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NEW LABOUR'S OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AID POLICY – CHARITY OR SELF-INTEREST?

Abstract

Robin Cook argued that New Labour's foreign policy would have 'ethical dimensions'[1] , and an assumption is often made, within existing literature, that this is an accurate statement when considering the overseas development agenda of New Labour government's between 1997 and 2010. Tingley argues that the more left wing a party, the more likely they are to increase attention on, and funding of, overseas development aid projects.[2] This article uses the New Labour governments, from 1997 to 2010, as a case study to test the argument of Tingley and determines that his conclusions are accurate in the case of the UK. This article will then argue, using the work of Breuning that the motivations of the New Labour governments, and the way they conveyed their policy to the electorate changed over time rather than remaining morally focused for the duration of their time in power.[3] By focusing on the rhetoric of the Labour Party, the changes in motivation can be identified in the period 1997-2010, with a distinct move from moral justifications to more self-interested pragmatic reasoning, which confirms Breuning's argument.

Keywords: Blair, Brown, Breuning, Overseas Development Aid, New Labour

Introduction

While the Iraq War has blackened the name of Tony Blair in many circles, the early days of the Blair government are often associated with their promise to include 'ethical dimensions' in their foreign policy.[4] One of the key policy areas where this approach was supposedly demonstrated was in International Development, with the creation of DFID in 1997, Clare Short as the new Secretary of State and a commitment to raise overseas development aid

funding (ODA) to 0.7%GNI. This raises the question of what drove such a policy initiative? Is it simply, as Tingley argues, that parties on the left of the political spectrum tend to be more morally driven to fund ODA programmes?[5] It would be easy to assume that was the case. In his first leader's speech at the Labour Party Conference in 1994, Labour Leader Tony Blair declared 'I can tell you that overseas aid and development will always be a central part of the Labour Party that I lead'.[6]

However, while political ideology is clearly an important factor in policy determination, where do other factors fit? How can we determine what impacts on the views of a political party or an individual if we simply write off their approach as being inspired wholly by their political ideology? In order to determine their changing views over time, it is important to focus on the changing language used by key individuals, but this can cause further issues. In order to rigorously conduct discourse analysis, certain guidelines are often followed, regarding the quality and quantity of the language being studied. In the case of ODA and New Labour, specifically Labour Leaders Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, there is a lack of evidence. These two powerful politicians tended to talk across a wide range of policy areas, but not extensively on ODA or international development generally, with the exception of the issue of Africa, which Tony Blair spoke extensively on around 2005.

This article takes a different approach to this subject, synthesising two theories in order to evaluate the reasoning behind the New Labour commitment to ODA funding and how it changed over the course of the New Labour governments between 1997 and 2010. By using the work of Tingley as a starting point, the article then utilises the work of Breuning to determine the motivations for Tony Blair and Gordon Brown while Labour Prime Ministers (Blair 1997-2007, and Brown 2007-2010).[7] Using the categorisations of Breuning this article

argues that the rhetoric used by the Labour leadership changed over the course of the New Labour governments, reflecting a change not only in emphasis and marketing of policy, but also a change in political motivation by the leadership and the political position of the audience. As the British electorate began to change over the period 1997 to 2010, the rhetoric used by the party to justify ODA changed, moving from a largely charitable focus to a more self-interested rhetoric, which would be beneficial to the party domestically as well as internationally. The work of Tingley would suggest that, as a party moves along the political spectrum from the left, they would be likely to begin to focus on more pragmatic benefits of aid, something which Breuning's categorisations and the rhetorical analysis of the author confirm. As the party moved further from the left, they began to utilise language which highlighted the benefits of ODA to Britain, in terms of their bi-lateral trade deals and their position within the international community. Therefore, the article concludes that, using Britain as an example, Tingley's theory, based on the work of Thérien and Noel, appears to be accurate.[8]

The History of ODA in the UK

Overseas development aid policy in Britain began, in earnest, during the Premiership of Harold Macmillan (1957-1963). There had been previous aid policies, but these had tended to be very closely linked to either the Empire or Britain's economic position. Rarely were they focused on the recipient nations. The decolonisation of the wider British Empire, which had begun during the Clement Attlee Labour premiership (1945-51) had slowed to a trickle during Conservative Prime Minister Winston Churchill's second term in office (1951-55), but Harold MacMillan's Conservative government began to accelerate decolonisation again, highlighted by his 'Wind of Change' speech in South Africa in 1960. This raised the pressing issue of how former colonies, particularly those who were asset poor or economically under-

developed, could become economically viable nations. Overseas development aid (ODA) was one way in which new nations might be helped to their feet, and also secure their relationship with the UK.

While the Harold Macmillan Conservative government (and subsequently the Conservative government of Alec Douglas-Home between 1963 and 1964) did look to increase aid spending, it was Harold Wilson's Labour government (1964-70) which raised the public profile of ODA, creating the Overseas Development Ministry, and giving the Minister in charge, Barbara Castle, a Cabinet Seat.[9] However, despite this higher profile, funding for ODA decreased. Funding had risen during the Macmillan and Douglas-Home governments.[10] During the Wilson premiership, official aid funding, despite the stated aims of the government, dropped from $4205.5m net in 1964 to $3436.5m in 1970.[11] Krozewski notes that the Wilson government aimed to 'increase … British aid allocation to 1 per cent of GNP by 1970', which was not achieved but gives a good indicator of the value which the government attached to ODA.[12] One of the motivating factors for this decline in ODA funding may have been the difficult economic circumstances in the UK between 1964 and 1970, leading the UK government to devalue the pound in 1967.

The increasing funding (by the Macmillan and Douglas-Home governments) and the Cabinet seat for the new Ministry (created by Wilson) demonstrate not only the higher political profile of ODA during the Premierships of Macmillan, Douglas-Home and Wilson, but also a recognition of Britain's changing international status, from a dominant Empire state to a nation who needed to build strong relationships with former colonies and leave those nations in a stable position, and it utilised ODA and the work of the Overseas Development Ministry to do this. Authors such as Gerold Krozewski and Jim Tomlinson have both suggested that

the rise in ODA was linked to a variety of factors, not simply decolonisation and Britain's economic difficulties in the late 1950s and 1960s.[13] Andrew Blick suggests that the creation of the Overseas Development Ministry, along with the creation of other new departments by the Wilson government, was driven by policy concerns and a desire to increase economic growth in the UK, as well as modernising and making Britain more efficient.[14]

[Insert table one here]

The Conservative government of Edward Heath (1970-74) and the second Wilson government (1974-76) continued to largely maintain the % of Gross National Income level, as shown in table one. However, the Overseas Development Ministry, which Harold Wilson had created in 1964, was merged back into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and it remained there until 1997. Harold Wilson's successor, Labour Prime Minister Jim Callaghan, increased funding for ODA with it reaching a high point of $5568.7 net in 1979 (0.51% GNI).[15] However, the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher had rather different priorities. The % of GNI spent on overseas development aid reducing dramatically under the Thatcher government. As shown in table one, while the monetary budget of ODA rose under the Thatcher and the John Major governments (both Conservative) due largely to inflation, the % GNI reduced dramatically. While funding is not the only indicator that a government is committed to a specific policy area, this substantial decrease in funding, coupled with the lack of an independent Ministry for Overseas Development, or a seat in cabinet demonstrates that ODA had become a secondary issue for the British government from 1979 onwards. This was the political landscape which the Blair Labour government inherited, with their promises to create a new Department for International Development and increase the funding of ODA to the OECD recommended level of 0.7% GNI.

The Field of Literature

Within the academic literature focused on political parties and their attitudes to ODA, three distinct categories can be identified, into which much (although not all) of the literature falls. One category focuses primarily on political positioning and ODA with the focus on the impact of political position on the level of funding and the policy priorities. Many within the field argue that those on the left are primarily focused on the moral principles of aid. This category of literature is typified by the work of Thérien.[16] He argued that while the use of the terms 'right' and 'left' was perhaps a little simplistic, in terms of development assistance it is a meaningful separation between groups and parties.[17] Much of this literature focuses on North American political systems (primarily the United States, which Tingley focuses on) which tends to be more right-wing that the political systems of many European nations, including the UK. Thérien concluded that 'the Left has traditionally contended that the definition of aid should be restrictive, so as to avoid an overblown representation of the developed countries' generosity. The Right has been inclined towards a broader definition that might include the widest possible range of donor practices'.[18] This translates to the practice of aid assistance where the Right tend to reduce assistance, focus on demonstrable results and/or the introduction of free markets to improve living conditions, while those on the Left focus on moral principles.[19]

A second category of writing focuses on the practical implications of such a party political division in attitudes to ODA. If governments on the right of the political axis are primarily focused on the efficacy of aid, it would be expected that aid programmes would be cut to reflect this priority, with untested or under-performing projects and funding streams halted. At the very least the focus of policy would be based on a more rigorous cost-benefit analysis.

A right of centre government would be likely to change the way in which aid was distributed and the measures of success, reforms which often lead to cuts or are inspired by the desire to limit funding. It could be argued that this was the case with the government of David Cameron (a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats between 2010-15, and then in a majority Conservative government between 2015-16), where funding levels remained at 0.7% GNI but the detail of aid allocation and oversight changed dramatically. Tingley argued that governments tend to reduce the level of aid assistance as they become more Conservative or right-wing, focusing on statistical modelling in order to prove his argument across the OECD nations.[20] He argued that the amount of effort which a government invested in its ODA programme was likely to decrease the more Conservative or right wing they were.[21] Tingley utilised the work of Noël and Thérien, Thérien, Boone and Chong and Gradstein.[22]

A third category focuses on specific nations to establish whether hypotheses focused on the importance of party political positioning are accurate. For example, Joly and Dandoy wrote on how political parties influence foreign policy in Belgium.[23] The UK has tended to be excluded from much, but not all, discussion of overseas development aid policy. Understandably, much of the pre-2000 literature excludes the UK due to a lack of significance, when Britain's overseas aid allocation was largely insignificant in comparison to larger monetary donors such as the US or Japan, or larger percentage donors such as Norway and Sweden. The academic study of the Blair governments' foreign policy has tended to focus on other aspects of Tony Blair's contentious foreign policy. For example, the work of Gaskarth, Daddow, Vickers and Wickham-Jones is indicative of the wider literature field, with the focus of their writing being on other issues, with ODA being given only limited consideration (for example, Daddow ; Dodds and Elden ; Dyson ; Gaskarth ; Little and Wickham-Jones ; Vickers).[24] Little exists which focuses extensively or principally on the

British ODA programme of the Blair government (see Whaites; White; Young; Payne; Honeyman; Honeyman).[25] Authors such as Joly and Dandoy and Fleck and Kilby have focused their writing on how political ideologies and rhetoric relate to the assistance policies of specific countries.[26] The UK has been, until now, largely overlooked in this research, with the focus being on other aspects of foreign policy.

Literature focusing on the developing nations where assistance is received, inevitably, rarely gives more than fleeting consideration to the motivations behind that policy or the inter-party debates which have preceded it. Relevant literature within this field tends to be focused on the principles and practices of donor nations globally, often focusing on the USA, Sweden and Japan but with little consideration of the UK, particularly pre-2000 when the Labour government's focus on ODA began to bear fruit (for example Alesina and Dollar ; Burnell ; Hook ; Maizels and Nissanke).[27] In studies published after 2000, the UK is usually included due to its status within the aid assistance sector and its commitment to the 0.7% UN target (for example Mawdsley; Riddell; Sogge).[28] These studies are helpful in explaining which issues influence donor nations, but they tend to focus on generalised issues which affect the majority of donors, such as aid effectiveness and how this is measured and assessed (for example Boone; Chong and Gradstein; Maizels and Nissanke).[29] Alesina and Dollar focused on specific justifications for aid, the amount of aid which was donated from specific nations and the nations they donated to.[30] This literature tells us much about the common issues which face donor nations, but they rarely focus on the domestic political battles which were needed to secure the aid budget in individual nations, particularly not those nations which are less prominent in the aid community. This literature tells us little of the motivating factors behind political parties' promises on aid, why they make such commitments and how their political position and ideological beliefs can impact on their aid programme.

The UK Example

Tingley argued that political parties could be placed on a simple x-axis positioning parties from left to right and that this crude positioning would indicate the amount of effort which a political party was willing to devote to development assistance.[31] While not specifically discussing this, it seems likely, given Tingley's background, that he is focusing on the United States political system. Dustin Tingley is a Professor of Government at Harvard University, having studied and worked in the US, firstly at the University of Rochester and then at Princeton, where he writes primarily on US foreign policy and ODA. The political spectrum in the UK tends to be more centrist, less right-wing than that of the US, meaning that both the UK's main political parties would be to the left of the axis which Tingley describes. Within this ideological bracket, the Labour Party would be identified as being to the left of centre, with a fluctuating position over time, being more to the left in the late 1970s and the period of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership (2015-Date), and more soft-left during the 1960s and the Neil Kinnock years (1983-1992).

The Blair years are more contentious. The creation of New Labour moved the party onto very centrist ground, occupying a position which was perhaps more centrist that soft-left, while still retaining some echoes of its left-wing political tradition, and even incorporating some more Conservative elements (such as, for example, a desire to incorporate private finance providers in the building and running of public buildings, primarily hospitals and schools, under the PFI programmes). Examples of long standing Labour policies being introduced by the Blair government include policies such as the National Minimum Wage, devolutionary power for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, increasing funding for public services and the focus on ethical dimensions to foreign policy. These policy initiatives were not singularly

driven by a left-wing heritage, but the focus upon them owed much to the party traditions and the long-standing priorities of the party. Indeed, the execution of these policies often garnered criticism from left-wing opponents, such as the low level of the National Minimum Wage. ODA was one such policy which owed its political prominence, and the party's long standing commitment to ODA, in part, to the left-wing traditions of the party. As Harriet Harman noted in a 2011 speech at the Labour Party Conference, the party had a ' longstanding commitment to international development – and […] Tony Blair and Gordon Brown made it a huge priority every single day of our Labour government … We are in the Labour Party because we hate injustice and inequality and together we fight against it'.[32] The original commitment to 0.7% GNI ODA spending was made by the Labour government of Harold Wilson in the 1970 election manifesto and every election manifesto released by the Labour Party between 1970 and 1997 repeated the pledge. It should be noted that the governments of Wilson (1974-76) and Callaghan (1976-79) did not introduce the 0.7% ODA funding target, despite their manifesto pledges. Therefore, it could easily be argued that Tony Blair was under no obligation to introduce it either, to make it more of an aspiration than a real target, but that was not the approach which the Blair government took. Instead, Gordon Brown argued that he and Tony Blair were both personally committed to an increase in ODA funding.

> I had hoped to do something to make a difference on world poverty ever since I was a child contributing articles and raising money for the Freedom from Hunger campaign. But it was only when I started to make visits to Asia and Africa that I saw at first hand the scale of poverty and yet the enormous potential of these two great continents. Like Tony, I wanted international development to have a far stronger profile.[33]

Therefore, using Tingley's hypothesis, we should expect that the New Labour governments, led by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, would commit considerable effort to ODA policy than the Conservative government which had gone before them, but perhaps less committed to it than the previous Labour administrations (who had not instituted it either). Therefore, using Tingley's hypothesis, it could easily be argued that New Labour would commit more effort to ODA, but not necessarily introduce the 0.7% ODA funding target, or work towards achieving it. However, that was not the case. New Labour not only increased attention on ODA, they also vastly increased funding. Therefore, the key research question here is did the New Labour governments act in this way because of their political position on the centre-left of British politics, as Noël, Thérien and Tingley would suggest, or were they motivated by other factors? Did they increase the status of the policy domestically and internationally? Importantly, how did they justify this change in emphasis? How did they 'sell' this policy to the public? To answer these questions, the article will consider the work of Breuning and the rhetoric of the Labour party leaders (Tony Blair and Gordon Brown) to establish their aims and objectives.[34]

Methodology; Political Rhetoric and Justification of Aid

One way in which the motivations of politicians can be analysed is through critical discourse analysis. By utilising software programmes, it is possible to analyse and categorise huge amounts of comment and discussion, allowing academics to understand, in more depth, the true motivations of politicians and the context of their commitments. However, there are limitations to this approach. In order for the results to have any validity, a certain amount of material is required and the type of material is also important. Speeches, while often being a way for politicians to explain their policy vision (and justifications) in greater depth, are often scripted by their aides, or have contributions made to them. That being the case, it is usually

the unscripted response to questions or the off-the-cuff remarks which are of particular interest, especially if they are of a reasonable length for analysis. Margaret Hermann, who writes on the personality traits of individual politicians using a form of discourse analysis, argues that within an interview 'political leaders are less in control of what they say and, even though still in a public setting, more likely to evidence what they, themselves, are like…'.[35] A distinction is therefore drawn between the scripted and the non-scripted, between what a politician wishes to communicate about their aims and what they inadvertently communicate, with the former often being of less interest than the latter.

These guidelines, while of crucial importance, limit the scope for discourse analysis and that is the case with the Labour Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in terms of ODA funding. In policy areas where material is more limited, discourse analysis cannot be undertaken, as the results lack rigour. Overseas development aid is one of these areas. There is a limited amount of evidence available on the specific views of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown on ODA, of how they fit into the ideology of the Labour Party, and their own personal commitment to this policy area. That which exists tends to be included in scripted or semi-scripted speeches, meaning that any systematic discourse analysis would be, at best, extremely partial leading to partial results. Part of the issue is that Tony Blair and Gordon Brown did not place themselves front and centre during debates, both in the House of Commons and in the media, on international development issues, despite both being self-professed supporters of the policy. This is surprising considering the commitment of the two men to development issues, and also the fact that Tony Blair is considered to be one of the most verbose Prime Ministers in living memory. He is considered by many to be an excellent communicator, but on this policy area, there is a distinct lack of evidence. One example of this is that neither Tony Blair nor Gordon Brown spoke in any depth on International Affairs

in the House of Commons during, the second and third readings of the International Development Act (2002). Any remarks they did make on international development were brief and therefore do not offer us a window into their souls on this issue. Indeed, when Tony Blair and Gordon Brown spoke of ODA post-2000, they were more likely to be simply reconfirming the party's commitment to the 0.7% target, or recapping their achievements in the policy field, not discussing their motivations or their future plans. This causes substantial problems when considering any linguistic analysis of the two men in relation to this policy area.

As discourse analysis is not suitable for this study, another form of analysis needs to be found to explain the motivations of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Therefore, this article utilised the work of Breuning to conduct an analysis of the rhetoric of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.[36] This involves collecting together the individual speeches and comments which Tony Blair made between 1997 and 2007, and Gordon Brown made between 1997and 2010 (first as Chancellor until 2007 and then as Prime Minister until 2010) which were focused on international development and which expanded on the basic policy of the party. This form of manual analysis was undertaken in a systematic way, but without the aid of specialist discourse analysis programmes. It required the gathering of all the speeches given by both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown while Prime Minister (and Chancellor in the case of Brown), both in the UK and overseas, where development aid was discussed in any depth. Those interviews were then initially analysed to remove any which focused only on superficial elements of the government's ODA programme, such as a reaffirmation of the 0.7% target. Each speech then had to be manually analysed by the author, but a framework was required to categorise the comments and words of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. This came in the form of Breuning's work on ODA and the discourse justifications she identified. By utilising

her framework, the words of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown are able to be categorised, not specifically in a quantitative format, but in a qualitative way, to label their discussion and categorise it to establish the prominence of certain justifications and reasoning at certain times. While this approach does not have the impartial rigour of computerised critical discourse analysis, it does allow us to study an area of policy which would be difficult, if not impossible, using traditional critical discourse analysis, as a lack of material would render the analysis invalid. That being said, it also means that the results are inevitably less systematic than a full discourse analysis, but this approach allows conclusions to be drawn based on rhetorical analysis, which allows us to analyse the motivations of the New Labour government in development terms to a much greater extent than previously achieved.

Breuning and the political motivations of donor nations

ODA funding can be a political 'hot potato' for governments. Spending money overseas with very little tangible pay-off or oversight can be very difficult to justify. However, between 1997 and 2010 self-interest was not a primary justification of ODA spending used by the Labour government of Tony Blair between 1997 and 2007. Instead the message delivered by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown focused on morality and the necessity of developed nations to assist developing nations to create a fairer world. This language is not something we would expect to see from a government which was pursuing their ODA policy for more self-interested reasons, largely because of the difficulty of justifying an ideologically driven policy. For example, the government of David Cameron (first in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats between 2010 and 2015, then as a single Conservative party government between 2015 and 2016) maintained the 0.7% ODA target. Their 2008 Green Paper on Overseas Development Aid argued that:

> We believe we can bring to the fight against global poverty weapons and techniques that will make more of a difference to more people: a focus on aid effectiveness and value for money; and understanding of the value of wealth creation and the means to foster it; a recognition that security is the precondition for sustainable development and hard-headed proposals to improve conflict resolution.[37]

Were pragmatic justifications the primary motivation for a national government, it would be expected that they would feature in the public pronouncements made by that government. They would be a valid and justifiable motivating factor for any domestic government, and therefore there would be little reason to hide them and utilise more moralistic arguments instead. It should be noted at this juncture, that for the majority of this time period, Britain's economy was performing well. With the financial crash in 2008, it would seem likely that economic necessity may influence the message being used to justify ODA spending.

Marijke Breuning is a Professor at the Univesity of North Texas, focusing her research and writing on foreign policy analysis. She is originally from the Netherlands, but has lived and worked in the US for several decades. Breuning argued that the motivations provided by politicians to justify ODA could be separated into four categories. The justifications given by an individual or government could fall solely into one category, or fit into several categories at the same time, with the different justifications being influenced by the audience, current events etc. She labelled these 'the good neighbour', 'the merchant', 'the powerbroker' and 'the activist'.[38] The key facets of each group are explained below in table two:

[Table Two Here]

Breuning argues that 'the themes associated with certain role conceptions will be mentioned more frequently in the parliament of one state versus that of another'.[39] Therefore, were a particular motivation to be identified in the statements and pronouncements of a politician, particularly if that politician were a policy driver and highly influential, such as Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, it could be determined that that motivation was a driving force behind the policy itself. These motivations are extremely difficult to empirically measure, indeed Fleck and Kilby argue that some motivations are simply *impossible* to measure empirically, meaning qualitative methods need to be employed, including the analysis of rhetoric and argument repetition.[40]

Using Breuning's definitions, we can expect different rhetoric from different actors. If Tingley's hypothesis is correct, we would expect the New Labour governments to increase the profile of ODA because they viewed it as a moral imperative, essentially being a 'good neighbour' in Breuning's categorisations. A 'good neighbour' nation (or government or party) would view aid as charity with a rhetorical theme of 'ethical and moral obligation'.[41] We can therefore test the hypothesis of Tingley by focusing on the rhetoric of the Blair and Brown governments on development assistance, particularly the language used by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown themselves. Tony Blair has made no secret of his views on ODA or on the importance of morality in foreign policy. Speaking in 2007, he argued 'I believe in the power of political action to make the world better and the moral obligation to use it'.[42] Debate still rages on how 'new' this approach to foreign policy was, but many argue that the rhetoric used to justify foreign policy changed with the Blair government, with morality and ethics featuring far more prominently in the public justification of policy (for debate, please see Daddow and Schnapper; Gaskarth; Honeyman; Ralph).[43]

While the motivations of the individuals are crucial in explaining ODA policy, the audience is also important. Any party who wishes to become the governing party or maintain their political advantage needs to ensure that their message is acceptable to the electorate. While it would be expected that any party elected to government was providing a message acceptable to the electorate for at least a short period of time around the general election,that can change over time, something which happened to the New Labour governments led by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. In the three general elections in 1997, 2001 and 2005, the Labour vote reduced at each election (63.4% in 1997, 62.5% in 2001 and 55% in 2005).[44] Gordon Brown faced the electorate just once, in 2010, when he received fewer votes than the Conservative party, who then formed a coalition with the Liberal Democrats. As their electoral advantage began to recede, it would be expected that the New Labour government would temper their political message across a wide variety of policy areas, including development assistance to recapture disillusioned voters. While ODA is not an issue which motivates the majority of voters, a move to the right by the electorate necessitates a politician to adapt their political message across a wide variety of policy areas, demonstrating that they are 'in touch' with the concerns of the electorate and have their finger on the political pulse of the nation. As the voting public began to move gradually to the right on the political x-axis, with more people voting Conservative over the time period, the expectation would be that the public's willingness to accept an existing development assistance programme based on moral reasons would decrease and instead more pragmatic arguments would need to be employed.

As New Labour became less popular amongst the electorate and began to move more to the centre ground (i.e. to their political right), it would be expected that the political message on ODA would change. While the motivations of the government and its key members might remain the same, we would expect to see more pragmatic, self-interested language being used

to justify the ODA programme. Using Breuning's categorisations, we would expect the rhetoric from the New Labour government's to combine the language of a 'good neighbour' with more pragmatically based categories such as the 'merchant', 'activist' or 'power-broker'. Combined with discussion of morality, we would expect to see an increase in language focused on the benefits of trade relationships between donor and recipient nations or discussion of natural justice. This more wide ranging argument would demonstrate the need to moderate and shape the message to speak to a changing electorate.

Financial constraints would also increase pressure on ODA, impacting on the arguments used to justify the policy. However, despite expectations to the contrary (for example, Manji)[45], the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition from 2010 to 2015 and the Cameron government from 2015 to 2016 did not cut the ODA budget, and the target was enshrined into law in 2015. In the absence of a policy reversal, it would be expected that the *execution* of ODA would change, and that the message being used to justify that aid spending to the British public (and Tory voters specifically) would change. While the Blair and Brown governments may have been able to rely on morality to justify aid spending to their own supporters, we would expect more pragmatic, self-interested justifications to develop over time, as the Blair majority was eroded, with the Conservative government of David Cameron (2010-16) focusing more specifically on cost-effectiveness and benefits for Britain. The work of Fleck and Kilby also suggests that the Conservative party would be likely to alter the allocation criteria for aid, meaning that the headline policy would remain intact, but the execution of that policy would change significantly.[46] We can now test our assertions regarding New Labour in the next section. As discussed above, effective discourse analysis of material can be difficult, especially if there are issues with scripted responses or speeches. In these cases, the material needs to be dealt with in a qualitative way, to establish whether

individual speeches and responses correspond and link with the breadth of speeches and material produced, as has been done here. The quotations and extracts here are replicated elsewhere, suggesting that Blair and Brown were expressing views which they were attached to, rather than parroting back a singular response during a conference or press release.

The Blair Governments - Good Neighbour, Merchant, Power Broker or Activist?

When the Tony Blair Labour government came to office in 1997 (1997-2007) with a massive majority, it faced a decimated Conservative opposition, which allowed a great deal of latitude. Critics of the Blair administration, prior to 2000, were in relatively short supply and were often ignored by the media. The work of Tingley would indicate that in such circumstances, a centre-left party would increase the importance of development assistance (both politically and financially) and, using Breuning's categorisations, we would expect that change to be justified to the public in 'good neighbour' terms. Indeed, that is exactly what happened during the first Blair administration between 1997 and 2001. ODA spending was massively increased with a commitment to reach the UN goal of 0.7%GNI spending, the creation of a new Department of International Development (previously development assistance had been handled by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and a new Secretary of State, Clare Short, with a seat in cabinet.

The first white paper which was issued by the Department for International Development in November 1997 included a foreword, written by the Secretary of State, Clare Short. It is interesting that Tony Blair did not contribute to this white paper, again suggesting a level of confidence in Clare Short and a desire to allow her to get on with the task of leading DFID. That being said, it seems certain that the white paper and Clare Short's foreword would have been read and agreed with Tony Blair prior to publication. Clare Short wrote that the aim of

DFID was to 'eliminate poverty. It is about ensuring that the poorest people in the world benefit as we move towards a new global society'.[47] Indeed, the foreword of the white paper makes no reference to how Britain can benefit from ODA assistance, other than to argue that if issues were not dealt with 'there is a real danger that, by the middle of the next century, the world will simply not be sustainable.' The impression given was that morality was a good enough reason for development assistance in itself, but that without such assistance, unspecified problems might become more pressing in the coming years. Clare Short spoke of Britain having a 'duty to care about other people, in particular those less well off than ourselves'.[48] This echoes Short's written response to a Parliamentary question asking about the role of ethics in the work of DFID in 1997. Clare Short replied that 'ethics will be at the heart of our international development policy'.[49] This is indicative of the language used by the Blair government to justify aid assistance, with the focus primarily on morality rather than any potential benefit for the UK. As Mawdsley notes

> All donors – North and South – construct a narrative that blends how these elements are framed, balanced and projected. In the case of DFID under New Labour, there was a heavy tilt towards the high moral ground, and DFID did indeed achieve some positive and progressive outcomes, notably around policy coherence for development'.[50]

In his 1998 Labour Party Conference speech, Tony Blair again made the moral case for aid, arguing

> Thousands of communities, tens of thousands of people, many starving and destitute, will live not die, have hope, not despair and may never know it was a new Labour

> government in Britain that had the courage to say: 'You are our brothers and sisters and we accept our duty to you as members of the same human race.[51]

As an aside, the Blair government continued to build Britain's ODA identity internationally by contributing to the creation of the UN Millennium Goals. The government also raised issues of aid assistance at key international group meetings, such as when the UK hosted the G8 meeting in 2005 at Gleneagles, again reinforcing its new role at the top table of international politics. The issues being faced by the developing world had changed since the 1984 Live Aid campaign, and there were a number of global initiatives coming to prominence at the turn of the 21st century. The Jubilee 2000 campaign focused its attention around the millennium on the cancellation of debt, something which both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were supportive of. Despite the rise in awareness of development issues in countries such as the UK and the USA, few politicians were willing to make practical contributions to the developing world, as evidenced after the 2005 G8 meeting. The members of the G8 made several economic commitments at the G8 meeting in Gleneagles, although, as is the nature of the G8, none of these commitments was binding. The vast majority of these commitments were ignored and overlooked, with numerous nations using the 2008 financial crisis as a reason for them to wriggle out of their previous commitments. The commitments made by the Blair government were the exception to this. While it is certainly accurate to note that both politicians and the public became more aware of development issues, and there was certainly more funding committed to these long-standing problems, the Blair government, and the Labour party, can pre-date their commitment to the developing world to this more widespread interest.

However, our interpretation of Tingley would suggest that as the electorate began to move towards the centre and centre-right, development assistance would come under pressure, with more pragmatic benefits being sought by the electorate to justify overseas spending. We would expect a change in the rhetoric of the government, meaning they would 'sell' development assistance in different terms. Using Breuning's categorisations, we would expect elements of the 'merchant' rhetoric to be included alongside those of the 'good neighbour', meaning morality would be combined with discussion of trade benefits. This change in rhetoric can be seen in the 2000 DFID White Paper *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor*.[52] The document has two forewords, one by the Prime Minister Tony Blair, and the second from the Secretary of State Clare Short, a change from the previous DFID white paper. In his foreword, Tony Blair began by stating that eliminating world poverty is 'the greatest moral challenge facing our generation'. In the very next sentence, he states 'it is also in the UK's national interest'. The rest of his second paragraph discuss the benefits of aid assistance for Britain, a theme he returns to in his concluding statement stating that eliminating poverty will create 'a world that is more stable and secure for our children and grandchildren'.[53] In her foreword, Clare Short focuses on the work which DFID had already done and the economic inequality which DFID was aiming to eliminate. She focused on morality, stating that 'I hope that this White Paper will help people of moral conscience and those with an intelligent concern for future generations – in all parts of the world – to join together to achieve a more decent and sustainable future for us all'.[54] It is clear that while Clare Short remains focused on the moral case for increasing development funding, space is already being given, within the Prime Minister's message, to the positive benefits which aid giving can have in the UK. Indeed, this may reflect their own positions in the party. Tony Blair was a centrist figure, with some left-wing inclinations but certainly not

a left-winger by nature. Short was on the left of the Labour party, and was seen as an unusual inclusion in Tony Blair's first cabinet. As Blair wrote in his autobiography

> Though I can see Alastair's [Campbell] look of disgust as I write this (he couldn't stand her) I did think she [Clare Short] had real leadership talent; the trouble was she thought people who disagreed with her were wicked rather than wrong – a common failing of politicians – and when she turned sour, she could be very bitter indeed. But we should be proud of our record and she of her part in it.[55]

In chapter one, point 12 of this white paper the change is fairly stark. 'Making globalisation work more effectively for the world's poor is a moral imperative. It is also in our common interest. Many of the world's contemporary challenges … are caused or exacerbated by poverty and inequality'.[56] This is a theme repeatedly returned to in the white paper and represents a change in language from DFID. Tony Blair also discussed this idea in a speech given in Germany, also in 2000, when he argued 'I believe we will only succeed if we start to develop a doctrine of international community based on the principle of enlightened self-interest. As within countries, so between countries. A community based on the equal worth of all, on the foundation of mutual rights and mutual responsibilities'.[57] As Gallagher argues, Tony Blair was able to present morality and ethics in foreign policy as being in sync with British self-interest and this theme 'morality working in tandem with enlightened self-interest - was to become a defining feature of the Government's approach to foreign policy'.[58] By using morality to justify development assistance and other policies relating to the developing world, Gallagher indicates that the underlying message was that by being a 'good global citizen', Britain would reap the practical benefits. The practical benefits for Britain did not have to be explicitly discussed, but were bundled up with issues of morality. This language

fits well with Breuning's 'merchant' category, and demonstrates the change in language from 1997 to 2000, and a combination of the 'good neighbour' and 'merchant' categories to speak to different audiences – those supportive of ODA and those seeking more pragmatic benefits for the UK after three years of a New Labour government.

We can see that Tony Blair had begun to adapt his message, tailoring it in order to ensure it spoke more clearly to the intended audience. That audience had changed because of the public's experience of the Blair government, after three years in Downing Street. Speaking at a 'Faith in Politics' conference in London in March 2001, Tony Blair was keen to discuss the importance of reform in ODA policy. Rather than focusing on the moral argument of development assistance, which might be expected at a meeting on faith, Tony Blair instead focused on the idea of basic justice, arguing that

> We need more development aid from everyone in the international system; and we need to ensure that it is used more effectively. We need better terms of trade for poor countries and policies to help them attract greater flows of private investment. We need policies to tackle corruption and to promote effective governance and human rights. We need a stronger voice for poor countries within international institutions, and action to protect the environment. And we need increased investment in education and health.[59]

Breuning's categorisations indicate that a rhetorical justification of development assistance focusing on social justice would suggest Tony Blair was moving into the realm of the 'activist', thereby demonstrating a change in his own thinking and a multi-faceted justification of ODA – morality, trade benefit and global social justice.[60] This evolution in Tony Blair's thinking and rhetoric coincides with Blair's growing interest in Africa and the

difference that the UK could make across the continent. By 2003, Tony Blair was extoling the benefits of ODA on the relationships which Britain had with developing countries, arguing that 'For many of those countries, our relations today are being transformed, with DFID helping to give us a relationship of equality, trust and partnership. We should deepen it at every turn'.[61] In his 2004 Labour Party Conference speech, Tony Blair again discussed ODA, but this discussion focused on the importance of aid in conjunction with anti-corruption legislation, trade linkages and other mechanisms for improving the lives of those in developing nations, both 'activist' and 'merchant' rhetoric. In his autobiography, Tony Blair returns to this 'activist' justification, arguing 'on Africa, I tried constantly to get them to see free trade, with aid for trade, as an essential African interest, but it was virtually impossible'.[62] Tony Blair argued that as leader of the G8 in 2005 'we will try for consensus on a new plan for Africa, not only on aid and trade but on conflict resolution, on fighting corruption, on the killer diseases Aids, malaria and TB, on education, water, infrastructure'.[63] Here we can see elements of Breuning's 'power broker' category in Blair's rhetoric, with international development both being furthered via international organisations, and being utilised by the Blair government to build Britain's international identity. It is clear that the justification has begun to change here, but also that Tony Blair's focus has moved on, and it seems likely that the two factors are linked. As Tony Blair begins to focus on Africa as a whole, his views on ODA become tied up with his desire for greater economic development, the introduction of more economical liberalism and democratic practices across Africa.

The rhetorical arguments Tony Blair made represented not simply a change in audience, but a change in justification. For example, if we compare Tony Blair's comments on ODA at the 1994 Labour Party Conference with those given at the party conference ten years later, while his audience remained largely supportive of the policy, his justification has moved from the

'good neighbour' rhetoric to being far more pragmatic in nature. Between 1994 and 2003, Tony Blair had moved his focus onto other issues in the developing world, particularly onto Africa, which became something of a preoccupation for him, and therefore his discussion of ODA in public shifted to a restatement of what the party had achieved, rather than a justification of policy which was being enacted.

The Brown Government – Good Neighbour, Merchant, Power Broker or Activist?

As a leading member of the Blair government, it was expected that when Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, many of the policies from the previous administration would remain in place. Gordon Brown could not have discredited the work of the Blair government without discrediting himself as a key member of it. Additionally, Brown was very closely associated with the ODA policies of the Blair government, using his position as Chancellor to fund the 0.7%GNI commitment and the commitments made by the British government at the 2005 G8 meeting. In his first speech after accepting the Labour Party leadership in 2007, Gordon Brown returned to Tony Blair's discussion of natural justice arguing

> we all want to address the roots of injustice, I can tell you today that we will strengthen and enhance the work of the department of international development and align aid, debt relief and trade policies to wage an unremitting battle against the poverty, illiteracy, disease and environmental degradation that it has fallen to our generation to eradicate.[64]

From the beginning of his time as Prime Minister, Gordon Brown was utilising the rhetoric of Breuning's 'Activist', focusing on social justice as the justification for an increase in development assistance spending. However, he was also, as Tony Blair did before him,

focusing on morality (the 'good neighbour' rhetoric) and trade (the 'merchant' rhetoric). This demonstrates how the New Labour governments had moved in terms of their rhetoric. This repeated use of the wider arguments suggests that the views of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have evolved along with their message and the attitudes of their audience, moving beyond funding issues to questions of natural justice and the implicit debt owed to the developing world beyond mere charity. While morality may have been the initial spur behind the development assistance policy, more justifications and benefits appear to have been identified by the two men, and they are using these to sell development assistance to the public. Speaking in 2008 at the Lambeth Conference, as the effects of the financial crash were beginning to bite, Gordon Brown again returned to the issue of justice, arguing 'the poor of the world have been patient, but 100 years is too long for people to wait for justice and that is why we must act now'.[65]

Writing in *The Independent* in early 2010, Gordon Brown renewed his government's commitment to ODA, a subject which he was clearly personally committed to.[66] He argued that assistance was important but was not 'the whole solution'. Instead he outlined a number of initiatives the British government would be involved in including trade linkages. 'We must encourage the capacity of developing countries to grow their own way out of poverty. There is, through the G20, a new opportunity to pursue global growth that includes and benefits low-income economies'. [67]This article again demonstrates that Gordon Brown is utilising a variety of different rhetorical arguments to justify the prominence and increasing spending of development assistance, using all four of Breuning's categories. By discussing the G20, Gordon Brown was, like Tony Blair before him, utilising the issue of development assistance to protect Britain's global status, as well as using the G20 to achieve greater benefits for developing nations. This change in rhetoric is further demonstrated in the Labour Party's

2010 manifesto. The manifesto section on global poverty begins by focusing on the previous actions of the Labour government, before moving on to focus on future policy. As part of this package, the manifesto notes that

> Trade can lift millions out of poverty. We will work with the private sector, trade unions and co-operatives to promote sustainable development, quadruple our funding for fair and ethical trade, and press for a fair World Trade Organisation deal, with no enforced liberalisation for poor countries, and increased duty-free and quota-free access .[68]

Here, Gordon Brown is combining arguments from Breuning's 'good neighbour', 'merchant', 'power broker' and 'activist' categorisations, demonstrating an evolution in his own thinking and the changes in the electorate. This change in rhetoric suggests that the electorate are requiring more pragmatic benefits to be identified to maintain the development assistance policy, suggesting a move to the right in the electorate, something which is borne out by the results of the general elections in 2001, 2005 and 2010. In 2001, Blair maintained his majority with the Conservatives only gaining 1 extra seat on their 1997 result (up from 165 to 166). Blair's New Labour government saw a minor reduction in voter share (from 63.4% in 1997 to 62.5% in 2001). In 2005, while Blair maintained his majority government, Labour's share of the vote reduced from 62.5% in 2001 to 55% in 2005. The Conservative party gained 32 seats with a 5.5% increase in their overall vote. In 2010, the Conservatives were elected as the largest party with 306 seats and 47.2% of the vote, demonstrating a gradual move to the right in the electorate, something which could be seen in the change in rhetoric of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.[69] A further indication of growing weariness and caution within the British electorate can be seen in the Public Attitudes Survey conducted on behalf of DFID.

This covered the period 2008 to 2010, but demonstrates declining support for development aid projects from the British public. Between 2008 and 2010, the numbers supporting an increase in government action fell from 49% to 35%. During the same time period, those supporting the statement that 'most aid is wasted' increased from 47% to 53%, and those supporting the statement that 'corruption makes it pointless donating' increased from 44% to 57%.[70]

Conclusion

The commitment to increase ODA spending was one of the most striking policies of the New Labour governments. While ODA is rarely a vote winner for political parties in the UK, it can be utilised by political opponents to attack a party, supposedly demonstrating a lack of awareness of domestic tensions and pressures or even a desire to help 'others' beyond British citizens – the ultimate action of the 'do-gooders'. Both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown made their personal commitment to increase ODA spending clear during their time in office, but their justifications for the policy changed over the duration of the New Labour government. As this article has demonstrated, between 1997 and 2000, the New Labour government focused on morality as the key motivation behind their ODA agenda. However, the language of morality was gradually eroded with more pragmatic, UK-centric factors playing a more prominent role from 2000 onwards.

Noël and Thérien argued that the more left wing a party was, the more effort that the party was likely to devote to development assistance and aid.[71] Second wave writers, such as Tingley argued that the more right wing a political party was, the more likely they were to view ODA and assistance in pragmatic terms. The focus was on the benefits for the donor nation rather than the benefits for the recipient nation. Conversely, the more left wing the

party, the more likely they were to focus on the needs of the recipient nation, rather than the cost-benefit analysis of aid assistance. For New Labour, their positioning on the crude left to right scale is a little more complicated than for some other political parties. While the Labour Party has traditionally been the largest left-wing party in the UK, it has, like many political parties, vacillated in its political beliefs. During the leadership of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown the party was at one of its most centrist points.

This article has used the work of Breuning to demonstrate the importance of specific language in explaining motivations in ODA policy. While politicians may 'sell' policies in different ways to different audiences, for the Blair and Brown governments, the argument has changed gradually over time, rather than vacillating depending on the specific audience. The New Labour government would be expected, using the work of Tingley, to commit some considerable effort to its development assistance programme, and we can see this is the case between 1997 and 2010. Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Clare Short all focused on the 'good neighbour' approach to development, focusing on the moral argument for ODA. However, as the electoral success of the government began to decrease and their experience in office increased, we see a change in language. While the 'good neighbour' approach is still utilised, it is combined with the language Breuning attaches to the 'merchant', where the trade benefits for both donor and recipient are highlighted. By 2003 we can also see Breuning's 'activist' role being utilised, with discussion of 'natural justice' or 'social justice' combined with morality and trade as the justification for an increase in aid. By 2004, we can see Breuning's 'activist' role being utilised, with Tony Blair, and later, Gordon Brown, discussing the international momentum for change in development assistance, referencing both the G8 and the G20. By discussing the importance of international organisations, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were not simply stating the importance of a global response to ODA

issues, but the important role of the UK within that discussion. As the British electorate changed, and the New Labour government gained experience, their motivations for furthering ODA policy adapted and changed, as would be expected using Tingley's work.

This article has argued that Tingley's work on the political positioning of parties and the impact on their ODA programmes can be proved using the British example of the New Labour governments from 1997 to 2010. Looking forward, using the approaches taken here, we would expect to see ODA funding increase under a left wing government, such as a potential Jeremy Corbyn administration, or remain in its current form under a continuing Conservative government. Under a more left wing government, we should expect, using Breuning's theory, that ODA funding would be justified in charitable terms, using the good neighbour approach. However, were a more right wing Conservative government to be elected, perhaps under the leadership of an individual such as Jacob Rees-Mogg, it seems likely that the commitment to 0.7% GNI would be reduced, and the remaining funding would be justified in terms of pragmatic self-interest, primarily the merchant or possible powerbroker approaches.

TABLE ONE: Britain's ODA Donations 1964 – 1998[72]

Year	Party in Power	Prime Minister	£ ODA Funding (net)	% Gross National Income
1964	Conservatives / Labour	Douglas-Home / Wilson	4205.5	0.527
1965	Labour	Wilson	3794.2	0.469

1966	Labour	Wilson	3717.9	0.453
1967	Labour	Wilson	3695.2	0.440
1968	Labour	Wilson	3467.5	0.401
1969	Labour	Wilson	3739.1	0.428
1970	Labour	Heath	3436.5	0.389
1971	Labour	Heath	4017.5	0.441
1972	Labour	Heath	3948.5	0.419
1973	Labour	Heath	3566.6	0.355
1974	Conservatives / Labour	Heath / Wilson	3903.1	0.397
1975	Labour	Wilson	3759.9	0.384
1976	Labour	Wilson / Callaghan	3924.7	0.388
1977	Labour	Callaghan	4470.4	0.440
1978	Labour	Callaghan	473.3	0.455
1979	Labour / Conservatives	Callaghan / Thatcher	5568.7	0.515
1980	Conservatives	Thatcher	3631.0	0.347
1981	Conservatives	Thatcher	4418.2	0.426
1982	Conservatives	Thatcher	3868.2	0.371
1983	Conservatives	Thatcher	3777.5	0.352
1984	Conservatives	Thatcher	3633.5	0.334
1985	Conservatives	Thatcher	3817.9	0.334
1986	Conservatives	Thatcher	3632.7	0.313
1987	Conservatives	Thatcher	3328.8	0.275

1988	Conservatives	Thatcher	4084.8	0.321
1989	Conservatives	Thatcher	4034.2	0.312
1990	Conservatives	Thatcher / Major	3507.6	0.274
1991	Conservatives	Major	4021.0	0.319
1992	Conservatives	Major	3972.8	0.312
1993	Conservatives	Major	4075.4	0.312
1994	Conservatives	Major	4324.5	0.307
1995	Conservatives	Major	4101.4	0.286
1996	Conservatives	Major	3980.9	0.274
1997	Conservatives / Labour	Major / Blair	4033.0	0.262
1998	Labour	Blair	4436.0	0.274

TABLE2: Breuning's Categorisation of Donor Nations[73]

Type of Donor	**What does the nation perceive?**	**Perceived Global Environment**	**Rhetorical Themes**	**Result**
The Good Neighbour	restraint	orderly	Aid as charity, moral argument	Reinforces status quo, rather than challenging
The Merchant	restraint	anarchic	Benefits of trade to both donor nation and recipient	'focus on low politics'
The Powerbroker	opportunity	anarchic	Need to support 'friendly' government – pro-western? Pro-	'States have the power to take advantages of [existing] opportunities'

			democracy?	
The Activist	opportunity	orderly	Focus on stability and social justice	'achieving greater international equity serves the long-term self-interest of the donor'

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