

Responsibility and its Avoidance: The Case of Aid

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Abstract

What is good practice in aid administration? This article, based on the reflections of an insider practitioner, finds that unequal relationships between donor and recipient and the ambiguous nature of aid as a gift between one country and another, creates a complexity that is difficult to negotiate in practice. A key finding is that neither market nor administrative rationality fit the needs of the exchange, although the rules of aid administration feature both. Instead, a third logic; the ambiguous social logic of the gift, creates opportunities for practitioners of good intent on either side to go beyond the contract obligations or rules of office to overcome negativities and achieve positive outcomes. At project level this to advocate a role for the mutuality of friendship that both administrative norms and market theory disallow as dangerous. At intergovernmental level, inequality persists in ways that are not masked by the language of partnerships that now pervades aid administration. The paper concludes with the thought that this may change, as will the nature of aid, as countries North and South negotiate a shared destiny in a warming World.

Keywords: Gift, delivery, development, donor, administration, recipient

Introduction

Social life, in all its forms, depends upon the exercise of personal responsibility; which, being burdensome, we tend to avoid. A spiral of neglect, avoidance and descent into chaos or corruption is only averted if people are willing to face up to civic challenges and commit to their purposes. Positive social outcomes, it seems, call for a willingness of people to give to their cause, sometimes beyond expectation. Does this general diagnosis of the human condition (Curtis 2017) have explanatory power in the case of foreign aid?

The case to be made is this: the dominance of the aid process and agenda by donors and the 'aid industry'—consultants, academics, others—creates the risk that recipients avoid thinking adequately about, or taking responsibly for, the action areas in question. Although there has been awareness of the issue for some years, in practice the donor-led aid industry still does much of the theorising, analysing, moralising and prescribing about both the purposes and modalities of aid. Do the recipients get more than a look-in? Is there a case of moral hazard here? Aid dependency in this interpretation is not primarily a matter of funds but of the lack of ownership of ideas that results from the de facto subordination of the recipients within aid relationships. The problem is exacerbated by the nature of aid itself. As a 'good' aid is neither a tradable commodity that might be subject to

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straightforward market exchange, not an entitlement that must be delivered administratively. It is a gift; subject to the full ambiguities that gifts bring to relationships. On the surface aid relationships are now expressed in terms of partnerships, unequal though they remain. At project level 'partner' implies equality in counterpart relationships that can be sought and sometimes achieved in day to day working, although patterns of accountability towards donor agent and government agent can pull in different directions. At intergovernmental level, donor domination in practice persists, but circumstances also matter. It may be that, with a faltering world economy, a growing awareness of the shared liabilities in global warming and a common need for food and other forms of security, aid relationships may re-locate on a more equitable basis within a wider common problem discourse.

Objectives

The objective of this paper is to discover a way of understanding some behavioural aspects of the relationships of aid which do not conform to structural norms and prescribed processes. Although there are many studies of aid effectiveness, aid politics and the economic relevance of aid, there are less studies of behavioural factors within the administrative processes of aid that might assist in this aim². Aid administration spans elements of more than one national government administrations as well as private or civil society intermediary agencies. By examining the logic of behaviour within the complex and in many respects, contradictory structures of aid management, the challenges and opportunities of practice are explored; seeking explanation of practices that served public purpose but appeared to be outside the logic and strictures of the relevant organisational rules.

Methodology

The paper is a reflection on experience as a practitioner, as distinct from examination of practice as a researcher. This is a process that is not without risk of bias but, as David Moss (2004) illustrates (see also Eyben 2006), an insider position within a complex set of institutions and administrative activities can reveal aspects of processes and relationships that would not be captured through surveys and questionnaires. To critically reflect on an administrative process, it is necessary to bring a different way of interpreting events and processes to those prescribed by the relevant authorities. Reflexive Methodology proponents, such as Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009), point to the complex interactive processes through which actors or researchers search out a fit between observed behavioural

² A major exception is a series of studies that focus upon the micro-politics of aid administration as it came under pressure in donor countries to demonstrate cost effective outcomes (Eyben et.al. 2015). Aid administrators became caught in a tension between centrally set targets and performance measurement demands on the one hand and the field demands of sensitivity to needs, responsiveness, mutual learning and adaptability. This series certainly illustrates the fact that the practices and methods in aid administration reflect interests, value systems and rationalities that belie the simple idea that aid is about helping people.

discrepancies and potential alternate explanations. Moss draws upon anthropological models and techniques in his search. The present paper draws upon the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas who, in collaboration with Political Scientist Aaron Wildavsky (1983), set in train an approach called 'Cultural Theory', sometimes called 'the theory of plural rationality' (Verweij and Thompson 2006). This approach identifies biases in thinking and acting that are associated with structural constraints and challenges in society. Hierarchical, group and individualist thinking are all apparent in different elements within an aid administration complex, providing opportunities to achieve public policy aims but also to shy away from responsibility.

Case material

These issues are explored in relation to projects and programmes in which the author was involved some years back as a team leader, lead consultant or project manager (Curtis 2004, 2006, Green and Curtis 2005, Curtis and Poon 2009). History this certainly is; but the underlying issues survive. The insider role of project manager revealed the necessity to go beyond the Log-Frame Terms of Reference [TORs] to;

- think outside the constraints of the project framework
- build relationships of purpose
- and act in the broader interest of the purpose of aid as well as to achieve intended outcomes

The projects to be examined illustrate the argument that when objectives, agenda, methods and lead personnel come from outside, the supposed beneficiary will have low ownership of resulting policies. The policies may have a poor 'fit' with the actualities of the local scene, and the accountability that the actors must provide will be primarily to the donor rather than to the national authorities. More damagingly perhaps, insofar as the aid granted serves to ameliorate the underlying condition, this dilutes the incentives upon local actors to confront problems and contradictions and themselves 'do something about them'.

Experience within the management of two projects is relevant to the discussion. One was a civil service reform project that came to be known as MATT1. It had been designed in the early 1990s to an agenda set by UK consultants [the Hume /O'Donovan report] around a 'new public management' [NPM] framework and was executed by UK consultant team led by the International Development Department of Birmingham University [IDD] and the UK Civil Service College (1999-2002). The project no doubt fed ideas and concepts into the Bangladesh Civil Service [BCS] but there was no fundamental challenge to BCS norms and procedures. No direct harm perhaps; some of the ideas were good (Curtis 2006), but did it also postpone the day upon which the Government of Bangladesh [GoB] would itself have to address the several contradictions within its structures and working practices?

A second project in the 2002-4 period focused upon financial management reform. The project was well supported by the then GoB Finance Secretary but several of the components illustrated the point that well-intentioned

foreign consultant design does not guarantee a workable fit with current realities. For instance, the training component called for the production and delivery of training for a cadre of “para-accountants”; which did not exist. It might have been a good idea if such a cadre had existed but the project was not designed as an opportunity for innovation, exchange of ideas and learning but as a bench-marked delivery system. The consequences were several. That component was not deliverable without compromise. The consultant firm, which had volunteered to be ‘paid upon delivery’ [as was then becoming fashionable in DFID] had to find a way of appearing to have delivered. What the GoB felt that it got out of the project is not known but a degree of dissonance might have been expected.

A glance at the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and at the following Accra Agenda for Action (2008) [OECD statement, appendix 1] makes the point that, by the turn of the Century, the aid industry had become well aware of these problems and sought, at Paris and elsewhere, to rally donors and recipients around a set of principles that would lead towards a partnership approach. The principles include the expectation that developing countries set their own strategies, that all stakeholders are included at all stages and that local systems of administration and management should be used in preference to externally imposed processes and structures. The discussion below will ask whether intentions are not sometimes contradicted by the means available, but the prior question is whether the framework within which aid is discussed and negotiated at such international conferences, does not itself bias the partnership dialogue in favour of donor priorities.

Good intentions sometimes fail to do more than gloss an exchange with the language of mutuality, leaving the realities of a power and resource hierarchy intact. In the case of international assistance, the power and resource hierarchy is supported by a set of ideas and assumptions about what makes the world ‘tick’. In this intellectual approach, aid fits alongside markets as agents of change, both being perceived to be beneficial and benign aspects of development. The prevailing Washington consensus; the neo-liberal economic and social agenda, provides a framework with which particular policy areas are expected to be compatible. What in effect this consensus does is to replace the specifics of aid conditionality [‘you will get this if you do that’] with the more general expectation that donor / recipient dialogue around aid packages will take as given the priority of open markets, respect for the law - particularly of private property - and clear-cut limits to the role of the state. These things are obviously not bad in principle. But aid recipient governments are not naïve. They will be aware that none of the newly industrialised countries have followed these norms to the letter, or even approximately, as they accelerate on their chosen paths to ‘development’.

Aid as gift

Attention can now turn to the actual processes of delivery of aid. Responsibility, it is assumed, is a willingness and ability to respond directly or indirectly to needs of self and other, even many others, on matters of material interest, such as wellbeing, security, or the production of goods and

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services. When giving /receiving aid, what kind of transaction is this? Between buyers and sellers there are clearly defined responsibilities. Bureaucrat and applicant know what is expected of each other as defined by government regulation or law. Club treasurer and club member will follow mutually agreed rules regarding dues. But aid is none of these. In terms of interaction, it is easier to say what aid is *not* than to define what it *is*;

- Aid is *not* a commercial, market, transaction; there is no exchange of goods, no dealing over their prices or calculation of relative advantage; though sometimes it is assessed in terms of 'value for money'.
- Aid is *not* a bureaucratic response to an entitlement; the recipient has no enforceable entitlement to the transfer.
- Aid is *not* a membership fee, as due within a club [though some clubs of nations such as the Commonwealth can provide funds for mutual benefit]

If it is not these things then perhaps aid is best perceived as a gift, freely and voluntarily given by one party or nation to another, for 'good' purposes. A gift however, is a curious social construct. It is curious principally because of its lack of 'fit' with the two prevailing rationalities that have come to dominate the modern world; namely administrative, planning, rationality and market rationality, the former the *modus operandi* of big organisations and governments, the latter, elaborated by classical economics, being the logic of market exchange. A gift may be curious in these terms though it may well be the oldest of social gestures. It is also the basis of a social calculus, a third rationality, a different set of precepts, practices and rationalities through which people seek to achieve social ends. In many ways, these principles contradict the precepts apparent in both market and administrative rationality.

Seen in the perspective of either market rationality or administrative rationality, to give something freely and voluntarily without order or return is irrational. The term then used is 'altruistic', often linked with philanthropy. In the language of 'corporate social responsibility'- which struggles to find a discourse which obliges firms to think beyond profit - philanthropic responsibility is at the top of the pile, above ethical, legal or economic responsibilities (Thorne McAlister et. al. 2003). The phenomenon of the gift is a much more pervasive and at the same time, ambiguous interaction. The anthropological literature suggests that to give something may also be to demand something in return. It is a matter of reciprocity. A gift today may be returned at some future time or in another medium, or indeed as negative reciprocity where an unreturnable gift is an invitation to subordination or client-ship. In other words, while the gift is always a socially creative gesture, it can be highly manipulative and we should not expect anything else of its role in international aid. While some leading authors [below] argue that aid is indeed an unreturnable gift that condemns recipients to client status, I will argue that this is not a necessary outcome. Much depends upon what the parties to the transaction want to achieve, in turn, a function of how they recognise the facts of inter-dependence in response to gross inequality and mutual vulnerability within a shrinking bio-sphere.

This identification of three types of rationality and its application in respect of aid is nothing new. American anthropologist Marshall Sahlins referred to them as economic exchange, redistribution and giving (Sahlins 1972), he in turn following Polanyi (1944), both reviewed by Hattori (2001) who is drawn upon here. It is the third type, the gift, that is most relevant to the present discussion, as a quote from Hattori – now drawing on Bourdieu - reveals;

The third form of resource allocation, *giving*, can be distinguished from both of the above by the lack of socially sanctioned laws or rights. Though voluntary like economic exchange, it involves neither certainty of return nor political entitlement. Giving unfolds in *real*, not *logical*, time and space (in contrast to the simultaneity and reversibility or equivalent values of a market) and tends to foster strategic ambiguity of values exchanged (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

The reference here to the strategic ambiguity of values points to a social calculus that must chart the highs and lows of human interaction; the straight and crooked paths to personal, or group or national advantage. It must identify, for different cultures, the known ways for dealing in trade, cooperating as partners, recognising authority, for dealing with difference, for social change and/or for its escape into realms of 'other realities' and – new coined – fake news. Somewhere in there - in socially responsible mode - it must posit models of survivable organisation or 'liveable society'; but 'social' behaviour is not always responsible in this sense. Different disciplines bring different concepts and models into the analysis of social interaction but for anthropology, the social engine is **reciprocity**; in all its variations – 'tit for tat', balanced, diffuse or generalised; and its obverse, negative reciprocity; the rules of social distance, subordination and breakdown into war.

In thinking through the juxtaposition of the three kinds of rationality, something should be said about the likelihood of any of the strategies being effective in producing 'development' or, more specifically, reducing poverty. In relation to the aims and objectives of aid it is worth recognising that while market extension has certainly been responsible for bringing many people world-wide out of poverty, markets have margins at which people starve, if alternative social mechanisms don't intervene. Administrative rationality also has its downsides. Plans and distribution systems can be used to allocate resources according to defined needs but they depend both upon the power-holder's definition of social needs and upon adequate, systematised information about the population; which is seldom complete. In consequence, there tends to be a great un-numbered and un-regulated mass of people who can miss out on the rations. Social rationality also leads to inclusions and exclusions; it can lead to social movements that demand inclusion but also to the corruption of both administrative systems and market mechanisms.

Responsibility avoidance

This third way of calculating can be presented as uniquely ambiguous or unpredictable, encompassing the full gamut of human affective relationships, creativity and perversity. This way of calculating allows

ambiguity to penetrate all kinds of social institutions including formal government bodies and market-based organisations, as well as social bodies such as clubs, associations, or communities where it might be expected to prevail.

- Hierarchies struggle to maintain the principles of logical categorisation, rank ordering, regulation, target setting and rationing (Scott 1998) against the tendency of power-holders to seek personal advantage or to favour friends and for less powerful, disgruntled subordinates to subvert or 'work to rule'.
- Individualist market players [or networkers] purport to live by a utilitarian logic in which society thrives upon free and unfettered exchange – fair deals – the social good being the sum of numberless individual choices in the market. Those same individualists nevertheless struggle with – or indulge in – inclinations to hide, disguise, or falsify information to their own or other's strategic advantage or disadvantage.
- Group or community members for their part will mostly recognise that the advantages that they seek through mutually defining their common endeavour, establishing agreed goals, objectives and strategies can easily be subverted by opportunist behaviour, free riding or outright cheating. Common purpose can only be maintained through constant mutual monitoring and a willingness to sanction deviants.

Such is the imperfection of the dominant institutional complexes of society, under such influences, that a fourth social entity or space must be recognised; the sphere of the outsider, the alienated, those who feel more subject to social order than benefited;

- The alienated do not have a positive view of their position in society. They are subject to an order that does not produce goods that they deem to be of benefit. They are outsiders to the dominant groups whose values are foreign to them. They are not having the resources to deal significantly in the market. It is a world of negativity. Uncertain and vulnerable, they are open to a charismatic offer; they can swallow whole a vision of a 'promised land', they can follow a leader into war to achieve it.

The risk, in relation to each of the positions, is that responsible social action, within a hierarchy, in support of mutual purpose or as individuals in exchange, is subverted or avoided by behaviours that defect from established principles [of hierarchy, mutuality, or individualist exchange] to seek special advantage for 'self' or other interests.

Each of these processes and associated divergences and avoidances are evident in aid and its delivery and can be examined in turn.

Aid delivery

Neither aid administrators nor indeed those receiving aid are particularly exposed to the temptations of responsibility avoidance. There may of course be cases on either side of the transaction where avoidance is a matter of corruption. But the 'doing' of aid administration is a necessarily political

business (Mosse 2004) and because of its complexity, it is inevitably messy. Good intentions can become tarnished and compromised in the process.

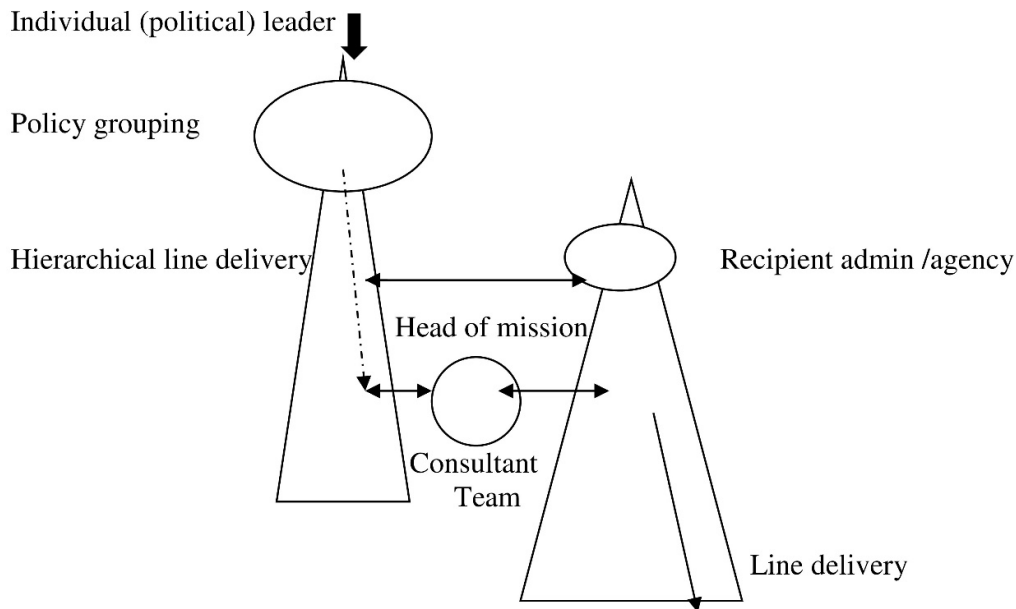
From the donor side, aid is usually presented as an act of generosity of one nation to another emphasising the needs of the latter, its current disadvantage, its vulnerability to contingent circumstance: calamities man-made or natural, or of other ties that bind (Eyben 2006). If the actual relationships of the aid process were defined at this level, they would be complicated enough (Molenaers 2012). Since, in politics, the case for aid is situated in amongst the case for trade or for other kinds of interaction or inaction or for other purposes altogether, all the arguments and the evidence concerning relationships and needs can be contested and will be contested. To 'keep it simple', the UK commitment to foreign aid is made in terms of volume: 0.7% of GDP. It is a sign of political courage that this commitment is maintained amidst a babble of dissent. It is also the case that any such figure is difficult to justify rationally, since it bears no relation to any objective interpretation of the need.

An examination of the processes of aid disbursement reveals a more complex picture. Does a gift remain a gift when it is wrapped in policy, packaged into deliverable programmes or projects, administered by bureaucrats, project managed by contracted agencies before being handled by similar bodies on the recipient side?

There are many responsibility-seeking actors within the system. A diagram in a 2004 article by the present author is reproduced here to identify individual, group and administrative patterns of responsibility within the delivery process³. The individual political leader; the minister has unique responsibility in the aid granting process. Group responsibility occurs in the policy grouping, the consultant team and in the recipient authority council or cabinet. Administrative rationality takes over in the hierarchy of the aid agency and in the recipient's line administration. Each context has characteristics that pull the aid delivery process in different directions, incurring frictions of different kinds.

³ 'How We Think They Think: Thought Styles in the Management of International Aid' Curtis (2004)

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[reproduced from Curtis 2004]

Working through the steps that make up the aid process; first comes the minister. This person, if skilled and personally committed will not only promote a vision of the purpose of aid but also rally support for it in a policy arena and negotiate the case for aid within the ruling party, the cabinet and the budget. The minister in question was Claire Short, an energetic and enormously committed Birmingham MP, who was always ready 'to fight her corner' in cabinet and on the floor of the house. There have been other appointees as ministers of overseas development who quite apparently had neither the vision nor conviction, of whom it might in fairness be said that they played the role while avoiding the political risks that go with being too strong an advocate of the evolved principles of aid.

The Minister

- *Responsible political choice*
 - *Advocacy within political arena*
 - *Requisite compromises with other interests*
 - *Choice of delivery mechanism [constrained by EU procurement regulations.]*
- *Avoidance*
 - *Tokenism*
 - *Obscurantism*
 - *Double speak*

Or commitment

- *Courage*
- *Inspiration*
- *Acting beyond the justifying ideology.....*

Note the either / or in avoidance or commitment.

The policy grouping

Next in the diagram of the policy grouping, Governments can allow a policy formulation process to be relatively, that is selectively, open and inclusive. Clare Short's initiative in establishing a new policy agenda involved several colleagues at the University of Birmingham. A senior DFID administrator called together field staff as well as HQ staff, as well as selected policy relevant academics and practitioners, setting aside status differences to ensure an open discussion. Aid policy took on the [then] new MDG priorities. This outcome certainly set the ministry and the wider 'aid industry' on a new path. Any element of avoidance would have been confined to intellectual doubts by some in the trade, who sustained different understandings as to what makes 'development' happens. It could also be said that the new group-think did not extend to answer questions as to 'how to do' MDG delivery.

After any such event, policy passes to DFID line administration for implementation. There, vision has to be turned into something deliverable within an administrative framework and discipline.

Donor administration

Public administration necessarily has some Weberian characteristics. Hat stands as signifiers of rank within the organisation may have disappeared, informality of dress and address has crept in, but nevertheless, there is seldom any doubt as to who is senior to who and what the consequences are for the business in hand. Furthermore, work schedules, budget disciplines and audit processes remain the backbone of accountable administration. Expectations of individual officers are tied to the process by performance monitoring in which senior officers set their expectations of junior officer work outcomes. Through such a regime annual goals and allocations determined in London are turned into 'things that must be done' in the line elements of DFID and in the DFID country offices in beneficiary lands.

If this were a straightforward process, there could be no problem with these top-down administrative norms and processes. A deliverable can be delivered. If the 'things that must be done' are of known quantity and value their achievement can be registered against a performance chart. But many of the 'things that must be done' that are deemed to be of value by donors or beneficiaries are not deliverables in this sense. For instance, a DFID Governance Adviser in Bangladesh was commissioned to 'influence policy'. She had no means of even meeting the relevant Secretary to Government; until, in a project context, some inter-mediation was engineered by the Bangladeshi Project Director and the UK Team Leader, both going beyond specified project terms of reference [ToRs] to facilitate the exchange.

In formal terms, what we have is:

- *Plan rational delivery process*
- *Hierarchical, budgeted, quantified allocations requiring compliance*
 - *Compliance is, in some degree, irksome, requiring subordination*
 - *Subordination is met with*
 - *tokenism*
 - *Work to rule*
 - *Comply with the letter, avoid the spirit*
 - *Meet the measure, not the intention*

OR

- *'Beyond the call of duty' commitment, willingness to forge new relationships or to feed-back critical observations and comments⁴*

The contractor

The contractor is the agent or person in the middle. This person or team is commissioned to deliver what the donor has had designed and the recipient, perhaps with elements of participation, has accepted to be the goal, purpose, objectives and activities of the aid assignment. The party in the middle can be subject to pressures from either side of the donor – recipient equation. The consultant team will take it upon themselves to build good relationships with their counterparts. There will be some scope for negotiating differences in perceptions and working towards common understandings of the nature of the tasks that must be undertaken to fulfil the contract. But the funding body is the principal and the innumerable reports that a consultant finds him/herself writing are aimed primarily at the donor as principal. Insofar as the agent is a tied person, the contractual position can be summarised formally as follows;

- *Bound by a classical contract*
 - *with specified Log Frame type goal, objectives, outcomes, inputs*
 - *Performance reporting and monitoring against deliverables / outcomes*
 - *Accountability to donor as principal*
 - *Avoidance*
 - *Token compliance*
 - *Meet the measure, avoid the purpose*
- *Personal commitment; giving beyond the contract*

The recipient agency

So how may it be anticipated that a recipient agency is likely to respond to an aid package delivered through such a process? Here conjecture is supplemented by some of the present author's memories from the field. If

⁴ As evidenced, from personal experience, by Roz Eyben in an article at that time (Eyben 2006)

this could be supplemented by research some questions concerning potential outcomes are as follows;

- Has the recipient been involved in the [moral] process of defining purpose and ...objectives and ...methods?
 - If not, expect; ‘what’s in it for us?’
[remembered instance; senior officers looking for visits to Britain as an adjunct to a training programme]
- Does the process respect uniqueness of circumstance and allow for adaptation or change of direction in implementation?
 - If not, expect; token compliance; take benefits - avoid costs responses
[remembered instance; a project component that assumed the virtue in privatisation of a training academy – which was not legally possible - accepted for the anticipated value in other elements of the program.]
- Who assesses outcomes?
 - If donor driven, expect limited ‘buy-in’ or policy commitment
[remembered instance; externally led evaluation of civil service training and development project accepted on the grounds that the donor had a larger project of the same ilk in mind that would, on balance, bring fringe benefits if not systemic reform.]

Throw in the Gift

In the above *summaries* about the minister, the line administration and the contractor the bottom line is about COMMITMENT. Commitment in each case is about overcoming responsibility avoidance temptations and sticking to social PURPOSE. In each case this entails a willingness of the individuals to GIVE beyond the contractual obligation.

Many people in public service or in other roles in ‘development’ come to their jobs out of interest with a degree of moral commitment for bettering the lives of other people whom they see as disadvantaged. Such people are often more interested in doing a good job than they are in the status positions or contractual conditions under which they are expected to work. It is equally the case that key individuals in aid recipient agencies can be found whose initial commitment will see them through the inevitable frictions and disappointments of inter-agency working. If such commitment is seen as beyond contractual obligation, then it is something extra; a voluntary contribution in the interest of good relationships; a mini-gift perhaps; if it is necessary to put a label on it. In common-sensical terms this is a matter of ‘give and take’; without which organisations of any kind do not work (Kramer et al 1992)

Conclusion

The GIFT, it has been shown, is not explicable in terms of economic or administrative rationality and can be contradictory – a matter of corruption even – but contains the possibility of being socially creative. Whether it is the one or the other depends on the moral intention of the giver, the responsiveness of the receiver and the circumstances in which both find

themselves. A gift is not routine; if it becomes so it becomes an administrative allocation. The gift can be a gesture that intends to make a change; perhaps from a 'bad' social relationship into a potential friendship. In the above analysis, the minister who can think and act beyond the expectation of authority can inspire the policy makers. The bureaucrat on either side who breaks out of hierarchical sterility can give scope to program implementers to shape resources and relationships creatively (Eyben 2006). The present author's personal memories as a consultant team leader in the two different projects in Bangladesh can add to this picture. Day to day management of a project must follow the requirements specified in the Terms of Reference or the Logical Framework document. Such documents are seldom adequate in specifying what needs to be done to achieve the overall purpose of the project. Sharing relationships that are outside formal roles create opportunities that go beyond the formal requirements of project documents. A contracted counterpart, The Project Director, became an information sharing, value sharing, risk sharing friend. The Project Director had been prepared to take personal responsibilities for project resources when the wheels of the administration ground too slowly to make progress. As stated above, the Team Leader and Project Director together, going beyond specified roles and responsibilities, were able to bridge the communication gap between donor and recipient over new project opportunities. These and other instances illustrate a point well known to practitioners of administration, that administrative rules are more about stopping departures from intended courses of action than enabling them to happen. A gift sharing friendship can help a project along. Gift sharing can also lead to corruption. Outcomes depend upon the commitment of the individuals involved to the public purposes being pursued.

At intergovernmental level, the aid relationship can accentuate inequality and entrench the hierarchical differentiation between giver and receiver. Bourdieu, following Sahlins, supported again by Hattori (2001), sees aid relationships as symbolic domination. Insofar as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the following Accra Agenda have been glossed by the donor community into an 'agreement' on the priority of the terms and conditions of neo-liberal development, it may well be the case that aid recipients do see today's aid as a continuing form of domination. But the neo-liberal agenda is not without its critics on both sides of the equation. For instance, an alternative agenda is emerging that addresses the negative consequences of globalisation based upon fossil fuels. Interdependency between wealthier and poorer countries becomes increasingly apparent in this scenario. The certainties of power, in such a case, become uncertainties. In an uncertain world, the donor and recipient both need friends who can call upon the creative potential of the gift.

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Appendix 1

Paris Declaration in Aid effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action

The Paris Declaration (2005) is a practical, action-oriented roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It gives a series of specific implementation measures and establishes a monitoring system to assess progress and ensure that donors and recipients hold each other accountable for their commitments. The Paris Declaration outlines the following five fundamental principles for making aid more effective:

1. **Ownership:** *Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.*
2. **Alignment:** *Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.*
3. **Harmonisation:** *Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.*
4. **Results:** *Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured.*
5. **Mutual accountability:** *Donors and partners are accountable for development results.*

Designed to strengthen and deepen implementation of the Paris Declaration, the **Accra Agenda for Action** (AAA, 2008) takes stock of progress and sets the agenda for accelerated advancement towards the Paris targets. It proposes the following four main areas for improvement:

Ownership: *Countries have more say over their development processes through wider participation in development policy formulation, stronger leadership on aid co-ordination and more use of country systems for aid*

delivery.

Inclusive partnerships: *All partners - including donors in the OECD Development Assistance Committee and developing countries, as well as other donors, foundations and civil society - participate fully.*

Delivering results: *Aid is focused on real and measurable impact on development.*

Capacity development - to build the ability of countries to manage their own future - also lies at the heart of the AAA

[<http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm>]