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The United Kingdom Government and the 0.7 Percent International Aid Target: Opinion amongst Conservative Parliamentarians

Abstract

This paper exploits a detailed dataset of the parliamentary Conservative Party (PCP) of 2010 to 2015 in order to identify opinion towards legally enshrining that 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) should be spent on international aid. Using a range of methods to determine attitudes we position every Conservative parliamentarian into three different categories vis-à-vis international aid – (1). Aid critics, who openly opposed and / or voted for the 0.7 percent target; (2) Aid sceptics, who abstained in parliamentary divisions on the 0.7 target; and (3). Aid advocates who voted for the 0.7 percent and spoke out for it. We apply this and test, through the use of multivariate analysis, a set of hypotheses that includes social background variables – i.e. age and gender; political variables – i.e. constituency marginality; ministerial status and leadership vote; and ideological variables – i.e. attitudes towards same sex marriage and membership of the European Union.

Keywords: Conservative Party, Prime Minister David Cameron, British foreign policy; British Overseas Development Aid, Parliamentary behaviour.

Introduction

This paper makes a distinctive contribution to the academic literature on UK government policy vis-à-vis spending on international aid under the Prime Ministerial leadership of David Cameron. The Conservative Party and international aid policy provides scholars with a fascinating insight into party change, and as a policy case study it fits into one of the criteria of change identified by Harmel and Janda (1994) in their seminal work defining party change – the others being rules, structures, strategies and tactics.

We have selected this as a policy case study for the following reason. Between 2010 and 2015 public scepticism about international aid spending being immune from the austerity drive gathered momentum, in part stimulated by a highly sceptical right wing print media (Cawley, 2015). Despite this, Cameron, as the modernising leader of a party that had hitherto not been known for being

pro-international aid (Chaney, 2013), persisted in not only ring fencing spending in international aid, but increasing it during a time of widespread public expenditure cuts. Given the absence of a clear shift in policy mood *towards* increasing spending on international aid, then the challenge for Cameron was to persuade fellow parliamentarians of the case for increased international aid spending. The aim of this paper is to see how successful Cameron was at converting his party to one of his central modernising causes – for an overview of Conservative modernisation, see Peele and Francis, 2016.

What differentiates this paper from other papers on international aid policy post 2010 (Mawdsley, 2011, 2015, Manji 2016ⁱ), is that our focus is on the attitudes of members of the PCP. Our central research question is as follows: how much support was there within the PCP for the leadership position for legally enshrining that 0.7 percent of GNIⁱⁱ should be spent on international aid? In addressing this central research question we will use a range of methods – e.g. division lists, parliamentary speeches, media interviews - to define every Conservative parliamentarian as either aid critics (voted againstⁱⁱⁱ or spoke out against the 0.7 percent target); aid sceptics (abstained from voting for the 0.7 percent target and did not speak out for it in or outside of Parliament); or aid advocates (voted for the 0.7 percent target and / or spoke out in its favour). The position of each Conservative parliamentarian will form part of larger database of the 2010 to 2015 PCP covering a range of social, political and ideological variables. The paper then constructs a series of hypotheses to test if any correlations existed (or did not) between attitudes to international aid spending and age, gender, constituency marginality; ministerial status, leadership vote, same sex marriage and the EU.

Although the ultimate objective of the paper is to use multivariate analysis to test a series of hypotheses about the PCP and international aid it is important to understand the debates within the party on this issue. As such the paper will be broken down into the following sections. The first section will identify the significance of a centre-right government ring fencing spending on international aid in a time of economic constraint. This feeds into the second and third sections of the paper, where we explain the rationale for international aid prioritisation from aid advocates alongside the case against from aid sceptics from within the PCP. In section four we construct a set of hypotheses to test in relation to our social, political and ideological variables, and we explain how our dataset on the PCP was constructed. In the fifth section we outline our research findings and in the final section we analyse their significance to our understanding of Conservative modernisation.

The Significance of the Cameron Government's Prioritisation of International Aid

In his resignation speech Cameron took considerable pride in his record vis-à-vis international aid (Cameron, 2016). His claims not only have substance but they defied expectations, because in the latter stages of the 2010 to 2015 Parliament the target of spending 0.7 percent of GNI on international aid was met. An increase in spending from £8,766 billion in 2012 to £11,437 billion in 2013 propelled the UK Government from 0.56 to 0.71 percent. This was sustained in 2014 and provisional estimates for 2015 suggest the figure will be 0.72 percent or £12.24 billion (Lunn and Booth, 2016). Meeting the target has to be placed within a comparative context – i.e. amongst G8 countries, the UK Government was the first to hit their international aid target (at 0.72 percent), far ahead, for example, of the United States figure of 0.19 percent (OECD 2014). Amongst EU member states only three other nations – Sweden (at 1.02 percent in 2013 and first reached in 1974), Denmark (0.85 percent in 2013 and first reached 1978) and Luxembourg (1.00 percent in 2013, and first reached 2000) – had superior international aid to national income ratios than the UK. Amongst Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members, the UK was ranked fifth, behind the above nations, plus Norway (1.07 percent and first reached in 1976) (Booth, 2014).

That desire to surpass the 0.7 percent target explained the decision to ring fence spending for the Department for International Development (DfID), exempting them from the swinging cuts to public expenditure that would characterise the economic plan of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition (Heppell and Lightfoot, 2012). Furthermore, the enacting of the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act of 2015 placed future UK Governments under a legal obligation to spend 0.7 percent of GNI on aid, making the UK the first member of the OECD to enshrine the 0.7 percent target in law (Manji, 2016). This commitment is significant for the following reasons.

First, the circumstances were against international aid prioritisation. A straightforward (and long standing) assumption is that in times of economic downturn the pressures of budgetary constraints contributes towards governments reducing their prioritisation of international aid (for this perspective see, for example, Tingley, 2010 and Dang *et al*, 2013). Heinrich *et al* have suggested governmental commitment to international aid might be shaped more by the need for politicians to be responsive to public opinion. Their more nuanced perspective suggests that reductions in international aid are not immediate, and that when that reduction occurs it is because politicians

are responding to the fact that voters' begin to place a lower emphasis on international aid in times of financial constraint (Heinrich *et al*, 2016).

Second, it was assumed that public opinion would be against international aid prioritisation. That is because although the electorate may display an interest in using international aid for the assistance of reducing poverty, they do so in an abstract sense – i.e. their commitment is shallow and involves achieving a balance between prioritising global and domestic poverty reduction (Henson and Lindstrom, 2013). Therefore, sustaining electoral support for strategies that are orientated towards global poverty reduction have to overcome voters' concerns about wasting resources and their perceptions about corruption in developing countries (see Van Heerde and Hudson, 2010; Hudson and Van Heerde, 2013). These assumptions about the shallowness of electoral concerns, which become more pronounced in times of financial crises, should have acted as a driver away from the position that Cameron and the Conservatives chose to adopt in government.

Third, international aid prioritisation represented a clear break with tradition within the Conservative Party. When the Conservatives had entered office in May 1979 the international aid to national income ratio had reached 0.51 percent due to the impact of Labour being in office since March 1974, but over the course of eighteen years of Conservative rule it dipped significantly to 0.27 percent^{iv} (Claire Short, HC Deb, 21 May 1997). The subordination of idealistic concerns to national interest, meant that although Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was willing to accept the 0.7 percent target in 'principle', progress towards it was dependent upon domestic economic considerations, and that her government was 'not able to set a date for achieving it' (HC Deb, 6 June 1989; see also Bose and Burnell, 1991).

Their low prioritisation of international aid was also evident from machinery of government changes made in the 1960s and 1970s. The Labour administrations of 1964 to 1970 and 1974 to 1979 had created the institutional apparatus throughout which to drive forward international aid as a foreign policy priority – in the shape of the Ministry for Overseas Development (ODM). However, in both 1970 and 1979 the incoming Conservative administrations subsumed the activities of the ODM within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The post 1997 Labour administrations re-established a separate department – DfID - and the international aid to national income ratio under Labour increased from 0.27 percent when they entered power to 0.57 percent by the time of their defeat in the General Election of 2010 (Fisher, 2015). It was not just that there

was a substantial increase on international aid spending under Labour, but their approach to international aid policy, (in the early years of power at least), was said to be a model for other rich countries (Morrisey, 2005). That trend towards centre-left wing administrations prioritising international aid, by aligning their objective of poverty elimination to the rhetoric of equality, rights and humanitarianism, applies not just to the British Labour Party vis-à-vis their Conservative counterparts (Chaney, 2013). It is a trend that can be seen within the comparative literature with ideological assumptions explaining policy formulation. For example, countries with centre-left administrations see international aid spending increase, and countries with centre-right administrations see the reverse (Therien and Noel, 2000; and Therien, 2002) because for the right international aid ‘represents interference’ in the economies of both the donor and recipient countries and this could ‘crowd out investment opportunities in recipient countries’ (Tingley, 2010, 42).

The Rationale for International Aid Prioritisation

Given the above what explains the decision to prioritise international aid? The first driver relates to the impact of Cameron, who invested a considerable amount of time and political capital on his commitment to the 0.7 percent target, and other key elites such as George Osborne (Chancellor of the Exchequer 2010-16) and Andrew Mitchell (Secretary of State for International Development 2010-12) and Justine Greening who succeeded Mitchell in 2012 (Ashcroft and Oakeshott, 2015, 279-85).

The commitment had a moral element to it and this was evident from the rhetoric used by Cameron and leading Conservatives (Seldon and Snowdon, 2015, 479-82). When entering office Mitchell offered an evocative rhetorical statement promising that we ‘will not balance the books on the backs of the poorest people in the world’ (Grice, 2011). He later argued that ‘it is a stain on all our consciences that a girl born in South Sudan today is more likely to die having a baby than to complete primary school’, before concluding that ‘when we know what life—and death—is like for over a billion people living on less than 80p a day, and we have the wherewithal to do something about it, then, yes, I do believe we have a moral imperative to do so’ (Elliott, 2011). Greening reaffirmed that commitment arguing that ‘tackling poverty overseas is about addressing the root causes of global challenges such as disease, migration, terrorism and climate change, all of which are the *right* things to do and firmly in Britain’s *own* national interest’ (Anderson, 2015).

For Cameron international aid prioritisation was a means to rebrand Conservatism. Resolving the crisis of post-Thatcherite Conservatism and determining how to reposition Conservatism vis-à-vis New Labour was the rationale for Cameronite modernisation (Taylor, 2010, 490). The Conservatives had suffered three electoral defeats in eight years as New Labour presided over a prolonged period of economic growth post 1997. New Labour presented to the electorate an image of governing competence by a triangulating strategy that promoted the importance of both economic efficiency *and* social justice. Continuous economic growth, and the resultant expanding tax yield, enabled New Labour to promote their investment in public services which could be achieved without the need for increases in taxation. Electoral competition was thus framed by New Labour as a choice – continuous investment in public services under an ongoing New Labour administration, or cuts in public services by an incoming Conservative administration (Bale, 2010, 283-362).

The ability of the Conservatives to compete against New Labour in a period of economic growth was further compromised by their incredibly negative image. Cameron and the modernisers would devote a considerable amount of time to changing these negative perceptions. Their modernising strategy of ‘brand decontamination’ involved downgrading their emphasis on taxation, law and order, immigration and Euroscepticism, which had been associated with the core vote and core vote plus strategies that had defined the General Election campaigns of 2001 and 2005 (Green, 2010). The modernisers’ then deliberately downplayed their rhetorical emphasis on traditional Thatcherite themes and switched their focus onto the very issues that New Labour were seen to be dominant on. In doing so they replicated the New Labour strategy of triangulation (post 1994) in which the modernising leadership seeks to nullify the supposed strengths that your critics have on specific issues (McAnulla, 2010). This attempt to reach out would in time provide ‘permission to be heard’ (Bale, 2010, 285) and the key issue was encouraging more of the electorate to trust their motives. To get the electorate to listen to the arguments required a major change in terms of their presentation – i.e. Cameron as the new face (one uncontaminated with the past); their rhetoric and tone (using inclusive language) and their focus (emphasising non-Conservative issues) (Quinn, 2008; see also Kerr and Hayton, 2015 and Dommett, 2015).

Multiple themes were used within the modernisers’ triangulation strategy – e.g. championing the National Health Service, supporting state schools, defending professional autonomy in the public sector, attacking fat cat salaries, feminisation and environmentalism (Bale, 2010, 283-362). There was also an awareness that neutralising Labour’s ownership of international aid as an issue could

be emblematic for them in terms of renewal (Seldon and Snowdon, 2015, 479). As a consequence making a strong public commitment to international aid represented a clear and easy ‘win’ for the Conservatives in terms of shedding their image as the ‘nasty party’ (Heppell and Lightfoot, 2012, 133). This would manifest itself in the 2009 when the Conservatives outlined their international development strategy in ‘One World Conservatism’, where they reaffirmed their commitment to the 0.7 percent target, alongside an apparent commitment to the moral driver of doing good, alongside pursuing national interest. Formulating an agreement between them and the Liberal Democrats was one of the least contentious aspect of coalition negotiations - see Sharp *et al*, 2010, Glennie, 2011, Mawdsley, 2011.

A third driver for Cameron and the modernisers would relate to the legacy of success from New Labour in this area. This made the case for significant policy change, and the case for institutional change within the machinery of Government, less compelling. The repeated hiving off of international development from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (1964, 1979 and 1997) or its reverse (i.e. subsuming within as in 1970 and 1979), which seemed to be symptomatic of the different importance attached to international aid from the respective parties, ended. Cameron retained DfID as an autonomous department (Ireton, 2013, chapters two and three). However, retaining it was more than just to symbolise the Conservatives embracing of international aid as an emblem of modernisation. Since its establishment in 1997 DfID had become a respected institution which was recognised by peer agencies for its contribution to the ‘aid effectiveness agenda’ (Mawdsley, 2015). Indeed, New Labour had clear achievements to their name in government vis-à-vis international aid. They were active in driving forward the agendas in terms of global poverty reduction and promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They also enacted the International Development Act of 2002 which enshrined in law the primary purpose of aid would be poverty reduction, as well enshrining a legal requirement to untie aid (Webster, 2008).

The final driver was national interest – i.e. the prestige and influence that comes from being seen as a global leader in development, and the benefits to them as a donor country. This was the view of Mitchell who argued that ‘America is a military superpower and Britain is a development superpower’ (Norton-Taylor, 2011). Cameron held an ambitious view of the benefits of international aid prioritisation in terms of not just influence, but also in terms of security and immigration. Alongside altruistic aims Cameron argued that expanding international aid provision would prove its effectiveness by first, reducing the necessity for military interventions in the future;

and second, the improvement to recipient nations in terms of their political stability and economic prosperity, which would reduce the incentive for ‘the poor and the desperate of the Third World to migrate to the UK’ (Foreman, 2012, 36). Alongside this Greening would emphasise how economic development was a central component of Conservative thinking vis-a-vis international aid. Notably she would promote the long term benefits to could be accrued through the pursuit of a private sector economic growth model (Mawdsley, 2015, 339-40). Her rhetoric between would be infused with references to markets, investment and structural rebalancing between the public and private sectors. Her method of promoting its value was through the concept of ‘smart aid’ – e.g. she would argue that DfID financing business projects in developing countries (through returnable loans) was not only beneficial to the recipient country, it was also beneficial to the UK as the donor country because ‘our money comes back when businesses are successful’ (Greening, 2013, 2014).

Arguments against International Aid prioritisation

The above analysis demonstrates that the policy change that Cameron was initiating vis-à-vis international aid was a significant departure for his party, and the dilemma would be the extent to which they would embrace change.

Conservative aid sceptics feared that joining the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats in a cross party consensus on international aid spending could be exploited by UKIP. Their fear that aid prioritization was electorally counter-productive appeared to be reinforced by a YouGov-Chatham House survey in late 2014. The survey revealed that 54 percent of voters wanted to reduce spending on international aid, and only 30 percent approving of the approach of Cameron and the coalition government. When restricted to only Conservatives the disapproval rate increased to 62 percent, thus fueling concerns that the anti-aid rhetoric of UKIP could be attractive to disaffected Conservatives (Bailey, 2014).

For aid critics it was a question of prioritisation. Repeatedly in parliamentary debates between 2010 and 2015 aid critics would question why international aid should ring fenced in this Parliament and then have a legally enshrined spending commitment for future Parliaments. Gerard Howarth told ministers that he was ‘yet to meet’ a constituent ‘who thinks that this [aid] target should be a priority’ (HC Deb, 4 November 2014), whilst Chris Chope cited opinion polling data that showed that ‘only 0.5 percent’ of the electorate identified international aid as their main policy priority (HC

Deb, 5 December 2014). Philip Davies claimed that voters' were not prioritising international aid because of the economic environment inherited from Labour, arguing that it is 'completely and utterly ridiculous' to commit to 0.7 percent when 'we have no money' and we are having to 'cut spending everywhere' (HC Deb, 12 September 2014). Aid critics were particularly angered by the double standards applied to international aid and defence, or what become known as the development/defence trade off (Seldon and Snowdon, 2015: 479). Cameron demanded swinging at the Ministry of Defence (which he criticised for being 'too big, too inefficient' and 'spending too much money', HC Deb, 19 October 2010), and between 2010 and 2015 he stood against the NATO commitment that 2 percent of GDP should be committed to defence spending (although he relented after the 2015 General Election, see Dorman *et al*, 2016).

Aid critics also expressed doubts about the link between the 0.7 percent commitment and evidence of effective policy making – i.e. the relationship between inputs and outcomes. Peter Bone argued that 'we should not set targets for overseas aid', rather we 'should give what is *required*' (HC Deb, 12 June 2013), and Edward Leigh suggested that 'we should be judged not by how much we spend on something, but by the value for money of what we *achieve*' (HC Deb, 12 September 2014). Davies went further and implied that the interventionist instincts associated with international aid spending could be said to be inconsistent with Conservatism. He bemoaned how DfID was 'entrenching welfare dependency abroad', by 'saying to countries "it doesn't matter what you do with your governance or what you spend your money on; we will keep handing over the cheques come what may."' (HC Deb, 12 September 2014). How can Cameron 'campaign to stop welfare dependency at home', and break the assumption that some voters had of 'waiting for their next handout from the state', argued Davies, when he is doing the 'exact opposite vis-à-vis international aid' (HC Deb, 12 September 2014).

Aid critics within the PCP also mirrored the right wing press focus on waste, inefficiency and allegations of corruption. Locating his criticism around the issue of the misuse of taxpayers' money, Leigh complained that DfID being 'awash with money' but that 'money [is] being wasted' (HC Deb, 3 November 2014). David Nuttall wanted Cameron to explain why research had 'shown that of 20 countries in receipt of UK aid 10 had shown little or no improvement in the amount of political, economic and press freedom they enjoyed and five actually enjoyed less freedom' (HC Deb, 6 November 2014). Placing international aid prioritization with a comparative perspective was another avenue that aid critics exploited. Davies asked Cameron why the UK had 'increased' their level of international aid expenditure just as 'other countries had reduced the proportion they

spend on aid' (HC Deb, 12 September, 2014). Davies concluded that Cameron was being outmanoeuvred as other nations were 'using our increased spending as an excuse to reduce theirs' (HC Deb, 12 September 2014).

Data Collection and Hypotheses

Having considered the rationale for international aid prioritisation (and against) it is worth analysing what other characteristics unite (or do not) Conservative in terms of their attitudes towards international aid. To achieve this we identified which Conservative parliamentarians in the 2010 to 2015 Parliament were aid critics - i.e. voted against the government across a range of divisions during the passage of the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act of 2015; those that were aid sceptics (abstained from voting); and those that were pro aid (voted for). Our aim was to then test a series of social, political and ideological hypotheses about attitudes towards international aid prioritisation. We will identify those hypotheses after explaining how our data was collected and collated.

With regard to our social variables differentiating on gender was straightforward. With regard to the other social variables of age and the political variables of ministerial status and constituency marginality, we acquired our data from their profiles on the UK Parliamentary website – at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>). In terms of coding via the following means: first, for age we used decades of birth – i.e. before 1960; 1960 to 69; and after 1970. In terms of marginality (relating to the 2010 General Election) we used the following distinctions: <1,000, 1,001-5,000, 5,001-10,000, and then above 10,001. In terms of ministerial status we distinguished between backbenchers throughout 2010-2015 and those who held office at some point during the Parliament. We also included whether parliamentarians endorsed Cameron or not in the Conservative Party leadership election of 2005 (n=154). Obviously we could only cover those who were in Parliament at the time of the leadership election, but for the positioning of each parliamentarian we used the voting behaviour list outlined by Heppell and Hill, 2009, and coded as either voted Cameron, did not vote Cameron, or not applicable (i.e. 2010 entrant).

In terms of our ideological determinants – i.e. same sex marriage and the EU – we positioned each Conservative parliamentarian by the following methods. On same sex marriage we positioned those who voted for the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill (in parliamentary divisions in February and May 2013) as socially liberal. Those who voted against the legislation were defined as being

socially conservative. Those who abstained were defined as ideologically agnostic. For positioning on the vexed issue of the EU we utilised the positioning used by Heppell – pro-European, agnostic, and soft and hard Eurosceptic – in his ideologically profiling of the PCP (2013).

Our social background hypotheses – on age and gender– were constructed in response to assumptions made by elite Conservatives and opinion polling data. So, for example, in justifying why the Conservatives prioritised international aid in opposition, and then in government, Mitchell noted that it ‘very popular with people under thirty five and also with women’ and thereby it was a theme which gave ‘permission for voters of other parties to entertain the idea of voting Conservative’. (Ashcroft and Oakeshott, 2015, 280). Furthermore, polling data tended to support such assumptions about age – i.e. that aid opponents tend to be older (Bond, 2015, 5). Therefore, on the basis of this we constructed the following social background hypotheses:

[H1] On age we assume that younger Conservative parliamentarians will show a stronger likelihood to vote for, or speak out for, the 0.7 percent commitment than older Conservative parliamentarians.

[H2] On gender we assume that female Conservative parliamentarians will show a stronger likelihood to vote for, or speak out for, the 0.7 percent commitment than male Conservative parliamentarians.

Our political background hypotheses relate to constituency marginality and ministerial status. With regard to constituency marginality our assumption is that re-election is a predominant concern for Conservative parliamentarians. Within this we assume that incumbents will think (correctly or incorrectly) that their individual policy preferences will matter to their constituents in terms of their likelihood to vote for them (or not). This assumption is made on the basis of prior academic research which suggests that parliamentarians base their positions in light of the assumed preferences of their constituents – for example, Baughman (2004) found that parliamentarians with a higher Catholic vote base showed a stronger tendency towards holding socially conservative positions on abortion and sexuality. Therefore, given the above and the persistence of the media campaigning against the 0.7 percent commitment (Cawley, 2015), our constituency marginality hypotheses was as follows:

[H3] We assume that Conservative parliamentarians with narrow majorities will show an increased likelihood to vote against, or speak out against, the 0.7 percent commitment.

With respect to ministerial status we note the assumption that parliamentarians who have acquired ministerial status will have aligned themselves to the legislative objectives and political agenda of the current leadership – i.e. to vote with the leadership (whether in whipped or non-whipped divisions) and to publicly speak out in to support the leadership’s policy preferences. We also note the assumption that career backbenchers have less of an incentive to ingratiate themselves to the current leadership (Kam, 2009). Therefore, our ministerial status hypotheses states that:

[H4] Conservative ministers as political insiders will show an increased likelihood to vote for, or speak out for, the 0.7 percent commitment.

With regard to leadership preference in the Conservative Party leadership election of 2005 we assumed that those who voted for Cameron would be more inclined towards supporting modernisation and its component parts. Therefore, our leadership vote hypotheses states that:

[H5] Conservative parliamentarians who did not support Cameron in the 2005 Conservative Party leadership election would be more likely to oppose, or speak against, the 0.7 percent commitment.

Our ideological background hypotheses relate to the two most divisive themes of the Cameron era – same sex marriage and European policy. Our hypotheses here flow from existing empirical findings that have shown a strong correlation between social conservatism and Euroscepticism, and the recurring emphasis on nationalism being a driver of Euroscepticism (see Heppell, 2002, 2013). Therefore, our ideological hypotheses are as follows:

[H6] Conservative parliamentarians who are opponents of same sex marriage (i.e. socially conservative) will show an increased likelihood to vote against, or speak out against, the 0.7 percent commitment.

[H7] Conservative parliamentarians who are opponents of hard Eurosceptics will show an increased likelihood to vote against, or speak out against, the 0.7 percent commitment.

Research Findings

We present our findings in tables one and two. Table one provides basic descriptive statistics with regard to the three positions on international aid – critic, sceptic and advocate – and all of the variables. This covers all 308 Conservative parliamentarians from the 2010 to 2015 Parliament –

i.e. all 307 elected in May 2010, plus one parliamentarian (Robert Jenrick) elected via a by-election in 2014. It also includes Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless, who were elected as Conservatives in May 2010, but who defected to UKIP by the time of the General Election of 2015. In addition to this, table two shows the output for a multinomial regression model. When interpreting the results of table two, all results are relative to the base outcome, here understood as being hostile to international aid. All coefficients are presented as log-odds units.

Table One

The 2010-2015 PCP and International Aid: Social, Political and Ideological Determinants

Variable	Aid Advocate	Aid Sceptic	Aid Critic	Total
Vote Share	190 (61.7%)	94 (30.5%)	24 (7.8%)	308 (100%)
<i>Social</i>				
Age (Date of Birth)				
Before 1960	63 (51.2%)	47 (38.2%)	13 (10.6%)	123 (100%)
1960-1969	75 (68.8%)	27 (24.8%)	7 (6.4%)	109 (100%)
1970-1989	52 (68.4%)	20 (26.3%)	4 (5.3%)	76 (100%)
Gender				
Male	159 (61.4%)	77 (29.7%)	23 (8.9%)	259 (100%)
Female	31 (63.3%)	17 (34.7%)	1 (2.0%)	49 (100%)
<i>Political</i>				
Marginality (Majority)				
<1001	9 (50.0%)	7 (38.9%)	2 (11.1%)	18 (100%)
1001-5000	44 (65.7%)	18 (26.9%)	5 (7.5%)	67 (100%)
5001-10000	52 (67.5%)	18 (23.4%)	7 (9.1%)	77 (100%)
10001+	85 (58.2%)	51 (34.9%)	10 (6.9%)	146 (100%)
Minister				
Yes	101 (69.2%)	42 (28.8%)	3 (2.1%)	146 (100%)
No	89 (54.9%)	52 (32.1%)	21 (13.0%)	162 (100%)
<i>Ideological</i>				
Leadership Vote				
Cameron	39 (58.2%)	22 (32.8%)	6 (9.0%)	67 (100%)
Non-Cameron	48 (55.2%)	28 (32.2%)	11 (12.6%)	87 (100%)
N/A	103 (66.9%)	44 (28.6%)	7 (4.6%)	154 (100%)

Euroscepticism				
Hard	39 (48.2%)	23 (28.4%)	19 (23.5%)	81 (100%)
Soft	106 (68.0%)	45 (28.9%)	5 (3.21%)	156 (100%)
Pro-EU/ Agnostic	45 (63.4%)	26 (36.6%)	0 (0.0%)	71 (100%)
Social Position (Gay Marriage)				
Liberal	76 (59.8%)	45 (35.4%)	6 (4.7%)	127 (100%)
Conservative	83 (61.0%)	37 (27.2%)	16 (11.8%)	136 (100%)
Agnostic	31 (68.9%)	12 (26.7%)	2 (4.4%)	45 (100%)

Table Two

Multinomial Logistic Regression Outputs

	N	308		
	Prob > chi ²	0.00		
	Pseudo r ²	0.14		
			Pro-Aid	Neutral
DOB (relative to those born before 1960)				
	1960-1969		0.582	-0.040
	1970-1989		0.458	-0.028
Female (relative to male)				
			1.428	1.692
Majority (relative to those with a majority of below 1000)				
	1001-5000		1.549	0.726
	5001-10000		2.198	1.134
	10001+		2.633 *	2.142
Backbencher (relative to Minister)				
			-1.151	-0.639
Leadership Election (relative to those who supported Cameron)				
	Non-Cameron		0.431	0.488
	N/A		2.583 **	2.245 *
Social position (relative to those classed as socially liberal)				
	Conservative		-0.257	-0.720
	Agnostic		-0.061	-0.626
Euroscepticism (relative to hard Eurosceptics)				
	Soft Eurosceptics		2.380 **	2.071 **

Pro-Europeans or Agnostic	15.820	15.958
Constant	-2.008	-1.468
*** $p < 0.001$ ** $0.001 \leq p \leq 0.01$ * $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$		

In terms of our social background hypotheses our findings show all of them to be unsupported. There is no statistically significant relationship between a Conservative parliamentarian's position on aid and age [H1] or gender [H2], when controlling for the other variables specified.

Our findings with respect to our political variables demonstrate no statistically significant relationship with regard to ministerial experience [H4]. Our other political variables are more significant when we consider marginality and leadership preference. We do see some statistically significant relationship between a parliamentarian's majority and position on aid. We can see that the relative log odds of being pro-aid vs. an aid sceptic increases by 2.63 when one moves from a majority below 1000 to a majority of over 10,000. This shows an increased likelihood of being pro-aid amongst Conservative parliamentarians in safe seats. Thus, we do have evidence of [H3] being correct as majorities matter in terms of opinion towards international aid.

Our final political variable was support for Cameron in the Conservative Party leadership election of 2005, and on this we can see that there is a statistically significant relationship [H5]. The relative log odds of being pro-aid vs. an aid sceptic increases by 2.38 for those classed as n/a. (i.e. not a member of the PCP back in 2005) relative to those who supported Cameron. This suggests a cohort effect; those who became MPs following Cameron's ascension to the leadership were more likely to be pro-aid. This could be due to the fact that Cameron's modernisation project attracted more candidates with a similar world view to the party, or perhaps that newer MPs felt that they had to be more pro-aid due to career advancement (We also see a similar relationship vis-à-vis being neutral on aid; relative to being an aid sceptic, those who are classed as N/A for the leadership election have an increased log-odds of 2.25 in terms of being neutral on aid).

What of our ideological hypotheses? In relation to same sex marriage and the socially liberal-socially conservative cleavage within Conservatism [H6] our hypotheses was not supported – i.e. we could not detect a strong statistical relationship between position on same sex marriage and voting position on international aid. However, with regard the EU [H7], our model did show a relationship between Euroscepticism and positioning on aid. The relative log odds of being pro-aid vs. an aid sceptic increases by 2.38 when one moves from a being a hard Eurosceptic to being

a soft Eurosceptic. Similarly, the relative log odds of being aid-sceptic vs. an aid critic increases by 2.07 when one moves to being a soft Eurosceptic. In both cases the relationship with the pro-European and agnostic group lacks statistical significance. This shows that hard Eurosceptics have a greater likelihood of being opposed to the 0.7 percent commitment than their soft Eurosceptic counterparts.

Analysis and Conclusions

Our paper provides us with a detailed and systematic account of opinion on international aid as key plank of Cameronite modernisation. It demonstrates the following:

1. Aid advocates amounted to 61.7 percent of the PCP (n=190). A correlation existed between voting for Cameron – the modernisers’ candidate - in the 2005 Conservative Party leadership election and being an aid advocate. A cohort effect was in existence, as those who entered the PCP in 2010 showed an increasing propensity for being aid advocates. These correlations show the *intent* of the Cameronite modernisers to change the party on international aid, and evidence of *impact* by securing support within the PCP. Significantly, support for the 0.7 percent commitment was *broad* and not restricted to any specific social section of the PCP in terms of age and gender (as was the case within the electorate with international aid prioritisation appealing more to women and the young). Majorities in favour of the 0.7 percent commitment existed amongst all age groups (although it was higher amongst those born after 1970), and the gap between female and male Conservatives was very small (63.3 percent of females were aid advocates as opposed to 61.4 male). Majorities existed for the 0.7 percent commitment, whether having been a minister or not, although support amongst ministers (or ex) was higher at 69.2 percent than amongst backbenchers (54.9 percent).
2. Aid scepticism was left as a rump within the PCP of only 24 members or 7.8 percent. Here a strong link existed between aid scepticism and hard Euroscepticism, as 19 out of 24 aid critics were hard Eurosceptics. However, a significant proportion of hard Eurosceptics overall were either aid advocates (n=39 or 48.2 percent), and 23 were aid sceptics (or neutral) at 28.4 percent. Amongst the aid critics, many were known to have as opponents of Cameron more generally – e.g. defeated rivals for the party leadership, Liam Fox and David Davis, dismissed ministers such as Owen Paterson and Howarth, and perennial opponents of Cameronite modernisation, such as Davies, Nuttall, Bone and Leigh. If the

aid advocates grouping was broad in terms of age and gender, the aid critics group was narrow and confined – 20 out of 24 aid critics were born before 1970, and 13 out of 24 of them were born before 1960; and 23 out of 24 of them were male.

Our findings contribute to the academic literature on Conservative modernisation, and thereby the wider literature on party change, in two substantive ways. First, the success that Cameron achieved in terms of international aid stands in stark contrast with the difficulties associated with another aspect of social liberal modernisation – same sex marriage. Whereas on international aid Cameron secured the backing of 190 (or 61.7 percent) of the PCP and the opposition of 24 (or 7.8 percent) of the PCP, Cameron only secured the backing of 89 (or 28.9 percent) of the PCP on same sex marriage, whereas 156 (or 50.6 percent) of the PCP spoke out against the legislation (on this see Hayton *et al*, 2017).

Second, and of the greatest significance, our research findings represent a challenge to the assumptions that permeate the existing academic literature on Conservative modernisation. Overarching critiques of modernisation talk of it as a ‘failure’ (Kerr and Hayton, 2015) or having been ‘abandoned’ (Dorey, 2016). The established narrative of the ‘limits’ of modernisation (Peele and Francis, 2016) has been reinforced by critiques on feminisation (Campbell and Childs, 2015) and environmentalism (Carter and Clements, 2015). Whether they are over-arching critiques of modernisation or specific one aspect case studies, what unites such research is that they claim that Cameron failed to modernise the party from a qualitatively driven perspective. That our research is quantitatively driven matters. That is because in their critique of Cameronite modernisation Kerr and Hayton argue that the modernising sentiment did not penetrate into the PCP (Kerr and Hayton, 2015). Our findings suggest that such a claim cannot be justified vis-à-vis international aid policy.

To conclude, our paper makes an original and distinctive contribution to the academic literature on party change and Conservative Party modernisation, via a quantitatively driven case study analysis of their approach to international aid policy. We demonstrate that Cameron did secure a remarkable success in transforming the position of his party. That a substantive change in policy was secured in challenging economic circumstances, when the evidence as to why this policy change should be accepted by his own party was not that compelling, and when the right wing print media were railing against increased spending on aid and making widespread allegations of

waste and corruption, demonstrates his ‘dogged commitment’ on this issue (Seldon and Snowdon, 2015, 479).

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Endnotes:

ⁱ For a discussion on the implications of Brexit on international aid policy see Lightfoot et al (2017).

ⁱⁱ This was a target that EU member states had committed themselves to back in 2005 (with lower targets set for new members set at 0.33 percent of GNI), and was also identified as a target for G8

members at the Gleneagles G8 Summit of July 2005 (originally identified as a target back in 1974). Eight years later the UK Government hit the 0.7 percent target as their total expenditure on aid hit £11.4 billion or 0.72 percent on GNI.

ⁱⁱⁱ Based on voting records during the passage of the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act of 2015.