

Theoretical Perspectives of Gross National Generosity (GNG): Philosophy for a Dignified Pacific to Enrich the World

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Abstract

A study of the donor-recipient relationship in ODA identified Leverage as the most successful tool used by the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to influence both Priority and Disbursement of aid. Further, the study showed that adapting to the relationship motivation of "Reciprocity" alleviates the Disbursement and Priority control held by donor nations, thus averting the expected destruction outcome for recipient countries using their own capabilities as Leverage for aid flow. Gross National Generosity (GNG) proposes to re-shape the development framework of recipient countries as "contributions." Shaping development as a contribution creates a route for recipient countries to actively participate in global discussions with dignity through the value of their well-giving while still corresponding to the original relationship established by donor nations for ODA. This well-giving replaces well-being, the goal of ODA as it currently exists and which automatically has led to the humbling of recipient nations and the stripping of their dignity. It is a philosophy for a dignified Pacific to enrich the world through transformation of self-perceptions by rearticulating what PICs can offer from their resources and achievements to enrich the world.

Key words: Dependency, Development, Dignity, Generosity, Pacific, SDGs

Introduction

The philosophy of ODA is encapsulated in the concept of *helping you help yourself* in order to promote self-dependency. To date ODA has been realized through a unidirectional relationship in which donor nations are committed to improving the development necessities within recipient countries and base the aid provided on their own experiences and capacities as donor nations. Since finance and technology is scarce in recipient countries, this one-size-fits-all pattern for development not only stimulates dependency, but also undermines the full potential of recipient countries to experience global prosperity. For decades the development strategies of developing countries have focused on satisfying the economic indicators of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Economic Growth; unrecoverable resources such as the environment and cultural heritage have been neglected.

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 with the prime purpose of promoting “peace and security” after the Second World War. This initiative strongly obligated economically advanced countries (donor nations) to provide a flow of economic assistance towards underdeveloped nations. Through the framework of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has the primary aim of reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of developing countries, the Development Assistant Committee (DAC) and all member countries agreed that donor members would each set their aid efforts to 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI). Regardless, the total efforts reported by the OECD show a yearly average contribution by all donors of approximately 0.3% of GNI, and this figure has stagnated at this rate for decades (ALI and ZEB 2016). Some researchers argue that this disappointing figure could be the result of selecting GNI as the tool for determining aid efforts, since it leads to these efforts being calculated based on the wealth of donor nations rather than considering the conditions present in recipient countries (HIRVONEN 2005). In addition, recent analysis has shown that disbursement of OECD aid in 2014 from the 28 DAC donor members in real terms reached a new record of USD\$136.5 billion (DAVIES 2016, April 1). This result is a concern because *half* of this contribution came from only three countries: the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. Given this information, one may question the motivations behind the contributions of donor nations as well as their overall commitment to the stated goals of ODA.

Nevertheless, the above history of ODA has led to dependency rather than self-dependency despite the ideals and intentions behind it. I argue that part of the reason why some experts claimed that ODA has “gone bad” and should be banned is that recipient nations have a deep-held cultural need to reciprocate, which the current ODA framework precludes. The story of the god “Maui” is commonly told in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) as a myth and has been passed down from generation to generation. Although it is interpreted and understood in various forms due to having been passed on through different languages and songs, Maui is commonly respected as the Creator. One of the Tongan versions the author grew up with as a child concerns the origin of fire. The god Maui Motu’a (Supreme Maui) kept the fire in Pulotu (the land underneath) where no one was allowed to

enter except for the gods. His son Maui ‘Atalanga traveled back and forth between Pulumotu and Maama (Earth) because he loved a woman in Maama. Maui ‘Atalanga had a son named Maui Kisikisi. One day, Maui Kisikisi followed his father and entered Pulumotu without being caught. After looking around, Maui Kisikisi found his grandfather Maui Motu’a peeling cooked yams at an open fire. His grandfather could not see him because he was blind. Maui Kisikisi quietly took some of the peelings and was surprised with the sweet taste as food in Maama was eaten raw. Maui Motu’a was not happy with the presence of Maui Kisikisi and ordered for him to be returned to Maama immediately. Maui ‘Atalanga came from the plantation to take his son back. When they left Maui Motu’a and passed by the fire, Maui Kisikisi hid some sparks in his no’o (body wrap) and ran ahead back to Maama. When his father sniffed the smoke, he knew his son was trying to bring fire to Maama. He quickly followed and commanded the clouds to pour rain on the fire, but Maui Kisikisi speedily threw the sparks into the air and commanded them to hide in the trees. The story concludes with the explanation that the fire produced when rubbing two sticks together is the outcome of the sparks brought by Maui Kisikisi from Pulumotu.

The fire in the myth is interpreted in the Pacific as knowledge, which had been kept by the gods. Sharing and distributing this knowledge as demonstrated by Maui Kisikisi bringing fire to Maama and then tossing the sparks into the air, can be viewed as “difference” produced by combining the strengths of the two worlds. However, one might wonder what happens to the relationship patterns when there are other alternative gods holding interests that differ from those of the Mauis. Similarly, for ODA donor-recipient relationships, there is certainly a challenge involved in seeking to achieve and sustain *unity in differences* when interests and motivations of the parties vary. Gross National Generosity (GNG) attempts to create this unity in differences by proposing a win-win scenario from the perspectives of recipient countries. One may argue that it is more natural to search for the advice of “doctors” (the donor nations) rather than ask the patients (the recipient countries). Likewise, in pottery, the pot does not ask the potter how and why it was made. The created does not question the creator. In development studies, wealthy nations frame the kind of progress suitable for underdeveloped countries based on their own development experiences without input from the underdeveloped countries. However, the GNG model centers on the idea of balancing the donor-recipient relationship through considering the views and voices from the margin and including them in the discussion for better development interpretations.

Theoretical Perspectives

This section briefly summarizes the background of the research in order to outline how the results led to realizing GNG. A new understanding of ODA is explored through the different approaches taken by the region’s main donor nations from the perspectives of three Pacific Island Countries (PICs). In particular, the study investigated new understandings of Priority, Disbursement, Dependency and Leverage through case studies conducted in the Republic of Vanuatu (Vanuatu, former British-French Condominium), the Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga, un-colonized, former protectorate of the United Kingdom), and the Republic

of Kiribati (Kiribati, war-time Japanese occupation and former British colony). For donor nations, the research explored the approaches to ODA of Australia (DAC¹ member), France (DAC member), Japan (DAC member and first non-European member) and the People's Republic of China (China, non-DAC member). Since Kiribati recognizes the Republic of China (Taiwan, non-DAC member) over China, the research acknowledged this relationship for a broader understanding of donor approaches to ODA. By projecting a broader view of the research towards answering the research question of whether all donor nations take the same approach to ODA within a given recipient country, four theoretical perspectives were selected from various disciplines to serve as frameworks for the research.

Development theory was chosen from the field of political economy in order to highlight the principles underlying the foundation of foreign aid as outlined by Wallenstein, the Cold War, Harry Truman's speeches, the Marshall Plan, and the Washington Consensus, to name a few. Since development is an enterprise initiated by wealthy nations, understanding the nature of the approaches taken by these nations from the perspectives of the recipient countries reveals the recipient nations' likely future course as developed nations as well as how donor nations shape this development along the way. The author's analysis utilizing development theory elucidated the rationales of donor nations as resource providers and owners of ODA. At the same time, learning from the experiences of recipient countries about donor nation approaches is most relevant, as new insights enhanced the circumstances in which PICs adjust and adapt to this system of foreign aid.

Another view used to assess the approaches of donor nations to ODA involved the application of *Common Pool Resources* (Elinor Ostrom). Common Pool Resources (CPR) explains the motivations of donor nations when PICs are the owners and providers of open access resources in contrast to being the resource appropriator as regards ODA. Although the aim of CPR is to maximize the long-term economic viability of open access resources, the influence of donor nations as appropriators of the resources held by the PICs plays a significant role in framing the governance of these resources. Thus, perspectives from the three PICs as resource owners added value to comprehensions yet to be considered in appropriator's strategies, including the nature of free riders as argued by the model. The nature of the differences that existed between the approaches of various donor nations who were both ODA providers and resource appropriators, led the researcher to the arguments of *Schismogenesis* (BATESON 1972) where destruction is guaranteed when relationships depend on the reactions of others. Schismogenesis is divided into Symmetrical (where the efforts of one side depend on the positive return expected from the other side and vice versa) and Complementary (where the behavior of both sides differs, but the two parties are complementary due to their differences) Schismogenesis. The researcher analyzed various responses made by the PICs when leverage was identified as influencing decision-making by donor nations regarding the flow of aid.

The researcher arrived at the solution of "reciprocity" as a way out from the destruction

1 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is a forum for donors under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

of Schismogenesis, and developed the detailed explanation of this solution through the anthropological arguments of the *Gift Giving* theory (MAUSS 2002). As the birthplace of anthropology, the Pacific Island Countries still hold on to the habit of gift giving where the three obligations to give, to receive and to reciprocate a gift form the backbone of community relationships. The first obligation *to give a gift* denotes that giving a gift initiates a relationship. The second obligation looks at the receiving side and argues that the gift must be *received*, as refusing to accept a gift signifies rejecting that relationship. The third obligation argues that after receiving a gift, that gift *must be reciprocated* in order to sustain the dignity of both giver and receiver and this reciprocity also sets the two parties on equal footing, creating neutrality within the relationship. MAUSS and HALLS (1990) describes how in the Pacific reciprocity is the cornerstone of the community and failure to reciprocate results in slaves for debt and loss of *mana*, or spiritual authority. The gift giving system encourages hard work by individuals as it forbids anyone from abstaining from receiving; abstention would denote refraining from giving, which in turn means avoiding reciprocity.

Assuming these reputable theories to be objective in character, the researcher inquired into subjective observations of aid relations from the viewpoints and experiences of aid decision makers in Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati. By comparing the approaches of ODA providers with the perspectives of ODA appropriating countries, this research contributed to understanding how each of the donor nations approaches international aid in practice, both in the methods they use and the motivations behind these methods. The analysis included identifying which countries are targeted, for what the aid is provided, and how it is provided – including the conditions attached to the aid and monitoring at the implementation stage.

Sharing the highlights from the findings, the next section encapsulates new insights into the donor-recipient relationship gained through deeper understandings of Priority, Disbursement, Dependency and Leverage.

A recap of the findings

Priority

The study revealed that the priority interests of Australia, France, Japan and China differ based on each country's individual foreign policy. Thus, these priority interests never coincided with the priority needs of the three PICs included in the study. As a result of this situation, priorities of recipient countries always occupy a weak position in contrast to the exclusive influences of the donor nations. Nevertheless, the priority approaches utilized by Japan and China were mostly successful in matching the priority needs of the PICs. China openly and clearly demonstrates to the PICs that its aid is political and a return is expected, while Japan takes a similar approach but with less clear communications. The ability of the PICs to meet these expectations was observed as leverage the PICs could wield, which took the cultural role of reciprocity and which in turn created a sense of balance in their relationships with these donor nations. From the PICs' perspective, this phenomenon was perceived as China and Japan becoming recipients and the three PICs becoming donors. The aid priorities of Australia and France, on the other hand, are strategically integrated into

soft politics with most approaches being applied through governance, education, health and other sectors as “capacity building.” Running capacity building training not only confuses PIC officials about whose capacity building to follow, knowing the interests and experiences of each donor nation differ, but also belittling as PICs are expected to conform without question due to being inferior in the relationship. As a result, the PICs are more comfortable not only with the mildness of the procedural conditions of Chinese aid, but also with the quality infrastructural development projects from Japan which meet the vulnerability of the PICs and to which, in their thoughts at least, the PICs are able to reciprocate.

Disbursement

Although the study found in all cases that Disbursements are facilitated and controlled entirely by the donor nations according to their interests, the practices for delivery of disbursements vary. Australian and French policies for aid Disbursement were perceived by the PICs as being pre-decided before even hearing the PICs’ priority requests. On the other hand, Disbursement of Chinese aid was aligned with the Priority requests of the PICs, especially when appeals for such alignment originated from the central government or were initiated by influential politicians. In addition, approvals of requests for aid are quickly granted at the resident Chinese Embassy. Taiwanese practices in Kiribati were observed to follow the same system. Disbursement of Japanese aid lies more in the middle, finding a balance between the extreme approach adopted by Australia and France and the relaxed approach taken by China and Taiwan. Japanese aid Disbursement is highly committed to the historical “request based” model, which is centered on Japan’s own experience as a former developing country. Although donor nations shape the Priorities of the PICs and at the same time control Disbursement, a positive correlation of this pattern was found with the Western approaches of Australia and France. In contrast, Priority was negatively correlated to Disbursements according to the Asian approaches of China / Taiwan and Japan.

Leverage

The study validated Leverage as the most successful tool used by the PICs to influence both Priority and Disbursement. Two types of Leverage were identified: 1) Leverage realized through matching the priority requests of the PICs to the actual Priorities of donor nations; and 2) Leverage capital found in each recipient country that interested each of the donor nations. As both of these types of Leverage connect strongly to the concerns of donor nations, the differences in a donor nation’s Priorities and Disbursement practices as explained above mirror the criteria for destruction of relationships warned of by both Symmetrical and Complementary Schismogenesis. In particular, the Leverage found in regards to the approaches taken by Australia and France was perceived to follow both Symmetrical and Complementary Schismogenesis. On the other hand, the approaches taken by Japan and China, including Taiwan, mostly follow Complementary Schismogenesis while at the same time recognizing “Reciprocity” as a factor in the relationship.

Dependency

The research revealed that the Dependency of the PICs on ODA for development and the donor nations' success at influencing the development of the PICs via ODA were both considered natural. As concluded from the three concepts above, Disbursement is controlled by both the Priorities of the donor nations and the Leverage capabilities of the PICs. Therefore, the Dependency concept is a natural phenomenon since the Priorities of the donor nations and the Leverage capabilities of the PICs depend on each other's responses in order to enable aid Disbursement. I argued that Dependency only occurs when no advantage is expected or observed from the other party in the relationship. The data collected instead revealed that *Interdependency* is the appropriate description for the donor-recipient relationship.

The destruction of the donor-recipient relationship warned of by Schismogenesis can be avoided by recognizing "Reciprocity" (GREGORY 1982) in the relationship. Instead of recipient countries accepting the destruction outcome expected as a result of using their own capabilities as Leverage for aid flow, they could instead, by adapting to the balanced relationship motivation of "Reciprocity", improve for themselves the circumstances surrounding the Disbursement and Priority control held by donor nations.

Interpretations and Conclusions

For the purpose of this paper, the author selected the three arguments below to define the donor-recipient relationship and to illustrate how the nature of this relationship undermines the merits of ODA and has the potential to lead to the inescapable destruction of Schismogenesis.

Firstly, traditional donor nations approach ODA as transactional yet only acknowledge a one-way relationship. Although the research confirmed that each donor nation delivers ODA with various conditions attached and has certain expectations of the PICs, the donor nation approach to ODA may have failed to recognize the knowledge and moral values that exist in each PIC. The philosophy of ODA currently promotes self-dependence by adhering closely to the concept of *helping you help yourself*. In this one-way relationship, development of the recipient countries is a necessity for which donor nations are willing to provide according to the capacity and standards of each donor nation. Since technology and ODA mechanisms are scarce resources in recipient countries, this one-way relationship undermines the full potential of each PIC at the same time as it stimulates dependency. Disallowing recipient countries to contribute to the relationship by not recognizing their giving, places donor nations at the top of the hierarchical relationship. This hierarchy stimulates frustrations in both donor nations and recipient countries. Donor nations continue to desire more resources in order to give more aid. Recipient countries, on the other hand, are forced to expect more despite having received less. Instead of improving the standard of living in developing countries, this one-way approach to ODA furthers the gap between the giver and receiver. In addition to the destruction outcome expected from this relationship, global disasters arising from the exploitation of natural resources or pollution could also

spiral out of control.

Secondly, PICs approach ODA as an unreciprocated gift. Following the one-way relationship as explained above, the PICs perceive that they have lost their spiritual power, *mana*, by failing to reciprocate the benefit brought to them through ODA. Research identified many experiences taking place in the three PICs that demonstrate the central value of reciprocity as a corner stone of everyday living. Furthermore, research also uncovered many experiences that use gift-giving theory to interpret the nature of losing dignity or slavery. One of the most effective and peaceful approaches to ODA practiced by the PICs is phrasing their aid priority requests to suit the policy interests of the donor nations while at the same time still meeting the PICs' development necessities. Otherwise, ordinary practice in the PICs each fiscal year is for a small number of government staff to adjust their priorities to the process schedule, deadline, requirements, conditions, procedures and policies of each donor nation. This balancing act represents some of the common struggles facing government officials in the PICs dealing with ODA operations, without even taking into account other complications, such as those related to the integration of multilateral donors, regional organizations and external partners. The nature of the relationship undermines the potential of the recipients by requiring the relationship to conform to standards set by the donor without investing further efforts in the recipient's own development initiatives. The destructive nature of this relationship forces recipient countries to favor the donor nations that best fit their conditions while simultaneously appreciating these donors' contributions, even when the donors' contributions are not the best option for the PICs.

Thirdly, the successful tool of Leverage creates divisions between both donor nations and recipient countries. Interviews with PIC government officials definitively showed that the accessibility of the PICs to the alternative approaches of non-traditional donors, such as China and Taiwan, generates a rival relationship to the one held with Australia, France and Japan, which adopt more traditional approaches. At the same time, the PICs may choose their development partners when multiple donor nations have interest in the same recipient country. Some of the common preferences identified in the approaches of traditional donors included being the main donor nation for years, being a giant trade partner of the Pacific, geographical location, and historical ties. Australian ODA, for example, strongly influences the framing of the PICs' development policies, especially in the education, health and governance sectors. In the case of China, the most successful approach highlighted visiting diplomacy for government officials and keeping close relations with central government agencies, including influential politicians. Chinese aid was highly admired in the three PICs included in this study, especially for approving remaining funds from the PICs' priority request list that traditional donor nations typically reject. These rejected priorities are important to the PICs, but usually not well prepared for presentation to donor nations and thus most of the time are ruled out as unqualified under the ODA requirements of the traditional donors. This situation allows the PICs to use the availability of donor nations holding common interests as leverage to choose the development partner that best suits them, regardless of efficiency or consistency in disbursement.

Seeking to increase the leverage ability that is unique to each recipient country

generates further competition among the PICs. Kiribati's refusal to charge the amount set by the PIC member countries in 2012 for the Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) fee is one example of such competition. At the time of the researcher's interview in 2016, Kiribati charged US\$12,000 for the VDS fee as opposed to US\$6,000, as originally agreed upon by the PICs, due to the discovery that the majority of tuna stock was primarily found in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Kiribati, especially during El Niño periods. This incident not only created tensions among the PICs unified in their "sea of islands" concept (HAU'OFA, 2008), but also mystified traditional donors, such as the European Union (EU), which are highly invested in pursuing development of this industry. However, alternative donor nations such as China, Taiwan and Korea, which hold similar fishery interests, are willing and able to pay the US\$12,000 VDS fee as it supports Kiribati's economic development which depends highly on fish.

Avoiding Schismogenesis

The three observations above exhibit the complete range of conditions required for destruction of relationships as argued through Schismogenesis. The complexities of the donor-recipient relationship revealed that avoiding this destruction is only possible if coordinated by both sides; it cannot be avoided if coordinated only by the recipient countries or donor nations. In order to apply the solution of reciprocity to Schismogenesis as suggested by GREGORY (1982), the author appeals for redefinition of ODA concepts by reconsidering the donor-recipient relationship. Reciprocity identifies the significance of shifting from an Independent focus to an Interdependent relationship. Instead of focusing on the self-interest motivation of *exchange*, we could anticipate a better outcome from *reciprocity* (gift giving) where motivations are based in the interests of the other party. That is to say, shifting from the current concept of *helping you help yourself* to the humanity value of *helping you to help others* (helping each other), which was the original philosophy of Japanese ODA after the Second World War. Since donor nations cannot operate ODA for the purpose of being reciprocated in return, the author suggests the development philosophy of GNG shape the strategic development framework of recipient countries as "contributions." Shaping development as contribution not only permits recipient nations to respond to the long-term relationships maintained with donor nations and the development assistance originated from these donor nations, but also for recipient countries to actively participate in global discussions with dignity through the value of their *well-giving* which will take the place of well-being.

Gross National Generosity (GNG)

Revisiting the historical origins of foreign aid, we can see that the intention was to develop the well-being of underdeveloped nations based on moral improvements. Although well-being was interpreted by wealthy nations according to their own experiences, we could argue that this moral action highlighted happiness or prosperity as the aim of human

activities. Aristotle theorized that these activities are articulated through moral values according to reasons. Many researchers concluded that happiness is a pleasant sensation in the body when reality matches with our expectations (HARARI 2016, ANNAS² 1987, BURNS 2005). As HARARI (2016) pointed out, those expectations grow as conditions improve and achieving happiness cannot be “easier than overcoming old age and death” (HARARI 2016:40). When development is based on GDP and economic growth, our expectations for future achievements could be as depressing as someone chasing their own shadow. Nevertheless, ancient philosophers, including Plato and Epicurus, agreed that happiness is indeed an end unto itself and virtues are the means to achieve it.

Among the ten ethical virtues that ARISTOTLE identified as essential functions to being human, generosity was the third to be examined. Generosity is executed for the good of others, but at the same time, its long-term advantage is that Generosity leads to one’s own good as well (in SMITH 2011).³ Rather than recipient countries framing development based on their own well-being through ODA, GNG emphasizes the good of others as the motivation for their own development. The model aims to contribute to global prosperity by prompting us to reconsider the donor-recipient relationship and promoting coexistence and unity in differences. GNG is initially defined as a sustainable development philosophy that rearticulates the moral contributions of recipient countries through ODA as an outcome of their own development. It is a philosophy of a dignified Pacific that enriches the world. The heart, and the first goal, of the vision is to transform the self-perceptions of the PICs starting from within, by revisiting and rearticulating what can they do for the world in the future. I recognize the significance of notions such as reciprocity to the Pacific value of dignified relationships, and also the challenges. When these notions are not fulfilled, dignity is hurt and lessened. Since the ultimate goal for foreign aid is the pursuit of global well-being, or prosperity, the ethical virtues of generosity act as functions in fulfilling this ultimate good. Just as generosity considers the goodness of others, so does gift giving theory; both share the same value, as motivations for both are based on the interests of others.

Gift giving as a theory is known to have appeared for the first time in 1924 in M. MAUSS’s powerful *Essai sur le don* in the field of anthropology (in SCHRIFT, 1997). Gift Giving Theory’s approach attracted respected anthropologists such as M. SAHLIN, E. BENVENISTE, and P. BOURDIEU to name a few (for more on this topic, see SCHRIFT 1997). Another key figure to whom MAUSS (2002) repeatedly referred while working on his theory was B. MALINOWSKI (1884 - 1942) and his ethnographic work, particularly his participatory observation of the “kula” circulation in Papua New Guinea (DILLON 2004, WEINER 1992).

The theory embraces the *obligations to give*, *obligations to receive* and the *obligations to reciprocate* as natural functions of traditional living (MAUSS and HALL 1990). Research suggested that the concept of “humiliation”, especially in a conflict relationship, was neglected by MAUSS and HALL (1990). ERICKSON (2007) shaped the concept as the 1) the refusal to give, 2) the refusal to receive, 3) the refusal to return a gift, and 4) refusing others

2 ANNAS, J. (1987), Retrieved 12 April, 2018, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43154002>

3 SMITH (2011), Retrieved 06 December, 2017, from <http://sites.nd.edu/science-of-generosity/>

the opportunity to return a gift. ERICKSON (1997) added this modification to reciprocity as the key tool for maintaining balanced relationships. The model argues that through the trust-based system of reciprocity, the honor of both the giver and the receiver are guaranteed and set to neutral. The balanced engagement in this relationship connotes that both tangible and non-tangible values and whatever is in the definition of possessions that “makes one rich, powerful, and influential” is usable for “compensating others” (MAUSS and HALL 1990: 12-13, also DILLON 2004: 101). Receiving the gift is said to involve the spirit of the giver and thus leads to returning the gift becoming a moral obligation. MAUSS and HALL (1990) phrased it as shown below in terms of the total service involved:

In this system of ideas one clearly and logically realizes that one must give back to another person what is really part and parcel of his nature and substance, because to accept something from somebody is to accept some part of his spiritual essence, of his soul. To retain that thing would be dangerous and mortal, not only because it would be against law and morality, but also because that thing coming from the person not only morally, but physically and spiritually, that essence, that food, those goods, whether movable or immovable, those women or those descendants, those rituals or those acts of communion - all exert a magical or religious hold over you (MAUSS and HALL 1990: 16).

It is implied that the obligation to give is uniform with the obligation to receive and refusing a gift is “losing one’s name” or admitting “oneself beaten in advance” (MAUSS and HALL 1990: 52). Discussing the commitment of giving, F. NIETSCHE (1976) through the spoken Zarathustra affirms that the “gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue” (NIETSCHE 1976: 186). The same author brought out the concept of *pitying*, and his disciples were warned that “great indebtedness does not make men grateful, but vengeful; and if a little charity is not forgotten, it turns into a gnawing worm” (NIETSCHE 1976: 201). SCHRIFT (1997) agreed further, stating that an “unreciprocated gift left the receiver feeling inferior and vengeful at the intrusion on one’s independence and the incursion of this debt to repay” (SCHRIFT 1997: 3). Fig. 1 below illustrates the characteristics of the Gift Giving model.

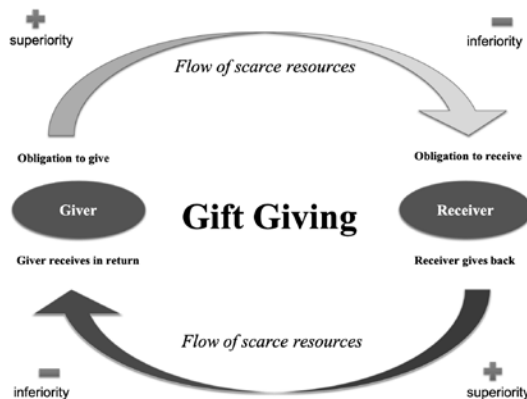


Fig. 1. The Gift Giving Model.

The nature of this cycle of gift giving and receiving enhances the burdens attached to the relationship. The system encourages hard work for individuals in order for each to have the pride to give, the courage to receive and the indebtedness to reciprocate. Chiefs or those privileged in the same context are only accepted as wealthy, powerful and viewed with respect if exceptional giving is observed - usually at festivals (MAUSS and HALL 1990). To share by giving away accumulated wealth is the obligation of chiefs in order to hold a hierarchical position; otherwise they are given the title of "rotten face" (MAUSS and HALL 1990: 50). MAUSS and HALL (1990) also noted a unique characteristic of reciprocity in that it depends highly on the quality of the things that are given. In addition, a gift should be considered something of great value from the original source as expressed below:

This giving is flat usurpation, and therefore when the beneficiary is ungrateful, as all beneficiaries hate all Timons, not at all considering the value of the gift, but looking back to the greater store it was taken from, I rather sympathize with the beneficiary, than with the anger of my lord Timon (EMERSON 1997: 27).

Looking at generosity, which Aristotle examines as a mean between wastefulness and stinginess, generosity is not based on the quantity of giving but rather on the motivation of the giver which also considers the wealth of the giver in comparison to what is being given away. Referring to the donor-oriented nature of aid, this nature defines the symbolic power of politics between donor and recipient, where aid signifies ownership dominance and is presented as generosity (HATTORI 2001). The author agrees that this transformation euphemizes the physical hierarchy that defines the relationship, where recipients are "complicit" to the obligation "that enables donors to give in the first place." As a result, it is argued that negative reciprocity, or aid without reciprocity, traps the recipient in the weak status of this created hierarchy (MAUSS and HALL 1990, HATTORI 2001, SYKES 2005).

Since generosity is known to be contagious, especially in well-established systems leading to the integration of social ties (CHRISTAKIS 2017),⁴ we can move closer to this theory by asking which sphere or area we could promote in order to heighten the recipient's sense of value and dignity. What could be used as guides for categorizing the level of generosity expressed by developing countries? The philosophy of GNG is centered on the empowerment of recipient countries through regaining the dignity lost due to the absence of reciprocity for foreign aid. GNG prioritizes a balanced relationship between donor nations and recipient countries through the return of services. It is also an attempt to answer the questions left by GREGORY (1982) of "What dignified role is each of the various nations best fitted to play? What motivational patterns shall we evoke between those who give and those who receive in order to submit not to each other but to some abstract principle?" (DILLON 2004: 106).

The non-economic aspects of well-being were first introduced through the theory

4 Nicholas CHRISTAKIS, *The Social Contagion of Generosity*, Harvard University. *Science of Generosity*, Retrieved on 06 December, 2017, from <http://sites.nd.edu/science-of-generosity/>

of Gross National Happiness (GNH) in 1972 by the fourth King of Bhutan as a better development indicator over GDP (OECD)⁵. GNH was developed further, which led to the first report on World Happiness in 2012 and its adoption to the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network.⁶ GNH is known to measure people's quality of life by centering on its original philosophy of peace, happiness and security (Center for Bhutan Studies and GNH)⁷. However, while GNH quantifies both material and spiritual development by looking at "well-being", GNG emphasizes the moral contributions towards "well giving" that are overlooked, mainly because moral contributions are intangible and immeasurable in character. The author has proposed that the categories for GNG shown in Fig. 2 be further investigated with the hope that they will contribute to liberating the PICs, as well as other developing nations having similar characteristics, from the negative interpretations of indebtedness. Fig. 2 shows categories identified as possible spheres for GNG.

The "giving" philosophy of the PICs is strongly woven into the Pacific mindset as maintaining generosity within the community, knowing one's defined status within the social structure, and using one's full resources to demonstrate obligations to others (SMALL 1997). The author argues that the PICs, having been trapped into the misinterpretations of "aid dependency", could represent the outcome of not having a recipient country's moral generosity acknowledged as "reciprocity." By identifying ways to complete the gift giving cycle as discussed below, we can expect recipient countries to carefully design a better aid framework for achieving the positive goals of ODA. The author's proposed framework is explained below based on findings from the perspectives from Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati.

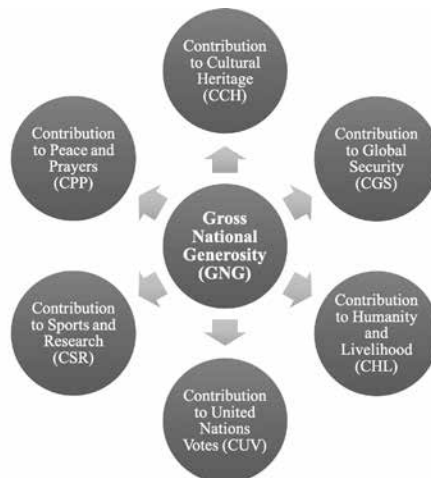


Fig. 2. The Gross National Generosity Model *Source*: Funaki (2017: 218).

5 Retrieved 02 May, 2017, from <http://www.oecd.org/site/progresskorea/44120751.pdf>

6 Retrieved 02 May, 2017, from <http://www.oecd.org/site/worldforum06/38704149.pdf>

7 Center for Bhutan Studies: <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com>

GNG Category 1: Contribution to Cultural Heritage (CCH)

As discussed above, there is a clear link between cultural values of PICs and the possibility of restoring dignity through practical actions. One important question to discuss is to look at the significance of the Pacific countries' cultural heritage to future generations. How can we ensure that knowledge from their ancestors is carefully conserved during the current generation's lifetime? At the closing of the fifty-ninth session of Tonga's Parliament on September 4th, 1959, Her Majesty Queen Salote addressed the assembled lawmakers, saying "*the customs of a people are its heritage and the possession of a complete knowledge of their customs will enable them to modify those customs to meet the demands of modern progress along lines most beneficial to their well-being.*"⁸ More than 40 years later, the movement of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) towards recognizing the need to preserve cultural heritage was finally established in 2003. The first registration of intangible cultural heritage occurred in 2008, and as of the year 2016 there are a total of 429 heritages listed (UNESCO)⁹. From the PICs, Tonga and Vanuatu each managed to register one cultural identity in 2008. Tonga highlighted its "Lakalaka" (dances and sung speeches) while Vanuatu showcased its tradition of "sand drawings." How many more oral traditions could be counted from each community? What about the thousands of dances and arts that are currently performed, not even mentioning those that are no longer practiced? The uniqueness of traditional lifestyles such as fishing and farming, including ritual festivals, are uncountable. It is difficult for developing countries to prioritize using ODA towards the conservation of cultural heritages due to other short-term priorities, but the outcome of continuing current prioritizations will lead to the disappearance of cultural knowledge that has the potential to contribute to international dialogues and cultural diversities.

Prioritizing the moral value of Cultural Heritage would encourage the PICs to design development strategies that contribute to conserving their cultural heritage, including traditional knowledge, through activities geared towards mutual understanding. Redefinition of cultural heritage within each country as a development framework would lead to a mutual respect and understanding for differences. Countries would continue to evolve towards global prosperity while perceiving their cultural heritage as a contribution.

Possible spheres to re-articulate what the Pacific Island Countries can offer that the world needs.

How significant is our cultural heritage for future generations? How can we transform this knowledge from our living libraries (elders)?

- Registration of Cultural Heritage
 - Tangibles
 - Intangibles
 - Languages (more than 1200 in the Pacific)

8 Tonga Parliament Records, Tonga Government Gazette. No. 12 dated September 21st 1959.

9 UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/lists>

- Performing Arts (dances), festivals, etc.
- Music (singing and compositions), etc.
- Knowledge (relationship, parenting, harmony with nature, etc.)
- Lifestyle:
 - Traditional Farming (Organic)
 - Traditional Fishing (Skills)
 - Food Preparations & Preservations
- Designs:
 - Houses (Suitable for global warming)
 - Fine arts (sculptures, weavings, drawings, etc.)

What are the spheres in the SDGs that Oceania could contribute from their CCH?

GNG Category 2: Contribution to Global Security (CGS)

The scattered position of the PICs with their wide EEZ has a weighty significance in regards to global security. The EEZ not only covers the ocean space and everything underneath, but also encompasses all the space above the surface of the ocean upwards into the sky. What spheres here could the PICs consider as contributions to Global Security?

Considering the Pacific is the largest ocean in the world and that Oceania covers 1/3 of the face of the earth, the region's contribution to international security cannot be underestimated. The Pacific has been proven to have a strategic geographical advantage that is being taken advantage of by major donor nations giving ODA. The active participation of the United States in the PICs is known to focus mainly on its dependent territories in Micronesia (western Pacific) and American Samoa (eastern Pacific). American military bases are common in these areas, which have been used for the testing of nuclear weapons by the US together with the UK and France and which currently are maintained as strategic positions. In addition, Japan dominated many countries in the region resulting in major battles during World War II. The same observation also applies to the strong presence of France in its dependent territories of Tahiti, New Caledonia, and Wallis & Futuna, which are all managed from the other side of the globe. The dominant influence in the region of Australia and New Zealand reveals that their foreign policy interests are based on threats depicted by this open space extending throughout the PICs (SCHULTZ 2012). Further research and discussions on CGS would assist not only with negotiations, but also especially support the PICs in confidently expressing their moral obligation to Global Security through their regional architecture as contributions reciprocating ODA.

Possible spheres to re-articulate what the Pacific Island Countries can offer that the world needs:

Enforce regional architecture through a united Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)

- Sea space (law of the sea)
 1. Secured commercial ship routes
 2. Patrol boats for security purposes

- Sky space - for commercial and security purposes
 1. air crafts, helicopters, rescue activities
 2. satellite facilities
- Strategic Locations
 1. War time nuclear testing sites (USA, France, UK)
 2. Military bases, Monitoring System (USA, France)
 3. Territories and Colonial Influences (Australia, New Zealand, UK)
- Strategies against Terrorism Activities
 1. United character of the Pacific - Our sea of Islands Philosophy

What are the spheres in the SDGs that Oceania could contribute from their CGS?

GNG Category 3: Contribution to Humanity and Livelihood (CHL)

In addition to the two categories discussed above, contribution to humanity itself is proposed as a significant factor of GNG. Livelihood as essential for supporting humanity is interpreted in many ways; here it is meant as the means used for securing the necessities of life. The world of anthropology studies people in terms of history, behavior, adaptation and the nature of their socializing with one another. C. LEVI-STRAUSS in SCHRIFT (1997) defined anthropology as “a system of interpretation accounting for the aspects of all modes of behavior simultaneously, physical, physiological, psychical, and sociological, only to study the fragment of our life which is our life in society is not enough” (SCHRIFT 1997: 46). The pioneering work of M. MAUSS in anthropology through the Pacific value of the Gift theory must not be underestimated.

Contribution to livelihood in the PICs insinuates the significance of the land, coastal, and marine resources into the existence of humanity as this region comprises the largest ecosystem of the world. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the oldest and largest global environmental organization focusing on identifying solutions to environmental and development challenges. Since the Pacific is 98% ocean, IUCN recognizes these valuable resources not only for the PICs, but also for the world. IUCN has confirmed that the region is under threat not only from the consequences of climate change, but also from activities resulting in the overuse, misuse, pollution and damage of the environment. The question here as proposed by the PICs is whether anyone has the right to place a value on the largest ecosystem in the world. The author suggests considering the value system of the Pacific based on human trust. Although the moral values of the Pacific do not recognize the estimates proposed by IUCN, few of the estimates are concluded to hold economic value that the PICs could refer to as contributing to GNG. The CHL category not only recognizes the necessity of the resources in the Pacific for future generations, but also encourages generosity in conserving these priceless resources and human values as a contribution towards global livelihood.

Possible spheres to re-articulate what the Pacific Island Countries can offer that the world needs:

Anthropological knowledge and survival of humanity

- Gift of knowledge for human development
 1. Birth place of Anthropology (Cultural and Social)
 2. Uncovering hidden knowledge
 1. Healing and Wellness
 2. Herbal Medicine
 3. Values of Generosity, Dignity, Peace, Family, Balance ...
- Climate Change
 1. Improving the Eco-systems (reducing CO²)
 2. Saving the Mangroves and tree planting projects
- Human movement (Migration)
 1. Contributions of migrants to the economies of receiving countries
 2. Contributions of migrants to the economies of sending countries
 3. Unity in Differences (Multiculturalism)
 1. Dignity of Migrants (Mr. A. TONG of Kiribati and his pioneer work on Migration with Dignity)
- Conservations of Land and Marine Resources – Possible registration as World Heritage.
 1. Land Resources:
 1. Saving the remaining forests, replanting of trees ...
 2. Diamond, Gold, Silver, Copper, Oil, Gas ...
 2. Marine Resources: food from the ocean (fish, shells, etc.)
- Potential Seabed Resources
 1. Polymetallic nodules, sulphides, cobalt, copper, gold manganese, nickel, etc.

What are the spheres in the SDGs that Oceania could contribute from their CHL?

GNG Category 4: Contribution to United Nation Votes (CUV)

The common, united nature of the PICs at the Pacific Island Forum (PIF)¹⁰ has significant influence in shaping global decisions facilitated by the United Nations. Excluding Australia and New Zealand, the PICs combined have 14 full members at the United Nations (UN), and each PIF member country is entitled to a vote per the UN policy of “*one state one vote.*” Thus the 14 PIF member countries have substantial muscle as not only are they united in character, but also because they vote in blocs. The case studies of Tonga, Vanuatu and Kiribati reveal that there is a common understanding, one woven into the practices of China and Japan in particular, that one goal of ODA is to win the favor of the PICs and thus their UN votes. The long battle between China and Taiwan for PIC recognition in order to gain PIC votes signifies that these votes hold significant value. The recent increase in the number of foreign embassies in the PICs also connects back to UN voting. From the research findings, supporting donor nations through UN votes is an implied Leverage, but it is not a matter that is discussed openly, with the exception of Chinese aid.

¹⁰ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The PICs have been voting for their former colonial masters and now donors since their admittance to the UN; these votes are given as an implied favor in return for ODA. The value of each vote might not be framed to be that significant, but the appreciation that one gives as a receiver must be large according to the cultural perspectives of the participants. This appreciation is connected to the motive and the spirit, which is that one is willing to give everything that matters. Recognition of the CUV category would give recipient governments the confidence to vote with dignity, acknowledging their votes as contributions to global solutions rather than based on self-interested negotiations where only the fittest survives.

Possible spheres to re-articulate what the Pacific Island Countries can offer that the world needs:

Vote with Dignity as contributions to global prosperity

- Number of votes contributing to global issues
 - Candidacy
 - Number of foreign missions registered
 - Number of diplomatic visits
 - Number of Memberships in international organizations
 - Number of signed agreements, etc.

What are the spheres in the SDGs that Oceania could contribute from their CUV?

GNG Category 5: Contribution to Sports and Research (CSR)

The PICs have contributed tremendously not only to academic research, but also to the richness of several major sports. Rugby and cricket were introduced to the region during the colonial period. Of these two sports, rugby is the most popular and has even become the national sport for some PICs, especially Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga. Due to the strong build of Pacific players, almost all strong rugby teams in the world have a player of Pacific origin. The increase in the presence of Pacific Island players outside of the Pacific has contributed immensely to the world standard of rugby, even for countries who have only recently adopted the game, such as Japan. As a result, the outflow of Pacific players to countries offering yearly multimillion-dollar contracts is a common practice. Although the success of players in obtaining expensive contracts leads to an expected increase in remittances for the region, there is no significant recognition given to the countries of origin or the region for this global level contribution to sports.

In terms of research, the region has contributed tremendously to knowledge creation since the arrival of Western civilization, Christianity and Western anthropologists. Since the history of the PICs is passed on through lifestyle storytelling and songs, uncountable scholarships and foundations have invested heavily in the region in order to record and interpret this history. Nevertheless, as experienced through this study, much traditional knowledge is purposely kept from non-Pacific researchers. As a result, the Pacific Island countries could be argued to be the most understudied region in the world. At the same time, some may wonder about the location of past studies conducted on each island, as most of

researchers never return and most islands have no local libraries to store research data. The gift-giving theory, for example, was interpreted through observation in the late 19th century and although it has influenced the world through anthropology for decades, its significance has yet to be fully recognized in the PICs. There is much knowledge yet to be discovered in the region and these untold mysteries and cultural riches can be uncovered and shared through collaboration between the PICs and other nations.

This CSR category would promote a consistent flow of talented players from the PICs to receiving countries while at the same time allowing the sending country to take pride in their own scholars. Contributions to research would not only recognize past scholarship for further interpretations, but also allow for creativity in the frameworks in order to encourage more researchers, both from outside and within the region, to join forces in knowledge creation. The moral contribution from the CSR category can be expected to make significant contributions towards a future with better teamwork and creativity.

Possible spheres to re-articulate what the Pacific Island Countries can offer that the world needs:

Collaborations of locals and international (sports and research) for global purposes.

- Sports: skills transfer (Rugby, Sumo, American Football, etc.)
 - Reputations
 - Influence, Contracts, etc.
- Research (Local + Global education)
 - Number of research papers registered and stored in local libraries
 - Number of collaborative projects (exploring undiscovered knowledge)
 - Number of researches converted into policies (local and international)

What are the spheres in the SDGs that Oceania could contribute from their CSR?

GNG Category 6: Contribution to Peace and Prayers (CPP)

It is ironic that there is much attention given to the destruction and tensions caused by war, but almost no attention is paid to appreciating the contribution of countries living in Peace with others. The establishment of the Nobel Prize¹¹ by Alfred Nobel in 1901 could be referred to as one of the most respected movements supporting this category. One of the famous quotes left by Martin Luther King Jr¹², the winner of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, also recognizes the value of peace: *“Peace is more precious than diamonds or silver or gold.”* It can be argued and summarized that the definition of “Peace” in the PICs is strongly woven into their value system, which is the same system where “reciprocity” is the core commitment to relationships. This value is a commitment to appreciating the spirit of the giver by giving back in return in order to strengthen the relationship. It can be argued based on research findings that in the PICs, Peace is living a balanced life where your moral obligations are fulfilled. This definition appreciates long-term relationships by ensuring the

11 See this page for details: https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/

12 Nobel Prize organization website. Retrieved 10 January, 2017, from <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/facts/>

balance is kept through giving, receiving and then giving back in return. The definition of Peace from the perspective of the PICs gives hints to alternative methods for maintaining and building relationships that the international community could also adopt to encourage generosity.

The concept of Prayer is complementary to the outcome expected through Peace. Although the practices of prayer are conducted differently in all religions, in general prayer is observed to be an act of humility through surrender to a trusted supreme authority. One of the treasures cherished by the PICs as observed during the research was the commitment to Prayer. In Tonga for example, on average at least four hours per week are dedicated to pre-scheduled services such as Sundays and a fixed schedule on weekdays for every person. These four hours do not include family prayers at home or private prayers in the morning and every evening before going to sleep. There is always a prayer for opening and ending of any get-together or any function, not to mention before every meal. Longer prayers are conducted at ceremonies such as funerals, birthdays, commemorative functions, and official ceremonies to name a few. Due to this background, it is very common to hear the phrase “let’s pray about it” in most conversations. Participants shared that wherever Pacific people go, they find their peace in prayers. The Peace and Prayer category would encourage and emphasize that Prayer is a cultural value to be cherished as it contributes to Peace.

Peace and Prayers are complementary to each other in the PICs although they have been overlooked in development discussions. The CPP category would encourage and emphasize the need for serious Prayers and identifying development initiatives towards Peace. To gain a better view of the CPP category, further research on this value as interpreted by other religions is necessary in order to comprehend the universal potential of this category. Possible outcomes could be observed by correlating CPP and the prosperities of developing countries by improving morality through peaceful and prayerful development.

Possible spheres to re-articulate what the Pacific Island Countries can offer that the world needs:

Improve global morality through Prayerful and Peaceful development.

- Highlight the number of government policies related to Peace building
- Recognition of activities related to strengthening local network and regional peace network
- Number of government policies related to inner and outer contemplations
- Recognize the efforts to strengthen spiritual strengths that leads to harmony with others

What are the spheres in the SDGs that Oceania could contribute from their CSR?

Conclusion and Future Prospects: *From Independence to Interdependence*

By linking the GNG categories comprised of CCH, CGS, CHL, CUV, CSR and CPP as proposed above, we should be convinced that attempting to quantify these moral contributions is no longer necessary. Attempting to quantify GNG not only could lead to incommensurable disputes due to differences in value systems between countries, but also

further destruction of scarce resources in the PICs that must be sustained to ensure the survival of future generations. Figure 4 below illustrates the framework designed to explain the rationale of the “balance” argued through GNG. Application of Generosity (Reciprocity) in place of Leverage to the donor-recipient relationship recognizes Interdependency as the new balance that concludes the relationship cycle.

Using GNG as an alternative method for delivering ODA we can expect the following:

1. GNG would promote sustainable development based on interdependence and balanced relationships between donor nations and recipient countries.
2. GNG promotes empowerment within recipient countries by recognizing the value of what they have in their possession to offer and allowing them to take pride in their significant contributions.
3. GNG would lead to hard work in recipient countries by recouping dignity through transformation of self-perceptions.
4. GNG would lead to better management of ODA funds in recipient countries, as ODA will not be perceived as charity, but rather as fully earned through their well-giving.
5. GNG would encourage traditional donor nations to reconsider their ODA commitment effort of 0.7% GNI.
6. GNG would encourage traditional donor nations to consider reshaping ODA concepts as a “*contribution*” towards global development and finding ways for nations to *stay united* even when foreign policies are self-interested.
7. GNG would contribute to the future direction of global prosperity through development aspirations based on other’s interests.

The figure below (Fig. 3) shows the proposed interdependent relationship between donor nations and recipient countries

The GNG model aims to recover dignity for the PICs and other developing countries so that they can proudly perform their global roles knowing the value of their responsibilities as resource provider for the world. The heart and first goal of the vision is to transform self-perceptions starting from within, by revisiting and rearticulating what the PICs can do for the world in the future. This vision requires a redefinition of priorities, reconsideration of

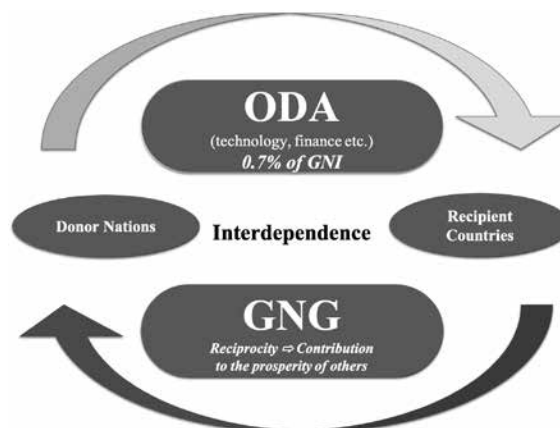


Fig. 3. New ODA framework. Source: Funaki (2017: 238).

concepts and reevaluation of development motivations from aiming towards well-being, to reflecting on the potential found in well-giving towards the good of others. GNG suggests an ideal solution towards sustainable development where traditions and cultural values of developing countries can be preserved and encouraged while these countries are evolving towards prosperity.

My next project recognizes that while working towards this vision, it is important to examine the foundations of changing self-perceptions to know what a developing country can offer that the world needs and also to trace how self-worth is transformed vis-a-vis engagements with advanced economies. The project will investigate the spheres or areas within each category that could be promoted to heighten this sense of value and dignity. These spheres will be derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as these SDGs are the guides to what the world prioritizes and values in order to find connections with what the PICs have to offer. The author wishes to cooperate with other views in order to further develop these spheres with the hope that this cooperation will contribute to improving global prosperity by considering the pacific value and motivation of “well-giving,” as a new value for society in addition to the global understanding of “well-being.”

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