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Post-wristband Blues: the Mixed Fortunes of UK Development Campaigning under austerity and the Conservatives.

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Post-wristband Blues: the Mixed Fortunes of UK Development Campaigning under austerity and the Conservatives.

INTRODUCTION

2005 witnessed the rolling out of the Make Poverty History development campaign coalition. The general, but not unanimous, view was that Make Poverty History (MPH) made tangible headway on many of its demands. Member NGOs generally declared the campaign a success, and the celebrity advocates that grabbed media attention spoke about historic victories. Seen in retrospect, this moment of success seems rather bathetic, the last great hurrah of a campaign logic that subsequently fell into abeyance. From 2006 onwards, individual campaign organisations each made a quieter and less celebratory post-mortem of the 2005 moment before returning to organisation-specific campaigning.

There was a general understanding that large collaborative campaigns were unlikely to happen again and that some damage to its prospects had been wrought by the Make Poverty History campaign. As a result of economic recession from 2008, the meta-narrative of British politics shifted to crisis and austerity. In 2010, New Labour was replaced by a coalition government of Conservative and Liberal Democrat, in which the latter were dominant. This election outcome removed a key institutional relationship that development campaigners had come to rely on: a ruling party that shared many of the development norms of the campaign organisations themselves. Nevertheless, in 2013, a major national development campaign coalition was once again devised: the Enough Food If campaign (EFIF). This article explores the motivations and strategies that underpinned the construction of a campaign coalition in such adverse circumstances. The first section sets out the difficult legacy left by Make Poverty History before proceeding in the second section to consider the changed environment within which EFIF emerged. The third section looks at EFIF in some detail, paying particular attention to the ways in which it faced both the MPH legacy and the new political environment. The fourth section sets out an argument that the major logic of the campaign was to lock in a success narrative from beginning to end, over and above other strategic campaign aims, and in this sense to shake off the post-wristband blues of its time. Finally, the article concludes.

THE ROAD TO 2015

The Make Poverty History effect

Make Poverty History was, in a sense, the best of times and the worst of times for development campaigning. Its most convincing success was its ability to mobilise some level of awareness and engagement from large numbers of people. Reportedly, as many as eight million white wristbands were worn. The support base of the coalition expanded massively, a base that was also designed to give supporters an opportunity to ‘migrate’ into a specific campaign organisation. The demonstrations around the Gleneagles G8 Summit and media impact of the Live 8 concerts generated moments of media saturation in which it was difficult for anyone to avoid...
the campaign. The level of cultural endorsement from celebrities, media, and politicians was exceptional.

These features might be considered as intrinsic victories, ones that relate to the aims of campaigning itself: public mobilisation, the growth of campaign organisations, the legitimisation of their purposes. One can also argue that the campaign’s extrinsic purposes were achieved to a considerable degree. That is, the policy objectives of the campaign were largely met. The G8 Summit led to commitments to aid and debt reduction which, for some campaign coalition members, demonstrated the success of MPH. Within the campaign, people had different expectations of what ‘success’ might mean, but many – especially from the larger organisations – considered the outcomes to be positive, at least in regards to aid and debt. The dominant metaphor at the time was that a mountain had successfully been climbed but that this revealed other peaks in the near distance.

However, this metaphor was itself a symptom of the fact that MPH was not an absolute success. The G8 would not make poverty history in any tangible sense. The campaign messages throughout 2004-5 relayed a sense of epochal temporality: making history by making poverty history; a momentous year in which the direction of the future of poverty was to be decided by ‘eight men in a room’. The campaign logic was that this was a ‘now or never’ moment. The fact that, especially after July, the campaign presented to the public a victory that would not make poverty history but rather offer a significant step forward over the next few years if the G8 leaders honoured their commitments which were a ‘good enough’ success rather than an historic victory generated significant anxiety within the coalition in terms of expectation management and the extent to which the G8 had the political will to fulfil its commitments as the years passed.

Furthermore, for some coalition members, the commitments were not worth celebrating; a ‘whisper’ rather than a ‘roar’ (Abugre 2005). The commitments of the G8 were seen as not equal to the task of mass poverty reduction, and the commitments that were made did not modify prevailing neoliberal development practices and ideologies. As the campaign progressed towards the G8, some coalition members had become so concerned about the closeness of the campaign to New Labour that they left the coalition, judging that both the politics of the campaign and the ability of New Labour to use it to boost their own legitimacy made it effectively morally and politically bankrupt (Hodkinson 2005). Reports seeped out as the year went on of considerable disagreement within the coalition.

As a result, as the dust settled on a campaign that ostensibly lasted a year but was all but over by August, the public celebration of ‘mission accomplished’ dissolved into a rather complicated, diffuse, and dour ratcheting down of the coalition as each member reflected on the pros and cons of the endeavour and moved back into their own silos with both positive and negative lessons from the coalition.

From 2005 to 2010, development NGOs maintained low-level networking and information sharing, mainly through BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development), the organisational hub for development NGOs. The NGOs continued to work within a context that was still underpinned by a positive relationship between the larger NGOs and the New Labour government. In other words, the fall-out of MPH was in
some degree calibrated by a government that remained positively-disposed to the mainstream development campaigning project. As a result, it was relatively easy for large NGOs to transition out of MPH. Indeed, some took aspects of MPH’s imagery and discourse into their own unilateral campaigns and maintained the kinds of working relations with government that were at the heart of MPH. This kind of transition was enjoyed mainly by the large NGOs that led the campaign, especially Oxfam, Christian Aid, Action Aid, CAFOD and Save the Children UK. A second distinct group (notably War on Want and World Development Movement, now Global Justice Now) spent this time moving into a more explicitly ‘social movement’ frame which was considerably more cynical about New Labour.

In retrospect, the five years after 2005 look like the six years before 2005. There was a ruling party with an ideology that was sympathetic to the core norms of the development campaign NGO community; there was a well-institutionalised and resourced NGO sector in which each organisation had its membership, institutional specificities, and networks; there were a series of organisation-specific campaign issues that generated advocacy and fund raising in specific development areas (Porteous 2008:12, 19).

**International development, NGOs and New Labour**

New Labour’s relationship with the development campaign community defines this period. The Labour party had campaign, social, and ideological roots in internationalism and Third Worldism (Howe 1993). This is evident in its Fabian politics, its connections with anti-apartheid (Vickers 2011, Bush 1999: 248 et seq.), its links with labour unions that had solidarity connections with post-colonial unions and movements, and with socially-progressive church organisations. From 1997, New Labour condensed these variegated developmentalist associations into a strong normative discourse around ethics and virtue in international relations and development (Gallagher 2011); one component of New Labour’s international development ethics was partnerships with development NGOs.

New Labour understood international development in what might be broadly glossed as progressively liberal. Good governance, development partnership, capabilities approaches, civil society and NGOs, and a socially-progressive market-based economy were the pivots of New Labour’s vision of a development future. The UK’s development NGOs fitted well into this vision as providers of resources, good development partners, and friends of civil society. Both Government and NGOs shared a strong desire to galvanise a pro-development constituency within the British public (Biccum 2007, Manzo 2006). New Labour channelled significant amounts of official development assistance through selected NGOs. It invested in both research and public relations to promote the construction of a form of knowledge based in a revived, ethical, and effective aid project in which UK NGOs played a pivotal role. The creation and political focus on DFID embodied New Labour’s developmental intentions. From its origins, DFID took on something of a campaign role itself: its foundational statement of intent *Building Support for Development*, could easily have been on a major campaign NGO’s website. Arch celebrity campaigner Bono spoke at New Labour’s 2004 party conference; Bob
Geldof was asked by Blair to act as a celebrity-advocate for the Africa Commission (Street 2012).

This comity between development NGOs and New Labour was the political context within which the rise and fall of MPH was managed, and it came to an end in 2010. In the next section, we will map out the salient political changes that took place after 2010. We present these changes as a context within which another campaign coalition emerged in 2013. Bearing in mind how inauspicious the circumstances were for a post-MPH campaign coalition, we need to explore the features of the campaign not only on their own terms but also as a response to a generally rather depressing state of affairs for international development campaigning. Seen in this light, the Enough Food If campaign is best understood as an attempt to re-define a *modus operandi* and *vivendi* for development NGOs in a context significantly transformed from that of the previous thirteen years.

NEW GOVERNMENT

It is important to start with a note of moderation. It is not the case that the coming to power of the Coalition government or indeed the subsequent Conservative government represented any kind of totalising counter-revolution in development policy. Indeed, for many analysts on the Left, the short history of Blair’s New Labour and David Cameron’s Conservatism was one of substantial convergence. Both in terms of public image, leadership style, and substantive areas of policy strategy, New Labour and Conservative policy shared a great deal.

New Labour reconciled itself to a non-socialist and broadly liberal policy agenda, based in a faith that private business and socially-beneficial competition would address the core concerns of the party: inequality and poverty (Porteous 2008). Within this intellectual framing, international aid was largely articulated within a neoliberal framework. One could see this in the Africa Commission Report (2005), a report which fed into the Government’s preparations for the G8 and engagement with MPH (Brown 2006). DFID also embraced a vision of development through support for competitive market-based growth and the facilitating of a positive role for transnational corporations and unconstrained markets: making globalisation work for the poor (Cammack 2001).

The Conservative party publically affirmed that it would commit to the 0.7% GNP aid target which was previously a key aspiration of New Labour. Making this commitment publically allowed the Tories a fairly cheap means of brand decontamination (Heppell and Lightfoot 2012), emerging as it was from a public image of sleaze and self-interest. Cameron’s Big Society, ‘golden thread’ in development, and quality of life conceptual orientations also fed into a development vision that was moderately distinct but substantially similar to New Labour’s. Both party’s orientations regarding international development were fundamentally based in a vision of good governance, open economies, competitive markets, and a faith that liberal political sociability would spread unproblematically into poor societies if all of the former components were in place. The two parties offered different points of emphasis and articulation within a substantially shared development vision.
Thus, there was no great shift in international development thinking by the Coalition or Conservative governments. But, this did not mean that nothing changed. In the first place, campaign organisations were now faced with a political party that had been culturally and ideologically distant from it. Few Conservative MPs considered international development as a major policy issue and, compared with New Labour, there was a weaker pro-aid constituency. More broadly the Conservative party in Parliament and amongst its membership were ideologically hostile to international development campaigning values, which had been constructed out of a Fabian, socialist, and social-democratic Christian bundle of values. More practically, development NGOs simply did not have good advocacy networks with Conservative MPs. All of the celebrity advocates taken up by campaign NGOs were broadly on the left and culturally anti-Tory. The NGOs’ policy positions on things like trade, climate change, and transnationals were clearly more distant from Tory views than they were under New Labour for all of the convergence at the heart of policy. This new environment was uncertain and potentially adversarial.

Secondly, in some ways, the Conservatives *have* shifted international development strategy, although this has not been as publicised as perhaps it should be. The core shift has been away from good governance and partnerships with aid recipient states which was at the very heart of New Labour’s strategy. In its place there is a far stronger focus on private companies as key development partners (Mawdsley 2015). The Conservative government has consolidated an aid model based in the contracting of private companies. This was present during the New Labour administration (Taylor 2012: 454), but there is also a more clear strategic orientation by the Conservatives to present private companies as ‘developmental’. And, large amounts of DFID expenditure go on private company services. Beyond the actual payments to contracted private enterprises, aid strategy has, in a sense, been corporatised in that the kinds of claimed knowledge and skills that private companies have are perceived as part of the international aid project itself. One can see this most clearly in the new green revolution for Africa (AGRA) (Kaarhus 2011). One can also see it in the providing of technological and infrastructural services by large transnationals. Discrete projects to promote microfinance, communications technology connectivity, the introduction of new seeds, and training all involve private corporations as service providers, knowledge holders, and aid recipients. The Conservative approach to development was/is more concertedly ‘corporate’ in that business is seen as a *direct* agent for the promotion of development, not just a source of capital which, according to most economic models (and subject to the right policy environment), generate developmental effects. We shall come back to this strategic reorientation later more specifically in regards to EFIF’s concern with hunger and malnutrition.

It seems sensible to conclude that the direction of movement under the Tories was/is concertedly towards a model of funding private companies directly to do development work and in the process celebrating this sector as the driver of change. Inasmuch as this is the case, it poses a challenge to NGOs who had customarily focussed around the activities of NGO, civil society, and partner government initiatives. This was the core dispensation throughout the thirteen years of New
Labour. From 2010, campaign NGOs were faced with a sectoral context defined by a post-MPH legacy and a new and ostensibly less amenable government.

And, of course, the shift in the British party system roughly overlapped with the global economic crisis. This fed into the NGO sector in a way familiar to other economic crisis moments previously: it generated a concern that fiscal austerity would impact upon the aid budget, that rising unemployment and stagnant disposable incomes would reduce charitable donations, and that the general public mood would shift against aid because of a concern for the poor ‘at home’. The rise of UKIP was explicitly based in arguments about massively reducing or abolishing aid, laced with barely-disguised racism.

It was this context within which Cameron’s explicit endorsement of the 0.7% figure and declaration of ‘One World’ Conservatism opened the door very slightly to a new working relation between international development NGOs and the government. Against some currents within his own party and somewhat against the austerity narrative his party enthusiastically embraced in most areas, Cameron’s leadership identified overseas development assistance as a diagnostic of its social conscience. This rather marginal and protean development within the Tories is vital to understanding the emergence of EFIF.

ENOUGH FOOD IF

A window of opportunity

Campaign coalitions offer an opportunity to understand the nature of campaigning in a way that is especially revealing. Most obviously, one can explore the dynamics of relations between individual campaign organisations because they are having to work together formally as part of a single political project. Secondly, the campaign coalition itself requires co-ordination, all manner of dialogue, the construction of a shared discourse, and the establishing of an institution that manages, leads, and co-ordinates the efforts of individual NGOs. Thirdly, campaign coalitions’ core purpose is to create a high-publicity action that strongly and publically engages with government or other official development agencies. As such, campaign coalitions offer a revealing way to explore the place of individual development campaigns within a broader British polity and public space. It is in this light that we shall explore the Enough Food If campaign of 2013. EFIF emerged shortly after the changes outlined in the previous section, a fact that raises key questions concerning the ability of development NGOs to negotiate a terrain defined by a sense that something similar to MPH was unlikely to happen again and that the relatively amenable political environment of New Labour had been replaced by something more problematic.

The Enough Food If campaign became a coalition of over 200 NGOs, oriented around issues of global hunger and malnutrition. In 2012, David Cameron hosted a post-Olympics Hunger Summit in 2012, a ‘summit’ that was largely a celebrity/sportsperson-endorsed expression of concern about global hunger, claiming that this would be a major international issue for the Government leading
into its hosting of the G8 the subsequent year. ONE and Save the Children attended and the summit spoke warmly about Cameron’s commitment. The EFIF coalition identified this moment as the ‘open door’ through which Britain’s development NGOs might find a revived role in the new political environment. This marked an opportunity for major development campaign NGOs: a statement of government openness to campaigning and a high-profile event in which ‘hunger’ would be a prominent focus.

The large development NGOs with strong lobbying abilities have always sought the ear of politicians. This was at the heart of MPH. It was also the case that these NGOs sought an audience with Gordon Brown (and him with them) when he became Prime Minister; and it was also the case when the Conservative Party came to power. The purpose of these informal contacts was to secure a certain common ground between the Government’s agenda for the G8 and the kinds of campaign goals that the development NGO sector might advocate. There is a symbiosis here in which a ruling party enjoys a ‘halo effect’ from publically supporting aspects of development NGOs’ campaigns and NGOs can make claims to success based in expectations that some of their ‘asks’ are informally assured as amenable to the government.

Thus, it seems reasonable to identify the beginnings of the coalition in 2012 when some NGOs were speaking with each other informally and also in communication with the government, all around the notion of hunger which had been identified as a strong starting position for ‘detoxifying’ the Conservative Party. A broad agenda that would reflect a development coalition’s common interests and also have a reasonable chance of being supported in part by the UK government could serve as a starting point for coalition building in earnest.

In October 2012, a BOND Annual General Meeting was held in which plans for a coalition around food and hunger to focus on the G8 were mooted. At this point, a group of prominent and relatively radical NGOs chose to remove themselves from the coalition, expressing concerns about the focus on hunger and the apparent lack of adversarialism concerning the Conservative-dominated government (interviews War on Want, Jubilee Debt Coalition).

Finding common cause

From November 2012 onwards, EFIF Assembly meetings rolled out a series of actions to focus mainly on the UK-hosted G8 in June 2013. Member NGOs reported on their own actions, and the Organising Committee (OC) members shared information about the broader strategy for the UK budget and the G8 ‘moments’. A set of four core themes related to hunger were set out, partly as the outcome of talks with Cameron, partly as important and inclusive campaign themes.

The EFIF campaign was publically launched at Somerset House, London, on the 23rd January 2013. The event was focused on generating media attention. Its main impact was through a high production value three dimensional film, beamed onto the facade of the House. The main speaker in the film was Bill Gates. The invitees were from EFIF campaign members, some celebrities, and people from the media. The event itself made no attempt to convey the demands of the campaign, develop
an engagement with a broader public, or identify a core problem that needed addressing beyond ‘hunger’ as a condition.

In March, EFIF carried out a series of actions or ‘stunts’ to publicise this ‘ask’, mainly focussed around an intense tweet and email operation focussed on Chancellor George Osborne, an ‘elephant in the room’ image campaign, and a series of George Osborne ‘rush mobs’ in which campaigners wearing Osborne masks turned up in public places for photo opportunities. As a result, In April, the coalition claimed a success in securing a commitment to achieving 0.7% aid expenditure. However, because the Government did not commit to include the magic 0.7% as legislation for the Queen’s speech and because this commitment had been supported by Cameron repeatedly before the Budget, perceptions of a campaign success were muted. The commitment to 0.7% and a general increase in DFID expenditure had been ongoing since 2010. Nevertheless, in the April meeting, it was presented as a campaign success.

After April, EFIF focused on the G8 meeting to be hosted by the British government. The G8 ‘moment’ was conceptualised as a week-long period, commencing with a large public assembly which aimed to coincide with Cameron’s hosting of a Nutrition for Growth pre-summit meeting. Following on from that date, smaller publicity events would keep public attention until a smaller rally took place on the 15th in Enniskillen to coincide with the G8 meeting. Between April and June, EFIF propounded its four demands to be addressed by the G8. These were: a commitment to 0.7% of GNP dedicated to official development assistance; a move to ensure international companies pay ‘fair’ levels of tax in poor countries; a halt to ‘land grabbing’ in poor countries; transparency in development aid and practice. It is striking how (with the exception of land grabbing) these demands closely mirror the Conservative Party’s own development strategy, embedded in the golden thread viii notion mentioned earlier, but also Cameron’s more recent ‘three Ts’ of transparency, tax, and trade which had each become core parts of EFIF demands.

Transparency and tax were foregrounded by the Conservative party at a time when Cameron was still centrally concerned to introduce a more socially-minded image to his party. This was a period when public attitudes towards government and big business were relatively negative. There was not only concern about the fraud and collusion by banks in the aftermath of the financial crisis and associated rescue packages; this was also a period in which large companies like Amazon, Google and Starbucks were revealed to be paying no or extremely little tax to the British government. The Tory focus on tax and transparency and its connection to a morally-positive international development campaign addressed the bad publicity emanating from tax evasion within big business.

The Big If

The London ‘Big If’ rally took place on 8th June. Attendees were invited to plant a flower-windmill in a way that resembled a commemoration of a single death. A pathway from this field to a stage with band and film clips brought people into the main event. Geographically removed from the G8 meeting which was to take place a week later, the experience of the rally was complex: a mixture of expressions of
concern or lamentation about hunger; sociability; spectacle; and in an indirect way an address to next week’s meetings in Lough Erne. There was a sizable attendance from people who were already members of development NGOs: in a survey carried out by XXXX, 67 per cent of respondents identified as members of development organisations. ix

The assembly at Hyde Park coincided with Cameron’s hosting of a Nutrition for Growth Summit which had an overlapping agenda, based in a project to address hunger through business and science. This was the epitome of the Conservatives’ DFID vision. Cameron’s summit laid heavy emphasis on the role of corporate technologies – this was the essence of the meaning of ‘business and science’. This meeting, held at Unilever House, was not mentioned throughout the day, although Bill Gates, the major video speaker, propounded his usual messages about the benefits of technology and big business. x On the 7th June EFIF staged a hand-in at Number 10 of empty plates by schoolchildren with ‘messages for leaders’ written on them which was aimed at the Nutrition for Growth summit. xi

The Lough Erne G8 Declaration starts: ‘Private enterprise drives growth, reduces poverty, and creates jobs and prosperity for people around the world.’ It then proceeds to itemise an agenda that precisely overlaps with the Conservative international development world-vision. The media generally reported on the G8 outcomes with an exclusive focus on Cameron, adding in some imagery of EFIF visual stunts of G8 leaders as chefs, or anonymous fat cats in a tax haven. xii The G8 did not commit to clear and concrete measures to ensure transparency in tax reporting and to prevent tax evasion, something that authoritative experts stated clearly and critically. Nevertheless, the EFIF spokesperson spoke of a ‘step in the right direction’ and the ‘right ambition’. xiii

The lose and generalised connection between the EFIF assembly and the G8 made it difficult to discern in any concrete way the effects of the EFIF campaign on the G8, especially in light of the closeness of the agenda of EFIF to Cameron’s own. Although EFIF campaign managers were pleased with the profile afforded to the campaign in the media, the content itself is less reassuring, based as it was on the association of campaign images with a generally government-focused and uncritical reportage on what were fairly moderate and vague commitments.

A final wrap-up meeting was held in July. The main content of that meeting was an enthusiastically-delivered general assessment of the campaign by the Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Working Group which awarded gold, silver and bronze to general areas of the campaign’s aims. This was delivered in a very positive fashion but was not accompanied by any organised critical reflection. In place of this, attendees were invited to write on post-its and pin them to boards under different themes. The exact purposes of this exercise was not clear. The impression – at least for this attendee – was that the primary purpose was to ensure positive feelings about the campaign. The person reporting to the meeting on the overall performance of the camping declared ‘we got every single thing!’ xiv It is worth bearing in mind that this meeting was of coalition members only; it was not ‘outward facing’ and did not require ‘spin’ for the purposes of messaging and brand. In this context, it seemed clear that the meeting was driven strongly by a therapeutic
sense of ensuring positive closure to the campaign after the difficulties that had defined the period from 2006 to 2013.

Throughout the campaign, EFIF’s policy aims were flexible and broad. They revolved around vague causal premises. There was no clear idea of how the campaign or indeed the G8 might arrest ‘land grabbing’. An emphasis on biofuels early on was de-emphasised. The issue of tax reform rose in importance, in spite of an opaque causation with hunger and malnutrition which seemed to boil down to an expectation – naïve by any analytical standards – that increased tax revenues from FDI would create larger resource for investment in agriculture. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on smallholder farming and local technological change that came from early meetings and the small member organisations of the campaign was lost. Through the Tories and the G8, the ‘solving hunger through business and science’ and new Green Revolution corporate-state project garnered highly publicised commitments of resource.

The fact that the campaign took care to establish campaign aims which did not require specific targets of achievement connected to metrics or discrete policies does not only raise questions about the way one might evaluate campaign success; it also opens up a deeper analytical question about how success and failure are constructed. In essence, EFIF was set up not to fail. The demands it made were sufficiently broad and integrated into Government initiatives as to make it possible to put a positive spin on practically any outcome from the G8 in terms of commitments to address hunger and malnutrition. The breadth, generality, and creeping moderation of EFIF’s demands necessarily left space for those who wished it to declare success. This might be considered not so much as a ‘failure’ of the campaign to get certain things achieved, but rather as a strategy elaborated within the specific conditions of the time. We will now explore other ways in which this was so.

CONSTRUCTING SUCCESS

Success for EFIF was framed in a specific way. The framing of success was not strongly oriented towards the policy achievements and resource commitments emanating from the campaign’s pressure on the G8 which, we have argued, was difficult to discern. Success in terms of G8 action was, at best, broadly implied, partial or affirmed rather than demonstrated. The concrete outcomes of the campaign were only positive in the sense of possibly leading to action by G8 states in areas that had already been identified by the British government as possible areas for action. The G8 (which saw global hunger as one issue amongst others) did not make strong clear commitments for action in any case. Since 2013, it is fair to say that those who drove the EFIF campaign have not followed up or campaigned to ensure that the areas of success have been realised. It is also very obvious that, to date, little has been achieved in reducing mass hunger and malnutrition and what success has been achieved can hardly be accounted for by G8 agency.

But there was very positive affect in the wrap-up meeting which put a kind of seal on a campaign that had worked well enough to establish a kind of besieged modus operandi for coalition campaigning: strategically cautious, aware of the difficulties of
coalition building, and in some sense therapeutic for an NGO sector that was looking for a sense of renewal in hard times. Principally this message was directed towards those within the coalition itself. Although entirely subjective, this observer was struck by how much time and energy was spent in assembly meetings talking up the project itself in ways that seemed to border on motivational speaking.

Enough Food IF did not achieve a brand or legacy in the way that Band Aid, Jubilee 2000, or Make Poverty History did. Even the most sympathetic reading would not claim that EFIF had a big impact on British government development practice. It did not become part of Britain’s ‘ribbon culture’ (Moore 2010).

Although there was broad and positive media coverage of the campaign’s ‘event’ high spots, there was less media reporting of mission accomplished or success. There was no high profile media event to relate the campaign’s successes to the general public. The campaign coalition’s main success comes from its achievements in organising a campaign coalition, establishing a relationship with government, and re-energising its existing members during a politically depressing period. This kind of success derived from strategic decisions made by the coalition’s managers.

The EFIF campaign: short and sweet?

The campaign itself was effectively six months long. Aware of how MPH had tailed off after the G8 and that coalition member commitment had waned, EFIF focused on the G8 summit in June and then held a wrap-up meeting for coalition members in July. As noted, the wrap-up meeting was overlain with a ‘success’ message which was not strongly evidenced and left no space for clear critical reflection. There was no ‘next steps’ moment either, although an evaluation consultancy was commissioned (Tibbett and Stalker 2014).

The first campaign meeting was in camera. Some campaign organisations attended this first meeting and then left the coalition on the grounds that it reproduced the moderate and (in their view) apolitical strategy that came to dominate MPH. In this sense EFIF had, by its first meeting open to all organisations, defined itself around the ‘BOAG’ NGOs and without the larger ‘radical’ NGOs. This had the effect of reducing the political tensions that had for a time pervaded Make Poverty History.

The first open general assembly of EFIF (16th November 2012) commenced with some scene-setting addresses from those in the coordination team. There was a strong affective content in these addresses that aimed to produce an affirmative and encompassing feeling in the venue. One key speaker related how good it felt to be back together again, implicitly referencing the sense of break-up left by MPH. Even in this first general meeting, there was a strong framing of the campaign around what one speaker called ‘ending well’ and ‘celebrating’. This is, of course, entirely understandable at the start of a project to build a coalition. But, it was also noteworthy that there was no sense of contention (Tarrow 2005), uncertainty, struggle, or opposition upon which a mobilisation might be constructed. One representative who asked if hunger and malnutrition could be meaningfully addressed in the absence of demands to end the ‘war on terror’ was pointedly excluded, although the points he made were quite reasonable.
Beyond the ‘0.7’, was no specific target setting, identification of a basket of specific policy ‘asks’ from G8 governments, or clear identification of problem of hunger. The four themes of investment, land, tax, and transparency were announced as the orientations of EFIF. As the assembly meetings proceeded and campaign material and activity emerged, it was clear that the evocations of the campaign were designed not to rely on specific, ambitious, but realistic targets in the way that MPH and Jubilee 2000 had been. Rather, these themes served as the aspirational focus for the campaign, each framed with a more or less specific cause and effect. Stop land grabbing to protect smallholders, invest and give aid to improve agricultural productivity, reduce tax avoidance to improve revenues that could be invested in agriculture, and make ‘governments and investors to be honest and open about the deals they make in the poorest countries that stop people getting enough food’.

These themes are presented with very vague causations, no specific demands and – especially in the case of the final theme – stretch a clear sense of cause and effect. Within assembly meetings, the coalition was theme-driven, not target-driven in terms of its demands. The bulk of meeting content was oriented towards the management of media (electronic and print) and public attitudes. As a result, the meetings were mainly concerned with the processes and progress of coalition building. The complex questions about campaign demands, and the causations behind hunger and malnutrition were not mooted.

The shortness and sweetness structured into the campaign makes sense from a post-2010 campaign recovery point-of-view; but as a way to deal with the massive and complex issue of hunger and malnutrition, it raises a very important issue. The campaign’s organisation and duration made it constitutively unable to address global malnutrition and hunger in any meaningful fashion. The core issues relating to hunger and malnutrition are at least as complex as those of international debt, apartheid, and slavery and in each of those campaign areas, coalitions endured for years and even generations. There is no amount of campaign success that can be compressed into a six-month period that would come close to addressing global hunger and malnutrition in any meaningful sense.

EFIF was a coalition that was sensitive to the plurality of its coalition members but, in the absence of the larger ‘radical’ NGOs, it worked through the larger and well-resourced mainstream development NGOs. EFIF was both inclusive, open-ended, not tied to any specific achievements, and de facto dominated by the large campaign organisations. It was designed in a strictly time-constrained fashion that ensured it did not collapse or lose energy. It worked well in generating a campaign coalition but far less so as a vehicle to identify clear targets and exacting actions attached to them.

Adjusting expectations

Ensuring success also required the construction of a strong policy and vision overlap with government. The absence of contentious or adversarial content in the campaign would make it highly likely that the campaign could be broadly positive about government actions and, as a result, narrate the campaign as having had a positive effect on government action.
During the first open assembly meeting – and repeated throughout subsequent meetings – a message was related that the Conservative government was amenable to EFIF and that there was a real window of opportunity for the campaign. In the words of the Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Working Group, Cameron was ‘saying some really good stuff.’ This framing effectively removed the notion of an adverse political environment from the campaign. One might suppose that NGO campaigns often tag onto larger and more ‘official’ and governmental initiatives (Hilton et al. 2013), but in this case the window of opportunity afforded by the moments from the Olympic ‘summit’ to the G8 meeting was narrow indeed and no explicit reflection on this fact or the dangers of attaching hope to a political party strongly wedded to neoliberal values can be found in any of the materials from the campaign or the discussions within the assembly meetings.

The major NGOs in BOND were meeting with senior members of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties as soon as possible after the election victory. In this period, Cameron’s strategy for the Tories was based in what were at the time judged to be relatively ‘liberal’ political ideas, revolving around wellbeing and the ‘big society’. The Conservatives were also well aware that a certain kind of presentation of international development had worked well for New Labour as a way to represent a political aesthetic of national grandeur and moral purpose. Positive signals about international development offered a fairly straightforward way to address the issue coined by now-Prime Minister Theresa May, of being perceived as the ‘nasty party’.

There was, in effect, a mutual desire by major campaign groups and the new coalition government, to find a cohabitation within which both could claim a moral virtue as progressive development actors, and an agenda was discovered to enable this comity. ‘Hunger’ was the venue within which this was achieved. David Cameron articulated his ‘golden threads’ of development: ‘stable government, lack of corruption, human rights, the rule of law, transparent information’. The campaign coalition interpreted this core directive within Cameron’s declared development vision as positive and fairly easy to work with. One can readily see how it maps quite extensively onto the four themes of EFIF. In none of the meetings I attended was Cameron’s golden thread notion articulated in a critical fashion, in spite of its obvious ideological and neoliberal facets.

Cameron generated a strong formulation of both problem and solution in regards to hunger that fulsomely fitted with a liberal and globalist Conservative worldview in which well-meaning transnational corporations, supported by governments and amenable scientists, would disseminate technologies, techniques, and financial mechanisms that would engineer peasant households into petty entrepreneurs able to upscale their own well-being. This agenda went under the rubric ‘solving malnutrition and hunger through business and science’. The ‘science’ part of this phrasing effectively meant corporately-owned technologies such as improved seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides.

EFIF reconciled itself to this vision. It invited Bill Gates to speak at its event and it did not make any strong critical statements of Cameron’s vision for solving hunger. EFIF ‘wished the leaders well’ in their meetings. Beyond the main stage performances, the main event was the planting of a field of ‘windmill’ flowers to represent the
number of children who died from malnutrition, an event that could hardly have been more apolitical.

As the G8 event approached, the campaign’s messages on hunger and malnutrition and the those of the Government came to overlap. Cameron’s explicitly pro-business, technocratic, and financialised model of change was devised within his government, did not change, and was announced as the agenda for his leadership of the G8. It was accompanied by a broad and open-ended EFIF coalition which was based on thematic overlaps with government, broad aspirations rather than demands, and a lack of critical positions on the Conservatives’ vision of development. These properties ensured that any outcomes from the G8 could feasibly look like success.

In sum, 2013 saw EFIF briefly generate an effective international development coalition in the teeth of inter-organisational trepidation and a broader political environment defined by austerity and a shift to the Right in UK governance. Inasmuch as one judges EFIF a success in managing a coalition that worked and did not generate a problematic legacy, one has also to understand its failure to make any kind of ‘historic’ progress in regards to hunger and malnutrition.

CONCLUSION: POST-WRISTBAND BLUES

The EFIF campaign can be understood as a response by development NGOs to a particularly challenging environment. In the teeth of a shift to the Right and a recession, NGOs set out a coalition that had as its primary aim establishing the beginnings of a modus vivendi in a new period. This did not translate a great deal into new, strong, and ambitious campaign demands. But, its success can be identified in its more internalised focus on making campaign coalitions based in a relationship with government possible. This explains why the organisation of the campaign was based in broad thematic aspirations that enjoyed a substantial overlap with Government agendas that were devised by-and-large independently from the development NGOs. It also explains why the campaign itself was highly time-constrained, generalised, and articulated in ways that did not expect specific outcome ‘wins’.

But, there is a downside to this. EFIF’s legacy is slender indeed. It’s public visibility was not sufficiently strong to create a ‘historic’ brand in the way that Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History did. In the midst of the moderate financial commitments of the G8 and the modality through which the ‘hunger issue’ is addressed by the corporate-state nexus EFIF did not collate a clear set of policies, demands, or political values to make a distinct contribution. The most obvious way in which they could have done this would have been through some evocation of the notion of ‘food sovereignty’, but this term was closely associated with the more radical campaign NGOs who removed themselves from the campaign. Food sovereignty would also have generated clear light between the campaign coalition and the Government. Contrastingly, one EFIF activity involved asking schoolchildren to write a message to David Cameron about hunger on a plate. This led to a very nice photo opportunity for Cameron on 7th June to pose outside Number Ten with a selection of kids and accompanied by David Walliams.
Individual development NGOs in the UK remain active and intellectually ambitious. Many of the leading NGOs in the EFIF coalition have ‘radical’ campaign foci that resemble the kinds of values associated with the food sovereignty movement or other radical campaign positions. This is not an argument that development campaigning is headed for the dustbin of history. What EFIF reveals is that there is a strategic tension between the desire for success and the risks of demanding ambitious change. In regards to the latter, it is difficult to see what prospects there are for large campaign coalitions that focus mainly on big intergovernmental summitry.
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1 See for example [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2013/05/make-poverty-history-and-g8-promises-was-it-all-really-worth-it](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2013/05/make-poverty-history-and-g8-promises-was-it-all-really-worth-it).

2 There were – and there remain – diverging views on the outcomes of the G8. There was a generally positive note concerning the commitments to write off debt to highly indebted countries and to commit to increases in aid up to $50bn by 2010. There was debate concerning whether this was enough, or whether it would be effective in reducing global poverty significantly. There was some confusion concerning the relation between debt write-off and aid commitment. Regarding the third issue, trade justice, there was a more concerted disappointment amongst campaign organisations.

3 By the 2007 G8 meeting at Heiligendamm, many NGOs considered the G8 to have failed to commit fully to the 2005 outcomes.

4 Although I will dispense with the quotation marks, it is important to note that the notion of hunger is a heavily constructed political term more than it is a specific calorific requirement. In the UK, it’s normative content and the kinds of identities it produces have tended to gravitate towards the charitable image of the famine victim. This concern that hunger evoked old-fashioned charitable appeals was expressed on numerous occasions during the EFIF coalition meetings.

5 The BOAG (big overseas aid group) Chief Executives met with David Cameron before EFIF was commenced (notes from coalition meeting, 16th November 2012). BOAG consists of ActionAid, Oxfam, CAFOD, Save the Children and Christian Aid.
The BOAG campaign NGOs had been meeting informally since mid 2011. The author attended general assembly planning meetings throughout 2012 and 2013. Much of the information in this section derives from the notes of those meetings.

Like many of Cameron’s attempts to disseminate ‘big ideas’, the golden thread notion was rather opaque and not especially prominent. In Cameron’s words: ‘you only get real long-term development through aid if there is also a golden thread of stable government, lack of corruption, human rights, the rule of law, transparent information.’ One can see that this fits with the ‘three Ts’ and with facets of the EFIF agenda.

N=476. The coalition expected 30,000 to attend, and some estimates were as high as 40,000. This did not reflect my own observations. The survey team distributed 3,000 surveys through a purposive sampling of one in ten and covered the entire field.

Bill Gates’ relation to international development campaigning is controversial and, in the context of this article, revealing. See McGoey (2015).

The Nutrition for Growth summit was protested by NGOs which had decided not to participate in EFIF.

This is clear from EFIF’s own collating of G8 media coverage.

From The Guardian and The Telegraph respectively, both June 18th.

From research notes of the meeting held on 5th July.

Notably here: War on Want and Global Justice Now (formerly World Development Movement).

The relationship between war and hunger is a common theme within livelihoods and famine research. See for example Keen (2008) Macrae and Zwi (1994)

Taken from http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2013-01/enough-food-everyone-if. I have directly quoted this last theme because it is difficult to paraphrase in a clear or concise fashion. I am not sure what it means.

It is worth noting that a broadly-read reflection on MPH that argued for the construction of ‘positive deep frames’ was absent throughout the campaign (Darnton and Kirk 2011). See also Hampson 2006.
Post-wristband Blues: the Mixed Fortunes of UK Development Campaigning under austerity and the Conservatives.

INTRODUCTION

2005 witnessed the rolling out of the Make Poverty History development campaign coalition. The general, but not unanimous, view was that Make Poverty History (MPH) made tangible headway on many of its demands. Member NGOs generally declared the campaign a success and the celebrity advocates that grabbed media attention spoke about historic victories. Seen in retrospect, this moment of success seems rather bathetic, the last great hurrah of a campaign logic that subsequently fell into abeyance. From 2006 onwards, individual campaign organisations each made a quieter and less celebratory post-mortem of the 2005 moment before returning to organisation-specific campaigning.

There was a general understanding that large collaborative campaigns were unlikely to happen again and that some damage to its prospects had been wrought by the Make Poverty History campaign. As a result of economic recession from 2008, the meta-narrative of British politics shifted to crisis and austerity. In 2010, New Labour was replaced by a coalition government of Conservative and Liberal Democrat, in which the latter were dominant. This election outcome removed a key institutional relationship that development campaigners had come to rely on: a ruling party that shared many of the development norms of the campaign organisations themselves. Nevertheless, in 2013, a major national development campaign coalition was once again devised: the Enough Food If campaign (EFIF). This article explores the motivations and strategies that underpinned the construction of a campaign coalition in such adverse circumstances. The first section sets out the difficult legacy left by Make Poverty History before proceeding in the second section to consider the changed environment within which EFIF emerged. The third section looks at EFIF in some detail, paying particular attention to the ways in which it faced both the MPH legacy and the new political environment. The fourth section sets out an argument that the major logic of the campaign was to lock in a success narrative from beginning to end, over and above other strategic campaign aims, and in this sense to shake off the post-wristband blues of its time. Finally, the article concludes.

THE ROAD TO 2015

The Make Poverty History effect

Make Poverty History was, in a sense, the best of times and the worst of times for development campaigning. Its most convincing success was its ability to mobilise some level of awareness and engagement from large numbers of people. Reportedly, as many as eight million white wristbands were worn. The support base of the coalition expanded massively, a base that was also designed to give supporters an opportunity to ‘migrate’ into a specific campaign organisation. The demonstrations around the Gleneagles G8 Summit and media impact of the Live 8 concerts generated moments of media saturation in which it was difficult for anyone to avoid
the campaign. The level of cultural endorsement from celebrities, media, and politicians was exceptional.

These features might be considered as intrinsic victories, ones that relate to the aims of campaigning itself: public mobilisation, the growth of campaign organisations, the legitimation of their purposes. One can also argue that the campaign’s extrinsic purposes were achieved to a considerable degree. That is, the policy objectives of the campaign were largely met. The G8 Summit led to commitments to aid and debt reduction which, for some campaign coalition members, demonstrated the success of MPH. Within the campaign, people had different expectations of what ‘success’ might mean, but many – especially from the larger organisations – considered the outcomes to be positive, at least in regards to aid and debt. The dominant metaphor at the time was that a mountain had successfully been climbed but that this revealed other peaks in the near distance.

However, this metaphor was itself a symptom of the fact that MPH was not an absolute success. The G8 would not make poverty history in any tangible sense. The campaign messages throughout 2004-5 relayed a sense of epochal temporality: making history by making poverty history; a momentous year in which the direction of the future of poverty was to be decided by ‘eight men in a room’. The campaign logic was that this was a ‘now or never’ moment. The fact that, especially after July, the campaign presented to the public a victory that would not make poverty history but rather offer a significant step forward over the next few years if the G8 leaders honoured their commitments generated significant anxiety within the coalition in terms of expectation management and the extent to which the G8 had the political will to fulfil its commitments as the years passed.

Furthermore, for some coalition members, the commitments were not worth celebrating; a ‘whisper’ rather than a ‘roar’ (Abugre 2005). The commitments of the G8 were seen as not equal to the task of mass poverty reduction, and the commitments that were made did not modify prevailing neoliberal development practices and ideologies. As the campaign progressed towards the G8, some coalition members had become so concerned about the closeness of the campaign to New Labour that they left the coalition, judging that both the politics of the campaign and the ability of New Labour to use it to boost their own legitimacy made it effectively morally and politically bankrupt (Hodkinson 2005). Reports seeped out as the year went on of considerable disagreement within the coalition.

As a result, as the dust settled on a campaign that ostensibly lasted a year but was all but over by August, the public celebration of ‘mission accomplished’ dissolved into a rather complicated, diffuse, and dour ratcheting down of the coalition as each member reflected on the pros and cons of the endeavour and moved back into their own silos with both positive and negative lessons from the coalition.

From 2005 to 2010, development NGOs maintained low-level networking and information sharing, mainly through BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development), the organisational hub for development NGOs. The NGOs continued to work within a context that was still underpinned by a positive relationship between the larger NGOs and the New Labour government. In other words, the fall-out of MPH was in some degree calibrated by a government that remained positively-disposed to the
mainstream development campaigning project. As a result, it was relatively easy for large NGOs to transition out of MPH. Indeed, some took aspects of MPH’s imagery and discourse into their own unilateral campaigns and maintained the kinds of working relations with government that were at the heart of MPH. This kind of transition was enjoyed mainly by the large NGOs that led the campaign, especially Oxfam, Christian Aid, Action Aid, CAFOD and Save the Children UK. A second distinct group (notably War on Want and World Development Movement, now Global Justice Now) spent this time moving into a more explicitly ‘social movement’ frame which was considerably more cynical about New Labour.

In retrospect, the five years after 2005 look like the six years before 2005. There was a ruling party with an ideology that was sympathetic to the core norms of the development campaign NGO community; there was a well-institutionalised and resourced NGO sector in which each organisation had its membership, institutional specificities, and networks; there were a series of organisation-specific campaign issues that generated advocacy and fund raising in specific development areas (Porteous 2008:12, 19).

International development, NGOs and New Labour

New Labour’s relationship with the development campaign community defines this period. The Labour party had campaign, social, and ideological roots in internationalism and Third Worldism (Howe 1993). This is evident in its Fabian politics, its connections with anti-apartheid (Bush 1999: 248 et seq., Fieldhouse 2005, Vickers 2011), its links with labour unions that had solidarity connections with post-colonial unions and movements, and with socially-progressive church organisations. From 1997, New Labour condensed these variegated developmentalist associations into a strong normative discourse around ethics and virtue in international relations and development (Gallagher 2011); one component of New Labour’s international development ethics was partnerships with development NGOs.

New Labour understood international development in what might be broadly glossed as progressively liberal. Good governance, development partnership, capabilities approaches, civil society and NGOs, and a socially-progressive market-based economy were the pivots of New Labour’s vision of a development future. The UK’s development NGOs fitted well into this vision as providers of resources, good development partners, and friends of civil society. Both Government and NGOs shared a strong desire to galvanise a pro-development constituency within the British public (Biccum 2007, Manzo 2006). New Labour channelled significant amounts of official development assistance through selected NGOs. It invested in both research and public relations to promote the construction of a form of knowledge based in a revived, ethical, and effective aid project in which UK NGOs played a pivotal role. The creation and political focus on DFID embodied New Labour’s developmental intentions. From its origins, DFID took on something of a campaign role itself: its foundational statement of intent Building Support for Development, could easily have been on a major campaign NGO’s website. Arch celebrity campaigner Bono spoke at New Labour’s 2004 party conference; Bob
Geldof was asked by Blair to act as a celebrity-advocate for the Africa Commission (Street 2012).

This comity between development NGOs and New Labour was the political context within which the rise and fall of MPH was managed, and it came to an end in 2010. In the next section, we will map out the salient political changes that took place after 2010. We present these changes as a context within which another campaign coalition emerged in 2013. Bearing in mind how inauspicious the circumstances were for a post-MPH campaign coalition, we need to explore the features of the campaign not only on their own terms but also as a response to a generally rather depressing state of affairs for international development campaigning. Seen in this light, the Enough Food If campaign is best understood as an attempt to re-define a *modus operandi* and *vivendi* for development NGOs in a context significantly transformed from that of the previous thirteen years.

NEW GOVERNMENT

It is important to start with a note of moderation. It is not the case that the coming to power of the Coalition government (or indeed the subsequent Conservative government) represented any kind of totalising counter-revolution in development policy (Clarke 2018: 25). Indeed, for many analysts on the Left, the short history of Blair’s New Labour and David Cameron’s Conservatism was one of substantial convergence. Both in terms of public image, leadership style, and substantive areas of policy strategy, New Labour and Conservative policy shared a great deal in regards to development and aid.

New Labour reconciled itself to a non-socialist and broadly liberal policy agenda, based in a faith that private business and socially-beneficial competition would address the core concerns of the party: inequality and poverty (Porteous 2008). Within this intellectual framing, international aid was largely articulated within a neoliberal framework. One could see this in the Africa Commission Report (2005), a report which fed into the Government’s preparations for the G8 and engagement with MPH (Brown 2006). DFID also embraced a vision of development through support for competitive market-based growth and the facilitating of a positive role for transnational corporations and unconstrained markets: making globalisation work for the poor (Cammack 2001).

In 2010, the Conservative party publically affirmed that it would commit to the 0.7% GNP aid target which was previously a key aspiration of New Labour. Making this commitment publically allowed the Tories a fairly cheap means of brand decontamination (Heppell and Lightfoot 2012), emerging as it was from a public image of sleaze and self-interest. Cameron’s Big Society, ‘golden thread’ in development, and quality of life conceptual orientations also fed into a development vision that was moderately distinct but substantially similar to New Labour’s. Cameron encapsulated this concisely himself in his ideological orientation away from One Nation Conservatism to One World Conservatism (Noxolo 2012: 33), calling the British aid the ‘best in the world’ (Clarke 2018: 24). Both parties’ orientations regarding international development were fundamentally based in what Brown (2009) calls the ‘liberal bargain’ of international aid: a vision of good governance,
open economies, competitive markets, and a faith that liberal political sociability would spread unproblematically into poor societies if all of the former components were in place.

The international component of Cameron’s premiership also supported his advocacy of a global neoliberal developmentalism. He accepted Ban Ki-moon’s invitation to co-Chair a UN High Level Panel on the post Millennium Development Goals (Seldon and Snowden 2015: 481). The post-MDG planning got under way from 2010 as the Coalition came to power and it was built on a sustained intergovernmental institutionalisation of development and aid governance that commenced with the Monterrey Consensus of 2002 (Wickstead 2015: 49 et seq.) and within which DFID had been a key player. The international aid and development architecture constructed throughout the new millennium provided a context within which any internationally-focused leader within a broadly neoliberal ideological disposition would find it amenable to continue this project, much in the same way as broader contexts of left/social democracy tend to promote favourable attitudes towards development aid (Chaney 2013, Therien and Noel 2000).

Thus, there was no great shift in international development thinking by the Coalition government. But, this did not mean that nothing changed. In the first place, development campaign organisations were now faced with a political party that had been culturally and ideologically distant from it. Few Conservative MPs considered international development as a major policy issue and, compared with New Labour, there was a weaker pro-aid constituency. Development NGOs simply did not have good advocacy networks with Conservative MPs. All of the celebrity advocates within the campaign NGO sector were broadly on the left and culturally anti-Tory. The NGOs’ policy positions on things like trade, climate change, and transnationals were clearly more distant from Tory views than they were under New Labour for all of the convergence at the heart of policy. This new environment was uncertain and potentially adversarial.

The Conservative party in Parliament and parts of its broader membership were ideologically hostile to international development campaigning values, which had been constructed out of a Fabian, socialist, and social-democratic Christian bundle of values. This broader disposition – of overseas development aid being associated with “liberal” and left-leaning politics – was virulently reinforced through the Right-wing press connected to groups within the party, a fact that the Tory leadership were well aware of (Cawley 2015 :547). The Conservative Party is, of course, a kind of coalition itself. One of the divisions within Parliament is between a ‘hard’ insular nationalism that Thatcher encapsulated, and a more globalist neoliberalism that Cameron certainly cleaved to. Within the Party, Cameron constantly had to manage a politically virulent opposition to his global neoliberalism, something that was most obvious in regards to the lightning rod that was the commitment to spend 0.7% of GDP on aid (Clarke 2018: 26-27). In response to pressure to abandon the 0.7% commitment, Cameron commented ‘we won’t make any new friends by dropping it’, a phrasing that suggests that he was reconciled to a degree of Parliamentary opposition however he acted, something that connects well with his attitude towards Eurosceptics within his own party after the MP rebellion in October 2011 (Shipman 2016: 7). It was at this point that the term ‘dinosaurs’ became currency to
describe a Eurosceptic, anti-gay marriage, and also anti-aid corpus within the party which Cameron consistently opposed.

Furthermore, in some ways, the Conservatives have shifted international development strategy, although this has not been as publicised as perhaps it should be. The core shift has been away from good governance and partnerships with aid recipient states which was at the very heart of New Labour’s strategy. In its place there is a far stronger focus on private companies as key development partners (Mawdsley 2015). The Conservative government has consolidated an aid model based in the contracting of private companies. This was present during the New Labour administration (Taylor 2012: 454), but there is also a more clear strategic orientation by the Conservatives to present private companies as ‘developmental’. And, large amounts of DFID expenditure go on private company services. These trends are extant in the sectoral spending of official development assistance away from DFID and into other government departments (Manji and Cullen 2016).

The increasing centrality of private companies in aid strategy goes beyond payments to contracted private enterprises. Aid strategy has, in a sense, been “corporatised” in that the kinds of knowledge and skills that private companies claim to have are perceived as part of the international aid strategy itself. One can see this most clearly in the new green revolution for Africa (AGRA) (Kaarhus 2011) in which companies are expected to train, provide services, and contribute to the reorganisation of smallholder agriculture. One can also see it in the providing of technological and infrastructural services by large transnationals. Discrete projects to promote microfinance, communications technology connectivity, the introduction of new seeds, and training all involve private corporations as service providers, knowledge holders, and aid recipients. The Conservative approach to development is more concertedly ‘corporate’ in that business is seen as a direct agent for the promotion of development, not just a source of capital which, according to most economic models (and subject to the right policy environment), generate developmental effects. We shall come back to this strategic reorientation later more specifically in regards to EFIF’s concern with hunger and malnutrition.

The direction of movement under the Tories was concertedly towards a model of funding private companies directly to do development work and in the process celebrating this sector as the driver of change. The refocusing of aid away from humanitarian and solidarity norms towards value for money and business case norms might have served to mollify some within the Party who were sceptical of Cameron’s commitment to an international development agenda. Inasmuch as this is the case, it posed a challenge to NGOs who had customarily focussed around the activities of NGO, civil society, and partner government initiatives. Thus, from 2010, NGOs were faced with a campaign sector context defined by a difficult post-MPH legacy and a new and ostensibly less amenable government.

And, of course, the shift in the British party system roughly overlapped with the global economic crisis. This fed into the NGO sector in a way familiar to other economic crisis moments previously: it generated a concern that fiscal austerity would impact upon the aid budget, that rising unemployment and stagnant disposable incomes would reduce charitable donations, and that the general public mood would shift against aid because of a concern for the poor ‘at home’. The rise of
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UKIP was explicitly based in arguments about massively reducing or abolishing aid, laced with barely-disguised racism. The discourse of austerity that emerged after the financial crisis generated an increased questioning of the value of aid expenditure. Indeed, there was evidence that a majority of Britons did not favour ring-fencing the 0.7% commitment (Heinrich, Kobayashi and Bryant 2011: 68, 74).

Nevertheless Cameron’s endorsement of ‘One World’ Conservatism opened the door very slightly to a new working relation between international development NGOs and the government. Against some currents within his own party and somewhat against the austerity narrative his party enthusiastically embraced in most areas, Cameron’s leadership identified overseas development assistance as a diagnostic of its social conscience. This rather marginal and protean development within the Tories is vital to understanding the emergence of EFIF.

ENOUGH FOOD IF

A window of opportunity

Campaign coalitions offer an opportunity to understand the nature of campaigning in a way that is especially revealing. Most obviously, one can explore the dynamics of relations between individual campaign organisations because they are having to work together formally as part of a single political project. Secondly, the campaign coalition itself requires co-ordination, all manner of dialogue, the construction of a shared discourse, and the establishing of an institution that manages, leads, and co-ordinates the efforts of individual NGOs. Thirdly, campaign coalitions’ core purpose is to create a high-publicity action that strongly and publically engages with government or other official development agencies. This is a kind of “representational” economy of scale. As such, campaign coalitions offer a revealing way to explore the place of individual development campaigns within a broader British polity and public space. It is in this light that we shall explore the Enough Food IF campaign of 2013. EFIF emerged shortly after the changes outlined in the previous section, a fact that raises key questions concerning the ability of development NGOs to negotiate an ostensibly more adversarial and austere terrain.

The Enough Food IF campaign became a coalition of over 200 NGOs, oriented around issues of global hunger and malnutrition. In 2012, David Cameron hosted a post-Olympics Hunger Summit in 2012, a ‘summit’ that was largely a celebrity/sportsperson-endorsed expression of concern about global hunger, claiming that this would be a major international issue for the Government leading into its hosting of the G8 the subsequent year. This was a key marker of Cameron’s own commitment to neoliberal internationalism. ONE and Save the Children attended and the summit spoke warmly about Cameron’s commitment. The EFIF coalition identified this moment as the ‘open door’ through which Britain’s development NGOs might find a revived role in the new political environment. It marked an opportunity for major development campaign NGOs: a statement of government openness to campaigning and a high-profile event in which ‘hunger’ would be a prominent focus.
The large development NGOs with strong lobbying abilities have always sought the ear of politicians. This was the case after MPH when these NGOs sought an audience with Gordon Brown (and him with them) when he became Prime Minister; and it was also the case when the Conservative Party came to power. The purpose of these informal contacts was to secure a certain common ground between the Government’s agenda for the G8 and the kinds of campaign goals that the development NGO sector might advocate. There was a symbiosis here in which a ruling party enjoyed a ‘halo effect’ from publically supporting aspects of development NGOs’ campaigns, and NGOs could make claims to success based in expectations that some of their ‘asks’ are informally assured as amenable to the government.

Thus, it seems reasonable to identify the beginnings of the EFIF coalition in 2012 when some NGOs were speaking with each other informally and also in communication with the government, all around the notion of hunger which had been identified as a strong starting position for ‘detoxifying’ the Conservative Party. A broad agenda that would reflect a development coalition’s common interests and also have a reasonable chance of being supported in part by the UK government could serve as a starting point for coalition building in earnest.

In October 2012, a BOND Annual General Meeting was held in which plans for a coalition around food and hunger to focus on the G8 were mooted. At this point, a group of prominent and relatively radical NGOs chose to remove themselves from the coalition, expressing concerns about the focus on hunger and the apparent lack of adversarialism concerning the Conservative-dominated government (interviews War on Want, Jubilee Debt Coalition).

**Finding common cause**

From November 2012 onwards, EFIF Assembly meetings rolled out a series of actions to focus mainly on the UK-hosted G8 in June 2013. Member NGOs reported on their own actions, and the Organising Committee (OC) members shared information about the broader strategy for the UK budget and the G8 ‘moments’. A set of four core themes related to hunger were set out: tax, aid, land, and transparency. These four were partly as the outcome of talks with Cameron, and partly broad and inclusive enough to ensure successful coalition building as early meetings attempted to draw diverse organisations in.

The EFIF campaign was publically launched at Somerset House, London, on the 23rd January 2013. The event was focused on generating media attention. Its main impact was through a high production value three dimensional film, beamed onto the façade of the House. The main speaker in the film was Bill Gates. The invitees were from EFIF campaign members, some celebrities, and people from the media. The event itself made no attempt to convey the demands of the campaign, develop an engagement with a broader public, or identify a core problem that needed addressing beyond ‘hunger’ as a condition. It was, at its core, a means to generate a motivated and aspirational coalition rather than a public awareness launch.
In March, EFIF carried out a series of actions or ‘stunts’ to publicise its tax ‘ask’, focused on the persistence of tax havens. This focussed around an intense tweet and email operation, an ‘elephant in the room’ image campaign, and a series of George Osborne ‘rush mobs’ in which campaigners wearing Osborne masks turned up in public places for photo opportunities. Additionally, in April, the EFIF coalition claimed a success in securing a commitment to achieving 0.7% aid expenditure. However, because the Government did not commit to include the magic 0.7% as legislation for the Queen’s speech and because this commitment had been supported by Cameron repeatedly before the Budget, perceptions of a campaign success were muted. The commitment to 0.7% and a general increase in DFID expenditure had been ongoing since 2010. Nevertheless, in the April meeting, it was presented as a campaign success.

After April, EFIF focused on the G8 meeting to be hosted by the British government. The G8 ‘moment’ was conceptualised as a week-long period, commencing with a large public assembly which aimed to coincide with Cameron’s hosting of a Nutrition for Growth pre-summit meeting. Following on from that date, smaller publicity events would keep public attention until a smaller rally took place on the 15th in Enniskillen to coincide with the G8 meeting. Between April and June, EFIF propounded its four demands to be addressed by the G8. These were: a legislated commitment to 0.7% of GNP dedicated to official development assistance; a move to ensure international companies pay ‘fair’ levels of tax in poor countries; a halt to ‘land grabbing’ in poor countries; transparency in development aid and practice. It is striking how (with the exception of land grabbing) these demands closely mirror the Conservative Party’s own development strategy, embedded in the golden thread notion mentioned earlier, but also Cameron’s more recent ‘three Ts’ of transparency, tax, and trade which had each become core parts of EFIF demands.

Transparency and tax were foregrounded by the Conservative party at a time when Cameron was still centrally concerned to introduce a more socially-minded image to his party. This was a period when public attitudes towards government and big business were relatively negative. There was not only concern about the fraud and collusion by banks in the aftermath of the financial crisis and associated rescue packages; this was also a period in which large companies like Amazon, Google and Starbucks were revealed to be paying no or extremely little tax to the British government. The Tory focus on tax and transparency and its connection to a morally-positive international development campaign addressed the bad publicity emanating from tax evasion within big business.

The Big If

The London ‘Big If’ rally took place on 8th June. Attendees were invited to plant a flower-windmill in a way that resembled a commemoration of a single death from hunger. A pathway from this field to a stage with band and film clips brought people into the main event. Geographically removed from the G8 meeting which was to take place a week later, or the Cameron pre-G8 summit, the experience of the rally was complex: a mixture of expressions of concern or lamentation about hunger; sociability; spectacle; and in an indirect way an address to next week’s meetings in
Lough Erne. There was a sizable attendance from people who were already members of development NGOs: in a survey carried out by XXXX, 67 per cent of respondents identified as members of development organisations.¹

The assembly at Hyde Park coincided with Cameron’s hosting of a Nutrition for Growth Summit which had an overlapping agenda, based in a project to address hunger through business and science. This was the epitome of the Conservatives’ DFID vision. Cameron’s summit laid heavy emphasis on the role of corporate technologies – this was the essence of the meaning of ‘business and science’. This meeting, held at Unilever House, was not mentioned throughout the day, although Bill Gates, the major video speaker, propounded his usual messages about the benefits of technology and big business.¹² On the 7th June EFIF staged a hand-in at Number 10 of empty plates by schoolchildren with ‘messages for leaders’ written on them which was aimed at the Nutrition for Growth summit.¹³

The Lough Erne G8 Declaration starts: ‘Private enterprise drives growth, reduces poverty, and creates jobs and prosperity for people around the world.’ It then proceeds to itemise an agenda that precisely overlaps with the Conservative neoliberal development world-vision. The media generally reported on the G8 outcomes with an exclusive focus on Cameron: there was very little media attention paid to EFIF beyond some unexplained imagery of EFIF visual stunts of G8 leaders as chefs, or anonymous fat cats in a tax haven.¹⁴ The G8 did not commit to clear and concrete measures to ensure transparency in tax reporting and to prevent tax evasion, something that authoritative experts stated clearly and critically. Nevertheless, the EFIF spokesperson spoke of a ‘step in the right direction’ and the ‘right ambition’.¹⁵

The lose and generalised connection between the EFIF assembly and the G8 made it difficult to discern in any concrete way the effects of the EFIF campaign on the G8, especially in light of the closeness of the agenda of EFIF to Cameron’s own. Although EFIF campaign managers were pleased with the profile afforded to the campaign in the media, the content itself is less reassuring, based as it was on the association of campaign images with a generally government-focused and uncritical reportage on what were fairly moderate and vague commitments.

A final wrap-up meeting was held in July. The main content of that meeting was an enthusiastically-delivered general assessment of the campaign by the Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Working Group which awarded gold, silver and bronze to general areas of the campaign’s aims. This was delivered in a very positive fashion and was not accompanied by any organised critical reflection. In place of this, attendees were invited to write on post-its and pin them to boards under different themes. The exact purposes of this exercise was not clear. The impression – at least for this attendee – was that the primary purpose was to ensure positive feelings about the campaign. The person reporting to the meeting on the overall performance of the campaign declared ‘we got every single thing!’¹⁶ It is worth bearing in mind that this meeting was of coalition members only; it was not ‘outward facing’ and did not require ‘spin’ for the purposes of messaging and brand. In this context, it seemed clear that the meeting was driven strongly by a therapeutic sense of ensuring positive closure to the campaign after the difficulties that had defined the period from 2006 to 2013.
Throughout the campaign, EFIF’s policy aims were flexible and broad. They revolved around vague causal premises. There was no clear idea of how the campaign or indeed the G8 might arrest ‘land grabbing’. An early emphasis on biofuels early on was de-emphasised. The issue of tax reform rose in importance, in spite of an opaque causation with hunger and malnutrition which seemed to boil down to an expectation – naïve by any analytical standards – that increased tax revenues from FDI would create larger resource for investment in agriculture. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on smallholder farming and local technological change that came from early meetings and the small member organisations of the campaign was lost. Through the Tories and the G8, the ‘solving hunger through business and science’ and new Green Revolution corporate-state project garnered highly publicised commitments of resource.

The fact that the campaign took care to establish campaign aims which did not require specific targets of achievement connected to metrics or discrete policies does not only raise questions about the way one might evaluate campaign success; it also opens up a deeper analytical question about how success and failure are constructed. In essence, EFIF was set up not to fail. The demands it made were sufficiently broad and integrated into Government initiatives as to make it possible to put a positive spin on practically any outcome from the G8 in terms of commitments to address hunger and malnutrition. The breadth, generality, and creeping moderation of EFIF’s demands necessarily left space for those who wished it to declare success. This might be considered not so much as a ‘failure’ of the campaign to get certain things achieved, but rather as a strategy elaborated within the specific conditions of the time. We will now explore other ways in which this was so.

CONSTRUCTING SUCCESS

Success for EFIF was framed in a specific way. The framing of success was not strongly oriented towards the policy achievements and resource commitments emanating from the campaign’s pressure on the G8 which, we have argued, was difficult to discern. Success in terms of G8 action was, at best, broadly implied, partial or affirmed rather than demonstrated. The concrete outcomes of the campaign were only positive in the sense of possibly leading to some action by G8 states in areas that had already been identified by the British government as possible areas for action. The G8 (which saw global hunger as one issue amongst others) did not make strong clear commitments for action in any case. Since 2013, those who drove the EFIF campaign have not followed up or campaigned to ensure that the areas of success have been realised. It is very obvious that, to date, little has been achieved in reducing mass hunger and malnutrition and what success has been achieved can hardly be accounted for by G8 agency.

But there was very positive affect in the wrap-up meeting which put a kind of seal on a campaign that had worked well enough to establish a kind of besieged modus operandi for coalition campaigning: strategically cautious, aware of the difficulties of coalition building, and in some sense therapeutic for an NGO sector that was looking for a sense of renewal in hard times. Principally this message was directed towards
those within the coalition itself. Although entirely subjective, this observer was struck by how much time and energy was spent in assembly meetings talking up the project itself in ways that seemed to border on motivational speaking.

Enough Food If did not achieve a brand or legacy in the way that Band Aid, Jubilee 2000, or Make Poverty History did. Even the most sympathetic reading would not claim that EFIF had a big impact on British government development practice. It did not become part of Britain’s ‘ribbon culture’ (Moore 2010).

Although there was broad and positive media coverage of the campaign’s ‘event’ high spots, there was less media reporting of mission accomplished or success. There was no high profile media event to relate the campaign’s successes to the general public. The campaign coalition’s main success comes from its achievements in organising a campaign coalition, establishing a relationship with government, and re-energising its existing members during a politically depressing period. This kind of success derived from strategic decisions made by the coalition’s managers.

The EFIF campaign: short and sweet?

The campaign itself was effectively six months long. Aware of how MPH had tailed off after the G8 and that coalition member commitment had waned, EFIF focused on the G8 summit in June and then held a wrap-up meeting for coalition members in July. As noted, the wrap-up meeting was overlain with a ‘success’ message which was not strongly evidenced and left no space for clear critical reflection. There was no ‘next steps’ moment either, although an evaluation consultancy was commissioned (Tibbett and Stalker 2014).

The first campaign meeting was in camera. Some campaign organisations attended this first meeting and then left the coalition on the grounds that it reproduced the moderate and (in their view) apolitical strategy that came to dominate MPH. In this sense EFIF had, by its first meeting open to all organisations, defined itself around the ‘BOAG’ NGOs and without the larger ‘radical’ NGOs. This had the effect of reducing the political tensions that had for a time pervaded Make Poverty History.

The first open general assembly of EFIF (16th November 2012) commenced with some scene-setting addresses from those in the coordination team. There was a strong affective content in these addresses that aimed to produce an affirmative and encompassing feeling in the venue. One key speaker related how good it felt to be back together again, implicitly referencing the sense of break-up left by MPH. Even in this first general meeting, there was a strong framing of the campaign around what one speaker called ‘ending well’ and ‘celebrating’. This is, of course, entirely understandable at the start of a project to build a coalition. But, it was also noteworthy that there was no sense of contention (Tarrow 2005), uncertainty, struggle, or opposition upon which a mobilisation might be constructed. One representative who asked if hunger and malnutrition could be meaningfully addressed in the absence of demands to end the ‘war on terror’ was pointedly excluded, although the points he made were quite reasonable.

Beyond the ‘0.7’, was no specific target setting, identification of a basket of specific policy ‘asks’ from G8 governments, or clear identification of problem of hunger. The
four themes of investment, land, tax, and transparency were announced as the orientations of EFIF. As the assembly meetings proceeded and campaign material and activity emerged, it was clear that the themes of the campaign were designed not to rely on specific, ambitious, but realistic targets in the way that MPH and Jubilee 2000 had been. Rather, these themes served as the aspirational focus for the campaign, each framed with a more or less specific cause and effect. Stop land grabbing to protect smallholders, invest and give aid to improve agricultural productivity, reduce tax avoidance to improve revenues that could be invested in agriculture, and make ‘governments and investors to be honest and open about the deals they make in the poorest countries that stop people getting enough food’.xviii These themes are presented with very vague causations, no specific demands and – especially in the case of the final theme – stretch a clear sense of cause and effect.

Within assembly meetings, the coalition was theme-driven, not target-driven in terms of its demands. The bulk of meetings’ content was oriented towards the management of media (electronic and print) and public attitudes. As a result, the meetings were mainly concerned with the processes and progress of coalition building. The complex questions about campaign demands, and the causations behind hunger and malnutrition were rarely mooted.

The shortness and sweetness structured into the campaign makes sense from a post-2010 campaign recovery point-of-view; but as a way to deal with the massive and complex issue of hunger and malnutrition, it raises a very important issue. The campaign’s organisation and duration made it constitutively unable to address global malnutrition and hunger in any meaningful fashion. The core issues relating to hunger and malnutrition are at least as complex as those of international debt, apartheid, and slavery and in each of those campaign areas, coalitions endured for years and even generations. There is no amount of campaign success that can be compressed into a six-month period that would come close to addressing global hunger and malnutrition in any meaningful sense.

EFIF was a coalition that was sensitive to the plurality of its coalition members but, in the absence of the larger ‘radical’ NGOs, it worked through the larger and well-resourced mainstream development NGOs. EFIF was both inclusive, open-ended, not tied to any specific achievements, and de facto dominated by the large campaign organisations. It was designed in a strictly time-constrained fashion that ensured it did not collapse or lose energy. It worked well in generating a campaign coalition but far less so as a vehicle to identify clear targets and exacting actions attached to them.

Adjusting expectations

Ensuring success also required the construction of a strong policy and vision overlap with government. The absence of contentious or adversarial content in the campaign would make it highly likely that the campaign could be broadly positive about government actions and, as a result, narrate the campaign as having had a positive effect on government action.

During the first open assembly meeting – and repeated throughout subsequent meetings – a message was related that the Conservative government was amenable
to EFIF and that there was a real window of opportunity for the campaign. In the words of the Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Working Group, Cameron was ‘saying some really good stuff.’ This framing effectively removed the notion of an adverse political environment from the campaign. One might suppose that NGO campaigns often tag onto larger and more ‘official’ and governmental initiatives (Hilton et al. 2013), but in this case the window of opportunity afforded by the moments from the Olympic ‘summit’ to the G8 meeting was narrow indeed and no explicit reflection on this fact or the dangers of attaching hope to a political party strongly wedded to neoliberal values can be found in any of the materials from the campaign or the discussions within the assembly meetings.

The major NGOs in BOND were meeting with senior members of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties as soon as possible after the election victory. In this period, Cameron’s strategy for the Tories was based in what were at the time judged to be relatively ‘liberal’ political ideas, revolving around wellbeing and the ‘big society’. The Conservatives were also well aware that a certain kind of presentation of international development had worked well for New Labour as a way to represent a political aesthetic of national grandeur and moral purpose. Positive signals about international development offered a fairly straightforward way to address the issue coined by now-Prime Minister Theresa May, of being perceived as the ‘nasty party’.

There was, in effect, a mutual desire by major campaign groups and the new coalition government, to find a cohabitation within which both could claim a moral virtue as progressive development actors, and an agenda was discovered to enable this comity. ‘Hunger’ was the venue within which this was achieved. David Cameron articulated his ‘golden threads’ of development: ‘stable government, lack of corruption, human rights, the rule of law, transparent information’. The campaign coalition interpreted this core directive within Cameron’s declared development vision as positive and fairly easy to work with. One can readily see how it maps quite extensively onto the four themes of EFIF. In none of the meetings I attended was Cameron’s golden thread notion articulated in a critical fashion.

Cameron generated a strong formulation of both problem and solution in regards to hunger that fulsomely fitted with a liberal and globalist Conservative worldview in which well-meaning transnational corporations, supported by governments and amenable scientists, would disseminate technologies, techniques, and financial mechanisms that would engineer peasant households into petty entrepreneurs able to upscale their own well-being. This agenda went under the rubric ‘solving malnutrition and hunger through business and science’. The ‘science’ part of this phrasing effectively meant corporately-owned technologies such as improved seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides.

EFIF reconciled itself to this vision. It invited Bill Gates to speak at its event and it did not make any strong critical statements of Cameron’s vision for solving hunger. EFIF ‘wished the leaders well’ in their meetings. Beyond the main stage performances, the main event was the planting of a field of ‘windmill’ flowers to represent the number of children who died from malnutrition, an event that could hardly have been more apolitical.
As the G8 event approached, the campaign’s messages on hunger and malnutrition and the those of the Government came to overlap. Cameron’s explicitly pro-business, technocratic, and financialised model of change was devised within his government, did not change, and was announced as the agenda for his leadership of the G8. It was accompanied by a broad and open-ended EFIF coalition which was based on thematic overlaps with government, broad aspirations rather than demands, and a lack of critical positions on the Conservatives’ vision of development. These properties ensured that any outcomes from the G8 could feasibly look like success.

In sum, 2013 saw EFIF briefly generate an effective international development coalition in the teeth of inter-organisational trepidation and a broader political environment defined by austerity and a shift to the Right in UK governance. Inasmuch as one judges EFIF a success in managing a coalition that worked and did not generate a problematic legacy, one has also to understand its failure to make any kind of ‘historic’ progress in regards to hunger and malnutrition.

CONCLUSION: POST-WRISTBAND BLUES

The EFIF campaign can be understood as a response by development NGOs to a particularly challenging environment. In the teeth of a shift to the Right and a recession, NGOs set out a coalition that had as its primary aim establishing the beginnings of a modus vivendi in a new period. This did not translate into new, strong, and ambitious campaign demands. But, its success can be identified in its more internalised focus on making campaign coalitions based in a relationship with a less amenable government possible. This explains why the organisation of the campaign was based in broad thematic aspirations that enjoyed a substantial overlap with Government agendas that were devised by-and-large independently from the development NGOs. It also explains why the campaign itself was highly time-constrained, generalised, and articulated in ways that did not expect specific outcome ‘wins’.

EFIF’s legacy is slender indeed. It’s public visibility was not sufficiently strong to create a ‘historic’ brand in the way that Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History did. In the midst of the moderate financial commitments of the G8 and the modality through which the ‘hunger issue’ is addressed by the corporate-state nexus EFIF did not collate a clear set of policies, demands, or political values to make a distinct contribution. The most obvious way in which they could have done this would have been through some evocation of the notion of ‘food sovereignty’, but this term was closely associated with the more radical campaign NGOs who removed themselves from the campaign. Food sovereignty would also have generated clear light between the campaign coalition and the Government. Contrastingly, one EFIF activity involved asking schoolchildren to write a message to David Cameron about hunger on a plate. This led to a very nice photo opportunity for Cameron on 7th June to pose outside Number Ten with a selection of kids and accompanied by David Walliams.

Many individual development NGOs in the UK remain politically active and intellectually ambitious. Some of the leading NGOs in the EFIF coalition have ‘radical’ campaign foci that resemble the kinds of values associated with the food sovereignty movement or other radical campaign positions. Indeed, a major response to MPH
was to reflect on possible campaign strategies that were *more radical* in many ways. The key report here, *Finding Frames* (Darnton and Kirk 2011), was read by many in leadership positions within large development NGOs just before the moment that the EFIF campaign commenced. Its core argument was that more medium-term cognitive shifts in what international development meant were required in order for development campaigning to escape from well-entrenched public attitudes concerning famine and charity. The report emphasises justice and equality rather than charity and poverty (Kirk 2012). It also argues that broad and shallow public appeals are immanently constrained in their ambition, and that focussed and deeper engagements are likely to be more politically forceful. Seen in the context of *Finding Frames* and the influence that this report had, EFIF’s contrived success seems all the more concerning because its strategic orientation shifted campaign politics away from the Report in spite of the latter’s popularity and stepped-up ambition. In the case of EFIF, perhaps the costs of success outweighed its benefits.
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i See for example http://www.oxfam.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2013/05/make-poverty-history-and-g8-promises-was-it-all-really-worth-it.

ii There were – and there remain – diverging views on the outcomes of the G8. There was a generally positive note concerning the commitments to write off debt to highly indebted countries and to commit to increases in aid up to $50bn by 2010. There was debate concerning whether this was enough, or whether it would be effective in reducing global poverty significantly. There was some confusion concerning the relation between debt write-off and aid commitment. Regarding the third issue, trade justice, there was a more concerted disappointment amongst campaign organisations.

iii By the 2007 G8 meeting at Heiligendamm, many NGOs considered the G8 to have failed to commit fully to the 2005 outcomes.

iv Although I will dispense with the quotation marks, it is important to note that the notion of hunger is a heavily constructed political term more than it is a specific calorific requirement. In the UK, it’s normative content and the kinds of identities it produces have tended to gravitate towards the charitable image of the famine victim. This concern that hunger evoked old-fashioned charitable appeals was expressed on numerous occasions during the EFIF coalition meetings.

v The BOAG (big overseas aid group) Chief Executives met with David Cameron before EFIF was commenced (notes from coalition meeting, 16th November 2012). BOAG consists of ActionAid, Oxfam, CAFOD, Save the Children and Christian Aid.

vi The BOAG campaign NGOs had been meeting informally since mid 2011. The author attended general assembly planning meetings throughout 2012 and 2013. Much of the information in this section derives from the notes of those meetings.

vii The author attended this launch meeting.

viii The commitment became law in 2015.

ix Like many of Cameron’s attempts to disseminate ‘big ideas’, the golden thread notion was rather opaque and not especially prominent. In Cameron’s words: ‘you only get real long-term development through aid if there is also a golden thread of stable government, lack of corruption, human rights, the rule of law, transparent information.’ One can see that this fits with the ‘three Ts’ and with facets of the EFIF agenda.

x N=476. The coalition expected 30,000 to attend, and some estimates were as high as 40,000. This did not reflect my own observations. The survey team distributed 3,000 surveys through a purposive sampling of one in ten and covered the entire field.

xi Bill Gates’ relation to international development campaigning is controversial and, in the context of this article, revealing. See McGoey (2015).
The Nutrition for Growth summit was protested by NGOs which had decided not to participate in EFIF.

This is clear from EFIF’s own collating of G8 media coverage.

From The Guardian and The Telegraph respectively, both June 18th.

From research notes of the meeting held on 5th July.

Notably here: War on Want and Global Justice Now (formerly World Development Movement).

The relationship between war and hunger is a common theme within livelihoods and famine research. See for example Keen (2008) Macrae and Zwi (1994)

Taken from http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2013-01/enough-food-everyone-if. I have directly quoted this last theme because it is difficult to paraphrase in a clear or concise fashion. I am not sure what it means.

See also Hampson 2006