid intern. In the Archerian schema, the gift of free labour by an intern to an 'employer', and that 'employer's' acceptance and use of it, constitute both necessary and internal properties of the unpaid intern-'employer' relationship. That is, neither can be understood without reference to the other. The ambition on the part of interns to secure eventual paid employment represents, therefore, an effort to modify those necessary and internal properties.

Acknowledgement of individual agency is key to understanding this ambition. As Archer (1995, 186) cautions, it is necessary to distinguish between the properties of the role itself and the contingent properties of any current incumbent. Thus, people 'personify' roles rather than simply follow them (Archer 1995, 186). An unpaid intern is an active agent pursuing a project to promote their interests (Archer 2007) on which they will have reflected in a more or less deliberative way. And, as indicated above, an individual's capacity to reflect and to learn is an emergent power of that individual (Archer 2007). This, it is suggested, is key to understanding the subjective sense of intern agency and control which, as previously discussed, has been reported within the sociological literature (Brook, O'Brien, and Taylor 2020; Leonard, Halford, and Bruce 2016; Percival and Hesmondhalgh 2014; Shade and Jacobson 2015). In morphogenetic terms, by attempting to convert the necessary and internal relations that constitute their unpaid role, each intern is also attempting to effect a form of double morphogenesis which would alter their status and that of their 'employer' within the relationship. This, then, represents the transactional nature of interns' gift-giving of free labour.

To summarize the analysis thus far, it has been argued that stages one and two of Mauss' ([1954] 2002) temporal gift-relationship – gift and acceptance – are inescapably



bound up in each other if they are understood to be the necessary and internal properties of the relationship between unpaid intern and 'employer'. From these two stages of the gift cycle, this discussion now moves to the third stage of Mauss' ([1954] 2002) temporizing, that of reciprocity. It will be recalled from the review of gift-theory literature that this stage constitutes an important element in any gift-relationship, although it may assume a number of different forms in any given relationship (Mauss [1954] 2002; Cheal 1988; Titmuss [1970] 1997; Sahlins, [1972] 2017). If a rather specific view of reciprocity in relation to unpaid interns were to be taken – the offer of future remunerated work by the organization to the intern – then the evidence that has been discussed previously suggests quite weak levels of reciprocity on the part of 'employers' (Purcell et al. 2012; Hunt and Scott 2020; Siebert and Wilson 2013; Jaffe 2022). Again, the Morphogenetic Approach offers a methodology with which to address this problematic.

The temporal antecedence that lies at the heart of analytical dualism provides for the understanding that all social agents engaged in present-day socio-cultural interaction involuntaristically inherit the results of prior structural and cultural relations. It follows from this analysis that, when an intern at the stage of socio-cultural interaction activates their causal powers by assuming the role of unpaid intern, they automatically activate the causal powers of structural and cultural properties which condition their agential powers (Archer 2007). It is suggested that, by beginning with the first stage of Archer's (1995) three-part cycle, in particular the role of SEPs and CEPs and their situational logics, a clearer account of the structural and cultural factors that have conduced to this situation of weak reciprocity will emerge.

As Sayer (1998, 127), also writing from a critical realist perspective argues, the relationship between capital and wage labour is a necessary and internal one. Deprived of autonomous access to the means of production, the worker must sell their labour to the owner of capital; similarly, the capitalist requires labour in order to reproduce capital (Sayer 1995, 91). The relationship between waged labour and capital thus displays the characteristics of a SEP (Archer 1995). It is also a relationship inherent with tension. When worker and employer rely on each other but within structurally unbalanced power relations, there exists an 'antagonistic interdependence of material interests' (Wright 1997, 10). Thus, in Archer's (1995) terms, the relationship between these two institutions of the social system exhibits all the features of a necessary structural incompatibility, as outlined above. As noted, such structural tensions can act to galvanize morphogenesis, but not always. They can also be reconciled within an uneasy situational logic of compromise. It is argued here that, during roughly the first three decades following World War Two, just such a logic of unstable compromise was reached in the UK between the corporate agents of organized labour, capitalists, and governments in the shape of a broad consensus around welfarist social policies and Keynesian economic interventionism (Edgerton 2019, 361). The consequence of this compromise was capitalist growth but a degree of worker protection, and the overall outcome was largely morphostatic.

Since the 1970s, a number of structural and cultural processes have worked in tandem to give directional guidance to capital and to push it towards the 'situational logic of competition' in its relations with labour, a position which, as Archer (2015, 139) contends, is itself an inherent feature of the liberal market economy. Discussion here shall focus on two which, it is suggested, help to explain some of the conditions for weak 'employer' reciprocity in the gift-relationship. The first of these is structural and relates to the



growth of an increasingly globalized market order characterized by intense competition between nation states, including 'emerging' economies such as those of China and India, and between large multinational corporations that work across them (Brown, Lauder, and Ashton 2011). One of the outcomes of global competition has been an unrelenting pressure on corporations to keep costs down (Keep and Mayhew 2014; Lauder, Brown, and Cheung 2018). And this, in turn, has encouraged employers in some sectors to seek to divest themselves of labour costs as far as possible by passing them on to the applicant (Brown and Souto-Otero 2020, 109). A synergistic, though relatively autonomous, process has been occurring in the cultural domain in the form of neoliberal ideologies.

The concept of neoliberalism is frequently located in the literature on unpaid internships as the source of casualised labour market relations. It functions as an explanatory umbrella term around which other concepts such as precariat, flexibilization, tertiarization and insecurity have clustered (Standing 2016; Shade and Jacobson 2015; Forkert and Lopes 2015). The term, though, is promiscuously and sometimes vaguely applied and, consequently, itself represents a key example of antecedence in cultural structures: an idea or set of propositions that have long since escaped their original progenitors, taken on new and different forms, and continue to shape present-day social interaction.

Its ideational roots are commonly traced to the work of Hayek and collaborators in the Mont Pelerin Society (MPS) (Mirowski 2014). Hayek and fellow free market intellectuals were able to take advantage of the conjunctural crisis of the 1970s to fundamentally challenge the broad consensus of post-War Keynesianism with a new, all-embracing political-economic model privileging the 'natural' running of the free market over the 'oppression' of state intervention. As noted previously, once adherents to set of beliefs embark upon promoting them, they commit themselves to its particular situational logic (Archer 1996, 285). And the work of Hayek and later followers in promoting free market principles offers a paradigm case of what Archer (1996, 239) terms the situational logic of 'competitive contradictions' in the cultural domain. As Archer (1996, 239) observes, this logic is one which appears to present people with choice but which, in fact, *compels* them to make one. Following this logic, corporate agents (the 'assertive group') who seek to challenge the dominant group must do so through the production of an ideology that not only legitimates its claims among its own followers and beyond, but which also negates the legitimacy basis of the dominant group (Archer 1996, 241). This well describes the process by which neoliberalism usurped Keynesianism to become the new dominant ideology in the UK and across other advanced capitalist economies.

The structural and cultural domains are relatively autonomous from each other, but the relationship between the two processes outlined here is one of broad synchronicity in that both have been played out over a relatively short period of post-War historical time. It is also a relationship of complementarity as ideology has sought to provide a legitimacy basis for structural morphogenesis. Thus, there have been various rearticulations of neoliberal doctrine since 1979 – the strident free marketism of Thatcherism, the coupling of managerial marketization with the more emollient socially democratic language of New Labour, the austerity policies of the Coalition and later Conservative regimes. Despite these differences, however, a key tenet running through UK neoliberalism has been the belief that the state should intervene as little as possible in the relationship between

employer and employee. This is well summed up in the assurances, following the passing of the National Minimum Wage Act in the UK in 1998, that the then Prime Minister Tony Blair gave to corporations that Britain would continue to have '... the most lightly regulated labour market of any leading economy in the world' Monbiot (2000, 8). It is suggested that the outcome of the structural and cultural processes just outlined is a clear example of the double morphogenesis: when agents (in this case, powerful corporate agents structurally pre-grouped into positions of relative dominance) can introduce structural/cultural transformations but, in so doing, transform themselves and other agents (Archer 2015, 145).

Thus, concepts of structural, cultural and agential emergence, and that of the double morphogenesis of corporate agents help to address the question posed above of weak 'employer' reciprocity in the gift-relationship. The confluence between powerful vested structural interest groups and cultural factors at the interaction stage of Archer's (1995) cycle has facilitated a permissive political, economic, and legislative environment in which organizations may feel little obligation to reciprocate to interns in the form of future paid employment. However, the effects of this structural and cultural landscape upon interns are complex: conditioning, not determining, as Archer (1995, 2007) insists. Certainly, the review of the intern-related literature discussed earlier points to interns' awareness of the structural and cultural constraints they face: the 'sacrificial labour' that Percival and Hesmondhalgh (2014) describe their participants speaking of, or the interns' need to 'pay their dues' before being 'entitled' to paid work as reported by Jacobson and Shade (2018). As Archer (2007, 8) emphasizes, though, when agents' causal powers interact with those of structural and cultural properties, the result is rarely one of primary congruence or incongruence. Rather, the causal powers of structural and cultural properties may be of secondary consequence. Agential reflexivity means that individuals have the capacity to continue to attempt to advance their aims despite apparent obstacles (Archer 2007, 8). And, as this article has discussed, the literature on unpaid internships provides clear evidence of such a sense of agency among many interns.

## Conclusion

This paper has drawn from a wide range of sources from within the sociology of work to discuss the problematic of unpaid internships. By applying gift theory and the Morphogenetic Approach, as elaborated across the work of Margaret Archer, it has been suggested that the provision of free labour from intern to 'employer' may be seen as a form of transactional, but asymmetrical, gift-relationship. Earlier within the article, it was also indicated that, while gift analysis assumed the function of a substantive form of theory for this paper, the Morphogenetic Approach has been employed as an underpinning metatheory. The purpose of drawing from the Morphogenetic Approach in this way has been to provide ontological depth, and thus explanatory support, to the propositions this article has made by its application of gift theory. This section will close with some further remarks on the theoretical framework utilised within this paper.

A gift analysis is of value to understanding the relationship between intern and 'employer' as a *social* one. Mauss ([1954] 2002) three-part decomposition of gift-exchange

into gift-acceptance-reciprocation (or not) provides not merely a description of each stage, but also to some extent a set of normative principles of gift-relations in themselves. Thus, this article has discussed evidence of interns feeling they need to 'pay their dues' with free labour before being 'entitled' to paid work, but also of anticipation (or, at least, hope) that the 'employer' will reciprocate accordingly. The limits of the Maussian anthropological model in explaining weak levels of 'employer' reciprocity to interns have also been noted, although it has also been observed that reciprocity for free labour may not always take the form of eventual remunerated employment. One of the contributions of this article has been, therefore, to extend a gift theory approach to the study of a mode of free labour not previously analysed in such terms.

The substantive theory of gift analysis has, though, been applied with the metatheory of the Morphogenetic Approach, and the combination of these two theories represents the second contribution of this paper. This paper has sought to 'map' Mauss ([1954] 2002) three-part-temporizing of the gift-relationship onto pertinent concepts within Archer's cycle. Thus, in discussing the interns as originary gift-givers, notions of agential stratification and role personification have given explanatory support to the proposition that the gift of free labour is a transactional one on the part of the interns. The subjective sense of intern agency and control, as discussed within some of the literature sources reviewed within this paper, has been discussed in terms of the distinction between a social agent's role and the particular incumbent's attempts to personify it. This, in turn, relates to another key concept within the Morphogenetic Approach which this article has drawn upon: Archer's insistence upon the key role played by an individual's reflexivity in guiding their actions. Finally, the concept of emergence has supplied the conceptual tools to suggest that, in attempting to modify their unpaid role, interns are also attempting to change its necessary and internal properties into that of another role. Similarly, in discussing the evidence of weak 'employer' reciprocation in terms of paid employment, the concept of SEPs has directed this present article to consider structural relations between labour and capital. The concept of the necessary and internal, but incompatible, relations between these two entities of the social system provided an ontologically rich explanatory framework. The concept of CEPs, and the discussion of the situational logic of 'competitive contradictions' that characterizes ideologies of neoliberalism also served a similar analytical function.

In conclusion, therefore, it is suggested that a gift analysis offers a productive way of locating the relationship between intern and 'employer' in terms of particular agential roles – that of originary giver and that of receiver – and in raising questions about the normative functions pertaining to those roles – the obligation to give and to reciprocate (or not). The Morphogenetic Approach addresses the metatheoretical considerations which inevitably underly this relationship: what is meant by agency or structure or culture, and the interplay between them. Both gift analysis and the Morphogenetic Approach have the potential, therefore, to be applied effectively in future empirical investigations into the area of unpaid internship labour.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

**Andrew Morrison** is a Principal Lecturer in Education Studies at Sheffield Hallam University. His research is focused on a sociological understanding of the relations between higher education and employment.

## References

- Archer, M. 1995. *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. 1996. *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*. Revised ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. 2007. *Making our Way Through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. 2015. "How Agency is Transformed in the Course of Social Transformation: Don't Forget the Double Morphogenesis." In *Generative Mechanisms Transforming the Social Order*, edited by M. Archer, 135–158. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Archer, M. S. 2020. "The Morphogenetic Approach; Critical Realism's Explanatory Framework Approach." In *Agency and Causal Explanations in Economics*, edited by P. Rona, and L. Zsolnai, 137–150. *Virtues and Economics* 5. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-26114-6\_9.
- Brook, O., D. O'Brien, and M. Taylor. 2020. "'There's No Way That You Get Paid to Do the Arts': Unpaid Labour Across the Cultural and Creative Life Course." *Sociological Research Online* 25 (4): 571–588. doi:10.1177/1360780419895291.
- Brown, P., H. Lauder, and D. Ashton. 2011. *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs, and Incomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, P., and M. Souto-Otero. 2020. "The end of the Credential Society? An Analysis of the Relationship Between Education and the Labour Market Using Big Data." *Journal of Education Policy* 35 (1): 95–118. doi:10.1080/02680939.2018.1549752.
- Cheal, D. 1988. *The Gift Economy*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Edgerton, D. 2019. *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth Century History*. London: Penguin.
- Elder-Vass, D. 2020. "Defining the Gift." *Journal of Institutional Economics* 16 (5): 675–685. doi:10.1017/S174413741900033X.
- Fairwork. 2021. *UK Ratings 2021: Labour Standards in the Gig Economy*. <https://fair.work/en/fw/publications/fairwork-uk-ratings-2021/>.
- Forkert, K., and A. Lopes. 2015. "Unwaged Posts in UK Universities: Controversies and Campaigns." *tripleC* 13 (2): 533–553. doi:10.31269/tripleC.v13i2.583.
- Frenette, A. 2013. "Making the Intern Economy: Role and Career Challenges of the Music Industry Intern." *Work and Occupations* 40 (4): 364–397. doi:10.1177/0730888413504098.
- Grant-Smith, D., and P. McDonald. 2018. "Ubiquitous Yet Ambiguous: An Integrative Review of Unpaid Work." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 20 (2): 559–578. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12153.
- Holmes, K. 2006. "Experiential Learning or Exploitation? Volunteering for Work Experience in the UK Museums Sector." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 21 (3): 240–253. doi:10.1080/09647770600502103.
- Hunt, W., and P. Scott. 2020. "Paid and Unpaid Graduate Internships: Prevalence, Quality and Motivations at Six Months After Graduation." *Studies in Higher Education* 45 (2): 464–476. doi:10.1080/03075079.2018.1541450.
- Jacobson, J., and L. R. Shade. 2018. "Stringttern: Springboarding or Stringing Along Young Interns' Careers?" *Journal of Education and Work* 31 (3): 320–337. doi:10.1080/13639080.2018.1473559.
- Jaffe, S. 2022. *Work Won't Love You Back*. London: C. Hurst and Co.
- Keep, E., and K. Mayhew. 2014. "Inequality – 'Wicked Problems', Labour Market Outcomes and the Search for Silver Bullets." *Oxford Review of Education* 40 (6): 764–781. doi:10.1080/03054985.2014.979580.

- Kmec, J. A., and E. H. Gorman. 2010. "Gender and Discretionary Work Effort." *Work and Occupations* 37 (1): 3–36. doi:10.1177/0730888409352064.
- Lauder, H., P. Brown, and S.-Y. Cheung. 2018. "Fractures in the Education-Economy Relationship: The End of the Skill Bias Technological Change Research Programme?" *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 34 (3): 495–515. doi:10.1093/oxrep/gry008.
- Leonard, P., S. Halford, and K. Bruce. 2016. "'The New Degree?' Constructing Internships in the Third Sector." *Sociology* 50 (2): 383–399. doi:10.1177/0038038515574456.
- Mauss, M. (1954) 2002. *The Gift*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Mirowski, P. 2014. *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste*. London: Verso.
- Monbiot, G. 2000. *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain*. London: Macmillan.
- Montacute, R. 2018. *Internships—Unpaid, Unadvertised, Unfair*. Research Brief 20. Sutton Trust. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/internships-unpaid-unadvertised-unfair/>.
- Osteen, M. 2002. "Introduction." In *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines*, edited by M. Osteen, 1–41. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Owens, R., and A. Stuart. 2016. "Regulating for Decent Work Experience: Meeting the Challenge of the Rise of the Intern." *International Labour Review* 155 (4): 679–709. doi:10.1111/ilr.12013.
- Percival, N., and D. Hesmondhalgh. 2014. "Unpaid Work in the UK Television and Film Industries: Resistance and Changing Attitudes." *European Journal of Communication* 29 (2): 188–203. doi:10.1177/0267323113516726.
- Purcell, K., P. Elias, G. Atfield, H. Behle, R. Ellison, D. Luchinskaya, J. Snape, L. Conaghan, and C. Tzanakou. 2012. *Futuretrack Stage 4: Transitions into Employment, Further Study and Other Outcomes (Full Report)*. HECSU Research Report. Manchester, UK: Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU).
- Randle, K., C. Forson, and M. Calveley. 2015. "Towards a Bourdieusian Analysis of the Social Composition of the UK Film and Television Workforce." *Work, Employment and Society* 29 (4): 590–606. doi:10.1177/0950017014542498.
- Roberts, C. 2017. *The Inbetweeners: The new Role of Internships in the Graduate Labour Market*. Institute for Public Policy Research. <https://www.ippr.org/publications/the-inbetweeners>.
- Sahlins, M. (1972) 2017. *Stone Age Economics*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Samdanis, M., and S. H. Lee. 2019. "Access Inequalities in the Artistic Labour Market in the UK: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Precariousness, Entrepreneurialism and Voluntarism." *European Management Review* 16 (4): 887–907. doi:10.1111/emre.12154.
- Sayer, A. 1995. *Radical Political Economy: A Critique*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sayer, A. 1998. "Abstraction: A Realist Interpretation." In *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, edited by M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson, and A. Norrie, 120–143. London: Routledge.
- Shade, L. R., and J. Jacobson. 2015. "Hungry for the Job: Gender, Unpaid Internships, and the Creative Industries." *The Sociological Review* 63 (1): 188–205. doi:10.1111/1467-954X.12249.
- Sibeon, R. 2004. *Rethinking Social Theory*. London: Sage.
- Siebert, S., and F. Wilson. 2013. "All Work and No Pay: Consequences of Unpaid Work in the Creative Industries." *Work, Employment and Society* 27 (4): 711–721. doi:10.1177/0950017012474708.
- Standing, G. 2016. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Titmuss, R. (1970) 1997. *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* with new Chapters, edited by A. Oakley and J. Ashton. London: LSE Books.
- Vercammen, A., C. Park, R. Goddard, J. Lyons-White, and A. Knight. 2020. "A Reflection on the Fair Use of Unpaid Work in Conservation." *Conservation and Society* 18 (4): 399–404. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26937306>. doi:10.4103/cs.cs\_19\_163.
- Weghman, V. 2015. "Exploited for a Good Cause? Campaigning Against Unpaid Internships in the UK Charity Sector." *tripleC* 13 (2): 599–602. doi:10.31269/triplec.v13i2.668.
- Williams, C., and S. Nadin. 2012. "Work Beyond Employment: Representations of Informal Economic Activities." *Work, Employment and Society* 26 (2): 1–10. doi:10.1177/0950017012437006.
- Wright, E. O. 1997. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.