



Generalized (positive) reciprocity:

- gift exchange (no money used)
- Transactions are personalized, altruistic, and friendly
- Reinforces solidarity and trust
- The nature of the exchange is giving/receiving
- Exchanges are balanced and all players are equals
- Includes food sharing, collective labor parties
- Structured by social controls against “hoarding”

“Exchanges are from each according to their abilities to each according to their need. The gift does not create an immediate debt for a gift of commensurate value from that person. Instead, all members are assured that when they need something, somebody in their network will provide it. The gift may not be in the form it was given, nor from the same person, but the network assures that everybody’s needs are eventually satisfied” (Reed, page 43).

Negative reciprocity or Market Exchange:

- Commodity exchange (money used)
- Transactions are impersonal and businesslike
- Reinforces unsociable relations--hostility, suspicion, and difference
- The nature of the exchange is losing/taking (there is the attempt, on the part of one party to get something for nothing, or to make a profit at the expense of the other)
- Exchanges are unbalanced, which fosters inequality
- Includes market sales that involve haggling, cheating, and exploiting
- Structured by social encouragement to “accumulate”