

Political attention and aid policy change

Lessons for aid advocacy from the aid spending expansions in Australia and the United Kingdom

Benjamin Day

Abstract

What leads a donor to change the trajectory of its aid policy? Surprisingly little is known about the political dynamics that drive the aid policy decision making process. Notwithstanding recent advances, the role public opinion plays in shaping aid policy remains poorly understood, as does the role political actors play in initiating such change. The role of advocacy efforts in driving change are also unsettled. This paper engages in these ongoing debates by drawing on the agenda-setting literature to highlight the crucial role political attention plays in shaping the political dynamics of the aid policy subsystem. The central claim the paper makes is that instances of high-level aid policy change are driven by top-down, political actor-led processes, rather than bottom-up processes triggered by changes in public attitudes towards aid, as is commonly assumed. This argument is substantiated theoretically by outlining how the politics of attention play out in the aid policy subsystem, and empirically by examining the dramatic aid spending expansions that occurred roughly in parallel in Australia and the United Kingdom during the mid-2000s and into the 2010s. Finally, suggestions are made as to how aid advocates can contribute to cultivating top-down aid policy change.

Political attention and aid policy change

Lessons for aid advocacy from the aid spending expansions in Australia and the United Kingdom

Benjamin Day¹

Benjamin Day is an Associate Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, The Australian National University.

Day, B S 2018 "Political attention and aid policy change: lessons for aid advocacy from the aid spending expansions in Australia and the United Kingdom", *Development Policy Centre Discussion Paper #71*, Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University, Canberra.

The Development Policy Centre is a research unit at the Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University. The discussion paper series is intended to facilitate academic and policy discussion. Use and dissemination of this discussion paper is encouraged; however, reproduced copies may not be used for commercial purposes.

The views expressed in discussion papers are those of the authors and should not be attributed to any organisation with which the authors might be affiliated.

For more information on the Development Policy Centre, visit

<http://devpolicy.anu.edu.au/>

¹ This research was conducted with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. I would like to acknowledge the very helpful feedback from Terence Wood and an anonymous reviewer. Any remaining errors are mine.

Political attention and aid policy change

Lessons for aid advocacy from the aid spending expansions in Australia and the United Kingdom

Introduction

On 16 April 2018, Australia's then-Minister for International Development and the Pacific,² Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells (2018), delivered a speech at the Overseas Development Institute in London. In the question and answer session that followed, Ken Caldwell, the Executive Director of Water Aid, a large British non-governmental organisation (NGO), asked: "What needs to change politically in Australia for it to become an attractive prospect for Australian political leaders from across the spectrum to make the case for reversing the recent cuts in the aid budget and how can we help for that to happen?" Fierravanti-Wells responded by citing recent surveys indicating that "about 80% of the Australian public believe that we should not be spending more on aid or that spending is about right", before noting that "when you do speak to the development sector, they do believe that it is the complete opposite." "One of the important things", the Senator explained, "is that you do have to take your public with you in relation to ODA [official development assistance] spend".³

This exchange is typical of public interactions between aid advocates and politicians. On one side of the debate, we witness the desire of aid advocates to 'do something' to alter the politics of aid. The notion that political will is the missing ingredient for increasing aid spending is also intimated. On the other side, we see politicians citing public opinion as a constraint on action, while the notion that the aid sector is politically naïve is also apparent. Implicit in the views of each side are ingrained understandings of the factors that drive high-level aid policy change.

While there are elements of truth in each sides' caricature of the other, this paper argues that both parties to this familiar debate are mistaken. Aid advocates are prone to

² During the second Turnbull Ministry, the Minister for International Development and the Pacific was a member of the 'outer ministry', and not a member of Cabinet.

³ This exchange was obtained via a podcast of the event (ODI 2018). See also Bourke (2018).

overestimate the extent to which the politics of aid can be transformed, while political actors tend to overstate the extent to which their actions relating to aid are constrained by public opinion. To substantiate this argument, this paper draws on the insights of the agenda-setting literature to theorise the ‘rules of the game’ that regulate the politics of high-level aid policy decision making. These rules convey that high-level aid policy change is very unlikely to occur via a bottom-up process stemming from variations in public opinion. Instead, on the rare occasions that high-level aid policy change does occur, it is much more likely to be driven by a top-down process led by a political actor.

Wood (2018, p. 13) has articulated how there is a “clear belief both among campaigners and Australian politicians that the views of the public matter”. While not denying that the views of the public matter for aid policy, this paper argues that they do not matter nearly as much as commonly assumed in triggering instances of high-level aid policy change, especially those related to aid spending. In line with this conclusion, I make the case for why aid advocacy efforts should focus foremost on shaping the views of political actors, especially those actors with the most influence over the political agenda. The implications of this argument for aid advocacy efforts are substantial, implying the need to embrace an alternate ‘mental map’ to more effectively promote changes in a state’s aid policy.

Before previewing how this discussion paper unfolds, two clarifications are necessary. First, as I have already indicated, this paper focuses on explaining instances of ‘high-level’ aid policy change. By ‘high-level’ aid policy, I am referring to decisions pertaining to ‘big picture’ strategic considerations about the overall shape of a state’s aid program that are the remit of the political executive. The dynamics of more granular levels of aid policy formulation, which tend to be more focused on aid delivery and implementation, are outside the scope of this discussion. More specifically, the high-level aid policy changes examined here concern significant changes in aid volume. While the fundamental political dynamics that govern decision making related to aid *quantity* are similar to those pertaining to aid *quality*, for example, I acknowledge that there are likely to be subtle yet important differences at play when considering different dimensions of high-level aid policy change.

Second, I recognise that policy change is a notoriously complex and multifaceted process in which many contributing factors are likely to remain hidden. Any effort to develop

conceptual models of this process unavoidably dispenses with these complexities to shine a spotlight on key aspects for special attention. In my case, the decision to categorise policy change as the result of either top-down or bottom-up processes reflects a view that distinctly different political dynamics prevail in policy domains that have low public salience than in policy domains that have high public salience. In summary, the models introduced here are necessarily reductionist, and are offered as conceptual devices to promote reflection and stimulate discussion about how aid policy change occurs and why.

This discussion paper unfolds in two parts. Part I presents the theoretical explanation of my argument, while Part II reinforces this argument with empirical examples drawn from two of the most prominent instances of high-level aid policy change in recent times. These are the dramatic aid spending expansions that occurred roughly in parallel in Australia (since reversed) and the UK (which has maintained aid spending at 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) since 2013) during the mid-2000s and into the 2010s.

In the first section of Part I, I mobilise the agenda-setting literature to propose two alternative models of major policy change: a bottom-up, public opinion-driven model and a top-down, political actor-driven model. In the second section, I make the case for why the latter model applies in the domain of high-level aid policy by documenting the unique issue area characteristics of aid policy and how they combine to deter political actors from paying attention to aid. To summarise Part I, I present the 'rules of the game' that govern the politics of aid policy.

In Part II, I ground the theoretical observations from Part I in a discussion about recent aid policy change in Australia and the UK. In Section 3, I provide an overview of these cases, focusing on the decisive leaderships of Kevin Rudd and David Cameron. In Section 4, I draw out lessons from the Australian and British cases for aid advocacy. Specifically, I demonstrate the benefits of focusing on changing the hearts and minds of political actors (rather than the public) and highlight why advocates should pay attention to political and policy (rather than electoral) processes. Finally, the conclusion recaps the key ideas of the paper and briefly considers how aid advocates and politicians might react to its findings.

Part I

The role that public opinion plays in shaping aid policy remains poorly understood.⁴ Likewise, little attention has been paid to how public opinion contributes to advocacy success (Rasmussen et al. 2018). In Part I, I leverage the insights of the agenda-setting literature as a way to contribute to these ongoing debates, in particular by focusing on the role of political attention. While the importance of political attention for effecting policy change is well-established in the domestic policy arena (Baumgartner & Jones 1993; Kingdon 1995; Jones & Baumgartner 2005), the agenda-setting literature has tended to neglect foreign policy issues. The role of the political agenda in influencing the political dynamics of specific instruments of foreign policy,⁵ especially in non-security-related foreign policy issue-areas like aid policy, therefore remains unexplored. Part I represents a step towards rectifying this oversight.

1. Political attention and policy change

The agenda-setting literature views policy change as stemming from variations in attention. The potential for change is activated when enough people reorder the degree of importance they assign to particular issues. This notion is encapsulated in the term ‘issue salience’. Issue salience is fundamentally an expression of the availability heuristic, the cognitive process (or mental shortcut) which describes how all human beings are prone to behave with reference to the information most readily accessible in their mind (Oppermann 2010, p. 4). Constrained by inescapable limitations on their time, “actors will concentrate their cognitive capacity primarily on issues which are amongst their uppermost concerns, i.e. which they consider most salient” (Oppermann 2010, p. 4).

It follows that each individual can be conceived of as maintaining a personal ‘salience profile’, which reflects the unique way that they personally order the importance of various issues. An individual’s personal salience profile will constantly evolve over time,

⁴ Recent scholarly contributions that discuss gaps in this literature include those by Milner and Tingley 2013; Heinrich et al. 2016; and Wood 2018.

⁵ To be clear, equating aid as a tool of foreign policy in this paper is a purely technical stance. Aid policy is foreign policy precisely because it constitutes an action of a state “directed in whole or part outside of the boundaries of the state” (Gyngell and Wesley 2007, p. 19).

as some issues become more salient and as others become less so. The adjustments in this profile are always relative, “since the attention and resources that an actor devotes to an issue cannot be devoted again to another issue” (Höse 2011, p. 226).⁶ It is precisely the zero-sum quality of attention that makes it the engine of change.

When contemplating how changes in attention influence high-level public policy change, it makes little sense to focus on personal salience profiles. This is because the preferences of one individual have a negligible impact on political decision making (except in the rare case of the individual being a political leader, an exception addressed below). Only when individual preferences are aggregated will they begin to have a meaningful explanatory purchase on political decision making. For the purposes of conceptualising the relationship between political attention and policy change, two such ‘preference aggregations’ are relevant:⁷ the ‘public agenda’ (the list of issues to which voters within a society collectively pay attention); and the ‘political agenda’ (the list of issues to which political actors, and the people closely associated with them, devote their attention)⁸ (Lelieveldt & Princen 2011, p. 208).

1.1. The centrality of the political agenda

The role of the political agenda is crucial in the agenda-setting literature. As “[g]overnments, like individuals, have limited attention spans” (Jones & Baumgartner 2005, p. 20), the “agenda space of governments is constrained” (Jones & Baumgartner 2005, p. 255), just as it is for individuals. It follows that “increases in attention to an issue by government signal the likelihood of serious policy change” (Baumgartner et al. 2006, p. 959). In particular, the step of a policy issue ‘reaching’ the political agenda is a threshold moment that is potentially transformative. As Green-Pedersen and Walgrave (2014, p. 6) relate, “the selection of issues that deserve political attention determines all further steps in the political process”.

⁶ “Salience is by definition”, cautions Oppermann (2014, p. 27), “a relational concept”, meaning that “[a] specific... issue can only be classified as a high-salience issue relative to another issue”.

⁷ Other aggregates commonly addressed include the media agenda and the elite agenda.

⁸ This definition of ‘political agenda’ is an amalgam of the definitions advanced by Kingdon (1995, p. 3) and Green-Pedersen and Walgrave (2014, p. 1).

How do political actors select which issues to pay attention to? The short answer is that they focus on issues that the public views as important. Political actors “employ their view on which issues are most salient to their domestic constituents as a heuristic in deciding what information to attend to and which issues to treat as a priority” (Oppermann & Spencer 2013, p. 40). Another way of expressing this is to say that in democracies, the priorities of elected representatives are expected to be *congruent* with those whom they represent (Schoen 2011; Bevan & Jennings 2014, p. 39). As Martin et al. (2014, p. 500) explain, the “general idea of democratic representativeness is that there should be a strong correspondence” between “issues being attended to by government ...[and] ...issues the public thinks are important”.

A range of political incentives operate in democracies to ensure that the political agenda remains broadly congruent with the public agenda. For elected officials to stay in office, they must be able to demonstrate to enough voters that they are representing their interests. This entails engaging with, and being seen to engage with, issues that the public views as important. If political actors choose to divert their limited supply of attention away from issues that the public, the media and their colleagues consider most important, they jeopardise their prospects for media coverage, promotion and re-election. Furthermore, the incentives that compel political actors to pay most of their attention to highly salient issues incorporate a self-reinforcing dimension, especially in terms of knowledge acquisition (a factor which is especially relevant to aid policy decision making dynamics and is discussed further below). Because political actors are obliged to spend much of their time paying attention to matters involving the economy, health and education, for example, they acquire experience and technical knowledge in these policy areas, giving them additional confidence, capability and insight to intervene in these policy areas.

It is worth spelling out here that *political* attention is consequential because in democracies, voters have delegated decision making authority to political actors (in most cases via electing representatives, but also more indirectly by granting these representatives control over a range of appointments, such as political staffers). This is why changes in the political agenda, rather than the public agenda, are more closely correlated with policy change. It is also important to keep in mind that some political

actors, for example leaders of political parties and members of the political executive, have more ability than others to influence the shape of the political agenda.

1.2. Two models of policy change

It may appear from the discussion up to this point that I am suggesting that political actors respond only to issue salience calculations. In highlighting the incentives that exist for political actors to prioritise the issues that their constituents prioritise, I do not mean to imply that political actors do not, or cannot, exercise personal agency when deciding how to allocate their limited attention. Rather, the discussion about the centrality of the political agenda has sought to demonstrate why we should expect political actors — both individually and collectively — to allocate their attention in a way that responds quite closely to the attention profile of the public.

This implies that major policy change is most likely to occur via a ‘bottom-up’ process. This idealised model of policy change conceptualises major policy change as stemming from variations in public attention. In response to these variations, political actors vary their attention in turn, with policy change eventuating when levels of political attention change substantially enough for long enough. Policy change is especially likely to occur according to a bottom-up model of change when the policy issue is salient to the public. As there are constraints on the number of issues they can address in office (Dellis 2009, p. 204), there is reduced *political* motivation for political actors to act on issues that are not salient to the public (Oppermann & Viehrig 2009, p. 925). This ensures that the congruence between the political agenda and the public agenda is more pronounced for more salient issues (Oppermann 2010, p. 5).

Yet in many cases, individuals enter politics precisely because they desire to effect change in policy areas of special interest or relevance to them personally.⁹ For this reason, the impact of *personal* motivation to act on issues that are *not* salient to the public should not be discounted. It is possible for political actors to alter the “economy of attention” by making “conscious efforts to give higher priority to some issues rather than others”

⁹ It is also possible, of course, for political actors to become passionate about a particular policy issue once elected.

(Wood & Peake 1998, p. 174). If this deliberate redirection of attention is powerful enough, and sustained for long enough for the issue to reach the political agenda, the potential for major policy change can be activated. This sequence of events describes an idealised 'top-down' policy change process.

The political incentives that encourage political actors to direct their minimal discretionary attention to issues that have low salience make top-down instances of major policy change uncommon. However, if a political actor is sufficiently motivated to prioritise a low salience issue, they stand to realise some benefits. "In issue domains that are not salient", affirm Franklin and Wlezien (1997, p. 350), "people are not likely to pay attention to politicians' behaviour." Policy action in these domains is unlikely to be highly scrutinised by the public or the media, offering more space to 'get things done'. So, while problematic in terms of providing political actors with exposure, the upshot of this is that there is considerable 'scope for agency' available to political actors, and especially political leaders, with the inclination and capacity to inject themselves into decision making dynamics in low salience domains (Peake 2001, pp. 72, 80; Busby 2010, p. 267).

In short, in low salience issue areas, "governments are relatively free to conduct their policies regardless of public opinion" (Oppermann & Viehrig 2009, p. 925). These parameters create a 'salience paradox' that operates in low-salience issue-areas: while political actors who prioritise these domains enjoy more scope for exercising agency, the political payoff for investing their limited discretionary time in attempting to effect change is very low, to the point of being counterproductive given the opportunity cost of investing scarce attention elsewhere. Furthermore, the prospect of creating space on the political agenda for a low salience issue is low, which limits the prospects of major policy change occurring. This is because to achieve what Jones and Baumgartner (2005, p. 21) label "major policy advances" typically requires concerted and coordinated action from key political and bureaucratic actors and institutions. This is very unlikely to occur for a low-salience policy issue unless an especially powerful political actor with a high degree of authority over the political agenda proves willing and able to secure space on the political agenda for their favoured issue item, thereby obliging other political actors to 'pay attention'. In practice, however, only a select few political actors — prominent members of the political executive and, outside of government, leaders of opposition

political parties — possess such agenda-shaping power. These powerful political actors would need to be involved to drive high-level policy change in low salience issue areas.

In this section, I have conceptualised two idealised processes by which major policy change might occur. The models draw on the agenda-setting literature to synthesise widely accepted assumptions that are expected to usually operate across most policy areas. These models are not designed to capture the innumerable intricacies and interconnections that inevitably accompany any large-scale instance of policy change.¹⁰ Rather, presenting these models is primarily designed to prompt thinking about how the ‘big picture’ dynamics of policy change can be expected to vary according to the level of salience of a particular issue. Having now introduced these models, we are now able to consider how they apply to aid policy.

2. Political attention and aid policy change

While the models introduced above describe processes that are broadly relevant across policy domains, the political dynamics that operate within each issue area will be subtly different. This section examines the unique politics of the aid policy subsystem through the lens of the agenda-setting literature.¹¹ The defining feature of this subsystem is the low salience of aid issues, a reality which ensures that aid issues do not normally attract the attention of political actors. The low salience of aid ensures the bottom-up model of policy change is rarely applicable. If the public are not interested in aid, it therefore becomes incumbent on individual political actors to put aid issues on the political agenda to initiate high-level policy change. However, two additional characteristics of aid policy act to further deter political actors from paying attention to aid, at least as a policy area on its own terms. One is the fact that engaging in aid policymaking requires specialised knowledge; and the other is the notion that aid represents a ‘discretionary’ agenda item,

¹⁰ To highlight just one example, they do not account for the fact that “there is likely to be two-way interactions” between public opinion and political actors, as Milner and Tingley (2013, p. 592) point out.

¹¹ In doing so, I augment recent scholarship which has sought to systematically investigate the “issue area properties of aid” (Lundsgaarde 2013, p. 17). Key contributions to understanding the politics of aid include those by Lancaster (2007), van der Veen (2011), Lundsgaarde (2013), Lightfoot and Szent-Iványi (2015) and Milner and Tingley (2016).

which means that political leaders are not obliged to pay attention to it in the same way they are expected to pay attention to 'required' national security issues.

Together, these three key characteristics of aid function as cumulative blockages which prevent aid issues from making their way through the "bottleneck of attention" (Jones & Baumgartner 2005, pp. 15-17) to reach the political agenda. Collectively, these 'barriers to attention' function as 'rules of the game' that govern the politics of high-level aid policy decision making. These 'rules' ultimately convey the idea that high-level aid policy change is much more likely to conform to the top-down model of change presented above, rather than the bottom-up model as is often implicitly assumed. Furthermore, these rules explain why the conscious involvement of a powerful political actor is typically required for major aid policy change to be initiated. Over the remainder of this section, I review the three key properties of aid policy in turn, beginning with the most important.

2.1. Aid policy issues have low salience

Quite simply, because aid issues are not important for the public relative to other priorities, they are not prioritised by political actors. The low salience of aid most powerfully shapes the 'rules of the game' for high-level aid policymaking by acting as the first and most consequential barrier preventing aid issues from receiving political attention. While well-established in the scholarly literature (Lundsgaarde 2013, pp. 23-24; Wlezien 1995, p. 984; Moravcsik 2004, p. 360; Riddell 2007, pp. 111-13, Spratt 2018, p. 85), the claim that aid issues are not salient for the voting public is one that demands substantiation, not only because aid advocates often vigorously reject it, but also because it is the pivotal assumption in the conceptual models presented earlier and in the discussion that follows.

Typically, aid proponents point to opinion polls recording high levels of absolute support for the provision of aid in Western countries as evidence that voters see aid as important. It is certainly true that levels of support for the provision of aid in Western donors have remained consistently high over long periods (Smillie 1998; Riddell 2007, pp. 107-109).

In a recent survey of the public opinion and aid literature,¹² Hudson and vanHeerde-Hudson (2012, p. 9) found that absolute support amongst voters in rich, Western countries for the provision of aid, averages around 70 per cent.

It is a mistake, however, to assume “that high levels of articulated support readily translate into *political* support” (Hudson & vanHeerde-Hudson 2012, p. 9, emphasis in the original). The reason that absolute support for aid does not translate into political support for aid, according to Hudson and vanHeerde-Hudson (2012, p. 10) stems from “a lack of salience amongst competing policy issues”. In other words, *support* for aid should not be conflated with the *salience* of aid (Hudson & vanHeerde-Hudson 2012, p. 9). As Riddell (2007, p. 111) relates, “[s]imply stating that one is broadly in favour of governments providing aid leaves unanswered the crucial question of how important aid is, especially in relation to other government priorities.” Lindstrom and Henson (2010, p. 4) explain the distinction this way: “[p]eople generally agree with helping the poor in developing countries in principle, but their support for aid spending tends to be less robust, while being easily deflected by accusations of wastage and corruption.”

Polls that ask respondents to identify the most important problem (or issue) are typically viewed as the best way for determining issue salience for the public (Oppermann p. 2010; Wlezien 2005, p. 556). In polls that specifically seek to capture the *relative* importance of issues to voters, aid issues barely register. In any case, aid issues are less salient than most other foreign policy issues, which have low salience to begin with (Lundsgaarde 2013, p. 46; Hudson & vanHeerde-Hudson p. 2012, 10; Gyngell & Wesley 2007, p. 160). For example, Gyngell and Wesley (2007, p. 160) find that “the weight of public opinion research conducted on international affairs bears witness to the low relative priority attached to external affairs by the vast majority of the public, other than during significant foreign policy crises”. There is also good evidence to suggest that ‘moving the needle’ on the salience of aid is exceedingly difficult. The apex of the Make Poverty History campaign in the UK in mid-2005 is conceivably the point at which aid policy issues achieved the highest levels of public salience in a donor state since the end of the Cold War, yet a key

¹² For another comprehensive survey of the public opinion and aid literature, see Milner and Tingley (2013).

finding from subsequent research was that “a vast amount of effort was required to deliver relatively small shifts in public perceptions” (Darnton 2006, pp. 10–11).

The low salience of aid in relation to the broad support it receives is neatly captured in Smillie’s (1998, p. 23) maxim that public support for aid is “a mile wide and an inch deep”. Likewise, the adage “there are no votes in aid” conveys the reality that public support for aid is ‘soft’ (Smillie 1998, p. 23; Grattan 2013). The thin public support for aid is explained, at least in part, by the indirect nature of the results of aid spending. Aid is delivered a ‘long way from home’ and voters cannot connect tangibly with the results of aid policy in the way they do with salient domestic policy issues. “[P]eople are more likely to pay attention to issues that seem to have a more direct and (geographically or temporally) more proximate impact on their own lives”, explains Zahariadis (2016, p. 8). “The more direct and close the impact... the greater attention the issue is likely to receive”.

2.2. Aid policy is complicated

The low salience of aid represents a high and confronting initial barrier for aid issues to clear to attract political attention. This characteristic also means that, for aid policy issues to reach the political agenda, a political actor needs to make a conscious effort to give aid policy a higher priority than some other more highly salient issue. The fact that aid policy is complicated functions as another barrier, which can prevent this prioritisation process from happening in the same way that it might in other low salience issue areas.

Spratt (2018, p. 85) has observed how “[l]ow public salience means that ordinary legislators will expend little energy attempting to understand overseas development.” This reticence is reinforced by the reality that engaging in aid policymaking requires acquiring specialised knowledge, which demands time and commitment. Cultivating foreign policy expertise is an investment that promises little electoral return (Hill 2003, p. 56), so it can be assumed that the returns to aid policy expertise are even more marginal. Furthermore, the relatively few politicians who *do* seek to become experts in international affairs on their own accord, perhaps motivated by personal interest or a moral imperative, immediately face another disincentive to the prospective investment of their scarce time: the obligation to invest over the long term. As Hill (2003, p. 56)

relates, “the international environment still presents a long and steep learning curve for any politicians wishing to feel at home in it.”

To move beyond political point-scoring or ideological signalling and engage seriously with aid policy issues requires political actors to consciously acquire relevant expertise. While political actors readily acquire a degree of technical expertise on highly salient policy issues of direct importance to their constituents, such as health, education and economics, the “low salience [of aid] ...gives legislators fewer incentives to invest time specialising in questions related to aid policy” (Lundsgaarde 2013, p. 24). There are few opportunities for political actors to acquire specialised aid policy knowledge outside an aid-related appointment.

Hill (2003, p. 262) highlights how the distinction between mass and elite opinion becomes important if a policy issue “is remote from everyday life and ...cannot even be conceptualised without specialised knowledge”. As the earlier discussion on public opinion and aid highlighted, the general public is incapable of accurately conceptualising their state’s aid program and its size. Non-specialists cannot conceptualise how aid programs are built, with funding spread across channels including multilateral development banks, United Nations’ agencies, NGOs, country programs and regional programs, and with each channel having a subtly different purpose and demanding considerably different operational and management requirements. Like the public, political actors can tend to ‘tune out’ when it comes to aid policy because it is not obvious how these policy issues are directly relevant to them.

Another dimension of the complexity of aid that dissuades political actors from investing their political attention relates to how aid policy encompasses many objectives simultaneously. “Aid policy is puzzling”, explains van der Veen (2011, p. 2), “because it is not obvious ex ante what the goal of official development assistance ought to be: aid can serve goals from security (e.g. fighting terrorism) to financial gain (promoting exports) to humanitarianism.” For van der Veen (2011, p. 2), the ability of aid policy to pursue multiple (and often competing) objectives simultaneously makes it the foreign policy version of a Swiss army knife: a multi-purpose tool of foreign policy. This multiplicity of potential purposes and applications distinguishes aid policy as an issue area and adds to its complexity.

This deters political actors from paying attention to aid because it is difficult to craft a ‘bumper sticker’ message that will resonate with a broad enough portion of the electorate to make the investment of discretionary time pay-off. Precisely because “aid programs can handle whatever policy-makers put their minds to” (van der Veen 2011, p. 2), it becomes extremely difficult for political actors, or indeed the public, to succinctly answer an apparently simple question: what is aid for? In contrast, the rationale for purchasing a submarine, for example, is relatively straightforward for the public to understand. Although the public cannot possibly comprehend the complexity of the hardware itself, there is a base level understanding that the rationale for this investment is that it provides them with security. The question ‘what is aid for?’ is difficult to answer not just because aid spending is intangible for voters, but because there are multiple, often conflicting, answers to the question. For political actors with limited discretionary attention, the challenge of overcoming this messaging dilemma is another component of the ‘barrier to attention’ formed by the complicated nature of aid policy.

2.3. Aid policy is a ‘discretionary’ agenda item

State leaders are obliged to pay attention to some policy domains, even if they are not salient. Engagement in international summitry is viewed as a responsibility of leaders, for example, despite not being considered important by the public. The notion that political leaders are obliged to pay attention to some issues and not others — even, in some cases, issues that are not salient — is captured in the distinction between required and discretionary agenda items (Walker 1977, p. 425). For example, political leaders are typically expected to take care of foreign affairs and the economy (Cohen 1995, p. 91). These are required agenda items, as they are intrinsically considered the responsibility of leaders. As Lundsgaarde (2013, p. 21) has pointed out, “[f]oreign policy processes [are] distinguished from domestic policy processes because of the prominence of executives in international statecraft and the deference of other domestic actors to executive dominance in this area”. It is clear, however, that not all domains of foreign policy are considered required agenda items. A division exists between foreign policy matters considered high-politics, which include issues where the security of the state is potentially directly threatened, and low-politics, where this is not the case.

The prominence of key executives in foreign policy decision making is exaggerated in crisis situations, which are “invariably ...handled at the highest levels of government power, and almost by definition top leaders will be involved regardless of their general level of interest in foreign affairs” (Hudson 2014, p. 40). When it comes to matters of high-politics, a state’s leaders are obliged to pay attention. Indeed, during foreign policy crises, their attention is often largely devoted to the issue for days at a time. Moreover, the public will often evaluate a leader’s performance based on the outcome of such an episode.

When it comes to aid policy, however, the viability of the donor state is never in question. In this sense there are no aid crises that demand the attention of political leaders.¹³ Political leaders are not woken in the middle of the night to urgently decide whether to recalibrate aid spending. Neither is engagement with aid policy viewed by the public as an integral role of leaders, in the way that other publicly overlooked activities are, such as engaging in global summitry. As a discretionary item, aid policy competes with other potential policy choices to reach the political agenda (Cohen 1995, p. 91).

2.4. The ‘rules of the game’ shaping the politics of aid policy

As a means of summing up the first half of this paper, I conclude this section by presenting the ‘rules of the game’ governing the politics of high-level aid policy change (see Figure 1). Together, these rules illustrate the tangible ways in which aid policy constitutes a *sui generis* issue area (Hook 1995, p. xiii). Rather than representing inviolable conditions, these rules should be viewed as ‘rules of thumb’, which can reasonably be assumed to hold most of the time.

We have seen how three key characteristics of aid policy combine to sequentially rule out more and more of the political actors who might feasibly pay attention to aid policy. First,

¹³ It may help here to distinguish between aid crises (which I have argued do not exist) and what might be termed aid scandals (which do occur occasionally). If they are serious enough, aid scandals will certainly ‘get the attention’ of political leaders and may conceivably precipitate a political crisis where the political future of a government is jeopardised. However, aid scandals are best understood as domestic political issues within donor states which are typically fuelled predominantly by the delivery or management of aid and not aid policy itself. In other words, the core driver of aid scandals is most likely to be corruption, broken promises, mismanagement or political infighting. This is not to say that such scandals will not have an impact on the direction of aid policy. Rather, aid is not a foreign policy instrument that is immediately selected when a national security crisis emerges. This means that aid is inevitably a discretionary agenda item for a state leader, rather than a required agenda item.

the low salience of aid immediately rules out most political actors. Next, the complexity of aid policy rules out many of the remaining actors from paying attention. Finally, we see that even political leaders, who are obliged to pay attention to most foreign policy issues, face no electoral penalty in ignoring aid issues.

What emerges, then, is a situation where major aid policy change can only be initiated by a political actor who is personally motivated to consciously prioritise aid policy issues, despite the lack of commensurate political benefit. Furthermore, this political actor will need to be especially powerful, with a very high capacity to personally shape the political agenda. As indicated earlier, in practice, only political leaders possess this capacity. They are the only ones capable of rendering the salience paradox: for political actors who *are* motivated to prioritise aid policy issues, and who are powerful enough to exert direct control of the political agenda, there exists considerable *scope* for agency. As we transition to Part II of the paper, it will become clear how, when these conditions are met, high-level aid policy change can occur.

Figure 1: The 'rules of the game' governing high-level aid policy decision making

1. Aid policy issues have low salience.
2. The public and political actors typically have a poor understanding of aid policy issues.
3. The public (and therefore political actors) pay negligible attention to aid policy issues relative to other issues.
4. High-level aid policy issues rarely occupy the attention of political actors and thus do not typically feature on the political agenda.
5. For political actors who *are* motivated to prioritise aid policy issues, and who are powerful enough to exert control over the political agenda, there exists considerable scope for agency.

Part II

This paper has advanced a theoretical argument about why high-level aid policy change is highly likely to be the product of a top-down, political actor-driven process. Part II changes tack by reinforcing these claims with empirical evidence drawn from two prominent instances of aid policy change. In Section 3, I illustrate how the decade-long expansion of Australian aid spending from 2003-04 and the UK's rise to become the first G8 (Group of Eight) country to reach the 0.7 per cent of GNI target both conform closely to the 'rules of the game' outlined above. Each case demonstrates what is possible when a powerful political actor pays sustained attention to aid. In Section 4, I probe each of these cases further to highlight lessons for cultivating top-down aid policy change.

3. Two cases of 'top-down' aid policy change

This section overviews a pair of parallel aid spending expansions that occurred in Australia and the UK through the mid-2000s and into the early 2010s. I show how both these cases conform closely to the 'rules of the game' outlined above.¹⁴ Most notably, the personal efforts of Kevin Rudd and David Cameron, respectively, were necessary (albeit not sufficient) conditions for high-level aid policy change to occur (Corbett 2017; Day 2017). These powerful political actors initiated and sustained top-down processes of high-level aid policy change. Tracing how these expansions unfolded shows how the ongoing presence of these leaders was crucial to aid spending expansions in Australia and the UK, offering an empirically focused counterpart to the theoretical ideas presented in Part I.

While the expansionary aid spending policies in Australia and the UK began under Prime Ministers John Howard and Tony Blair respectively, Rudd and Cameron were in power when spending increases were at their steepest and were responsible for providing the ongoing impetus during the most politically challenging periods. Both Rudd and Cameron afforded aid policy special attention throughout their political careers because they were

¹⁴ Much of the material in Section 3 is drawn from Day (2017, Chapters 5 and 6).

personally committed to increasing aid spending.¹⁵ Yet they also effectively framed their support for aid in ways that generated an indirect electoral advantage. Rudd framed his support for aid as a way to “appeal to young, progressive voters” (Corbett 2017, 112) and to distinguish himself from his predecessor. For Cameron, aid functioned as a pillar of his modernisation program that sought to ‘detoxify’ the Tory brand (Heppell & Lightfoot 2012). Crucially for the prospects of achieving aid policy change, both Rudd and Cameron were powerful enough to exert direct control over the political agenda for much of their careers.

Corbett’s history of Australian aid found that “Rudd’s support for the aid program ...[was] ...the key to its growth, increased status and autonomy between 2007 and 2013” (Corbett 2017, p. 113). While Opposition Leader, Rudd publicly committed a future Labor government to reaching the 0.5 per cent of GNI target by 2015 (Rudd 2007), locking in the objective as the core of a dramatic aid spending expansion that would become known as the ‘Golden Consensus’ (Day 2016). Soon afterward, in his first budget as Prime Minister, Rudd oversaw the largest single-year increase in the history of the Australian Aid Program. Later, after being deposed as Prime Minister and appointed as his successor Julia Gillard’s Foreign Minister, Rudd’s influence protected the aid budget from being cut as aid spending came under more pressure after the onset of the global financial crisis.¹⁶

Cameron, too, “invested a considerable amount of time and political capital on his commitment to the 0.7% target” (Heppell et al. 2017, p. 898). His support for aid spending was the reason why the Conservative Party embraced the 0.7 per cent target when he was elected its leader in late 2005. Three weeks later, Cameron announced the creation of the Globalisation and Global Poverty Policy Group, one of six policy commissions he established to drive policy development in priority areas. Six months later, he used a defining speech at the University of Oxford to signal the level of attention he intended to pay to aid policy. The “Conservatives used to regard [global poverty] as a significant, but second-order subject” Cameron (2006) explained, before assuring his listeners that

¹⁵ Rudd’s personal commitment to aid policy is apparent in his essay for *The Monthly* (Rudd 2006). Seldon and Snowdon’s (2015, Loc 4246) account of Cameron’s rime ministership concludes that the 0.7 per cent target was “a cause close to the Prime Minister’s heart”.

¹⁶ For accounts of Rudd’s influence over the aid budget at this time, see Flitton (2011), Lewis (2011) and Corbett (2017, p. 113).

international development was “my personal priority”. Like Rudd, Cameron also highlighted his commitment to aid spending as Opposition Leader by staking a future government he led to meeting a very challenging spending target initially set out by Labour — reaching the 0.7 per cent of GNI target by 2013. Later, as Prime Minister, Cameron personally intervened on numerous occasions to ensure the ‘aid ring-fence’ — a commitment made by Cameron to preserve aid spending despite scheduling deep cuts across all other areas of the budget except health services — was maintained (Seldon & Snowdon 2015, Loc 1154 and 7874; Laws 2016, Loc 3790).

Cameron’s decision to ring-fence the UK aid budget offers an excellent example of a major aid spending change occurring in contravention of the public’s wishes. A YouGov poll conducted in July 2010, eighteen months after Cameron first committed to ring-fencing the aid budget, asked respondents about their views on dealing with the budget deficit. The poll revealed that, while the ring-fencing of the National Health Service was popular (58 per cent of respondents supported exempting health from spending cuts), only 15 per cent thought international development should be exempted from cuts. On the other hand, 60 per cent were opposed to maintaining the aid ring-fence (BritainThinks 2010, pp. 4,14).¹⁷ A series of other polls yielded similar insights.¹⁸

Cameron’s commitment to maintaining aid spending was even more at odds with the wishes of supporters of his party. Results from the Public Opinion Monitor showed that “Conservative voters were 12 per cent more likely to support cutting the aid budget than Labour voters” (Lindstrom & Henson 2010, p. 11). In an online poll hosted by the website *ConservativeHome*, 32 per cent of Tory members nominated international development as their lowest priority for public spending, marginally exceeded only by the number who thought ‘culture, media and sport’ should receive less priority (34 per cent)

¹⁷ This poll surveyed 1788 members of the general public in the UK in an online questionnaire on 27 and 28 July 2010 (BritainThinks 2010, pp. 4,14).

¹⁸ A Harris Interactive poll from the same period revealed that 64 per cent of voters thought “aid to developing countries should bear the biggest part of cuts in government spending” (Lindstrom & Henson 2010, p. 4, emphasis added). Similarly, results from a series of UK Public Opinion Monitor surveys conducted in mid-2010 showed 63 per cent of respondents thought that aid spending “should be reduced as part of efforts to address the UK budget deficit” (Lindstrom & Henson 2010, p. 8), while only 8 per cent advocated increasing aid spending.

(Montgomerie 2009).¹⁹ A similar survey overseen by *ConservativeHome* in late 2012 asked members to respond to how they felt about a range of deficit reduction measures. Eight-four per cent of respondents said they would find a reduction in aid acceptable, versus only 13 per cent against (Montgomerie 2012).²⁰ This example illustrates that major aid policy change can be enacted in direct opposition to public sentiment. The fact that this is a possibility means, at the very least, that a ‘bottom-up’ strategy should only be a component of an overall advocacy strategy.

Rudd and Cameron placed a higher priority on aid policy than the public and most of their colleagues. Rudd, in particular, was an outlier on aid in relation to his cabinet. His embrace of aid was tolerated amongst his colleagues rather than actively supported, something that was especially apparent once Rudd returned to the backbench after resigning as Foreign Minister in early 2012. With Rudd no longer capable of exerting direct influence on the political agenda, aid lost its political ‘champion’ (Chandler 2012; Corbett 2017, p. 127). From this point, the Australian aid budget came under increasing pressure. Cameron, on the other hand, had the advantage of being supported by numerous like-minded senior colleagues (Heppell et al. 2017, p. 898). Andrew Mitchell (Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, 2005-10 and Secretary of State for International Development, 2010-12) was arguably the most important, but the support of George Osborne (Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer 2005-10 and Chancellor of the Exchequer 2010-2016) was also pivotal.

The degree of change that Rudd and Cameron helped to promote and sustain by choosing to pay sustained attention to aid was striking. The aid expansions these leaders oversaw shifted Australian and British aid spending patterns from their long-term trajectories. In the case of Australia, aid spending had been growing by an average of just one per cent per annum for a period of three decades before the decade-long expansion. Yet over the decade from 2003-04, Australia’s ODA contributions increased by more than 80 per cent,

¹⁹ This online survey attracted 1812 respondents.

²⁰ Support for reducing aid spending was second only to reducing Britain’s contribution to the European Union, a measure acceptable to 95 per cent of respondents (Montgomerie 2012). Furthermore, the commitment to aid spending was not only failing to win the Tories any new adherents — a 2011 YouGov poll showed that the aid ring-fence was not winning any voters over to the Conservative Party, with only 7 per cent of voters saying “the decision to increase the aid budget makes them more favourable towards the Conservatives, while 37 per cent say it makes them less favourable” (quoted in Jones 2011).

rising from A\$3 billion to A\$5.6 billion at its peak in the 2012-13 financial year (Howes 2015).²¹ During this expansion decade, aid spending grew by an average of seven per cent per annum. The story of the UK expansion was similar. Since 1960, UK aid spending had hovered around the £3 billion mark (in 2017-18 pounds) for four decades (Krutikova & Warwick 2017, p. 3; Morrissey 2002, p. 14). From 1999, however, aid spending began to rise dramatically, from £3 billion to almost £13.6 billion in 2016.

The key point in which these cases diverge, however, is that the Australian aid expansion was immediately followed by an aid spending contraction under Prime Minister Tony Abbott that rapidly brought aid spending levels roughly in line with their long-term trajectory (Howes 2015). On the other hand, UK aid spending appears to have reached a new equilibrium, with aid spending maintained at 0.7 per cent since 2013. The reasons for Australia's about-turn on aid spending are also highly instructive for aid advocacy, although they cannot be addressed in the limited space here (see Corbett 2017; Day 2016, 2017 for more detail). Instead, in the final section below, the discussion extracts lessons for aid advocacy from the aid spending expansions overviewed above.

4. Lessons for cultivating 'top-down' aid policy change

At this point, the implications of the findings of this paper for aid advocates should be apparent. Rather than seeking to effect aid policy change primarily through influencing public opinion, aid advocates should give more weight to advocacy strategies that enhance the likelihood of top-down change occurring. The evidence I have presented provides a rationale for directing advocacy efforts towards obtaining the attention of current or future political actors — especially future political leaders. This final substantive section of the paper highlights key aspects of the aid policy change processes documented above to draw out lessons for cultivating top-down aid policy change.

4.1. Focus on winning the hearts and minds of political actors

Top-down policy change is initiated and sustained primarily by political actors, not the public. If this is the case, it follows that efforts to promote aid policy change should focus

²¹ Note that these figures are in 2015-16 dollars.

on convincing political actors of the merits of such change, rather than on winning the hearts and minds of the public. Identifying, supporting and converting receptive political actors, rather than segments of voters, should be a chief concern of aid advocates. Project Umubano (discussed below) provides an example of an initiative that consciously sought to influence political actors on the direction of aid policy. It served as a model of the potentially transformative influence that such a strategy can foster.

In 2007, then-Shadow Development Secretary Mitchell invited Conservative Members of Parliament (MPs) to join him and Cameron in setting up a new social action project in Rwanda. The initial iteration of the project saw 43 Conservative Party MPs, members and supporters pay their own way to Africa to spend two weeks of their summer volunteering. The project rapidly expanded scaled and in 2017 celebrated its tenth anniversary.

Mitchell established Project Umubano — the name comes from the Kinyarwanda word for friendship — with the objective of fostering a pro-international development policy constituency within the Conservative Party. Umubano connected like-minded individuals and exposed current and future political actors to development issues in a meaningful way. In a published diary entry from the 2009 edition of Umubano, Mitchell (2009) explained how “[w]ithin the Conservative Party our project helps ensure there are even more people passionate about international development who have tasted the reality of life in a developing country and are determined to tackle global poverty”. Likewise, Stephen Crabb, who inherited the leadership of Umubano from Mitchell in 2011, explained in an email to the BBC’s Andrew Harding that the project had “helped to create a critical mass of people who are not only interested in development but have seen the lasting difference it can make first hand” (Stephen Crabb, in Harding 2010). “There is no question”, continued Crabb, “that Umubano has helped to generate a new level of positive interest and experience of development within the Conservative Party”.

The three iterations of Umubano undertaken while the Conservatives were in opposition (2007, 2008 and 2009) were especially crucial in functioning as an important incubator of Tory interest, awareness and policy engagement in international development issues. The 2008 and 2009 editions attracted over 100 volunteers each. When the Conservative Party was returned to government in 2010, in coalition with the Liberal Democrats,

almost ten per cent of the Conservative caucus in the House of Commons (30 out of 306) had taken part in Umubano (Mitchell 2010). Umubano representation was even higher amongst Cameron's first Cabinet, with four of the eighteen Conservative members of Cabinet — Mitchell, David Mundell, Jeremy Hunt and Cameron himself — having been volunteers. Two additional Umubano alumni were appointed to Cabinet in later reshuffles — Crabb and Justine Greening, who replaced Mitchell as Secretary of State for International Development in 2012. Another Umubano alumni, Desmond Swayne, became Minister of State for International Development in 2014.

The influence of Umubano was also manifest in other important ways. Early in Cameron's tenure as Prime Minister, a group of Umubano veterans sought to build on the momentum of the project and harness the latent interest in development issues with the broader Conservative Party by establishing Conservative Friends for International Development (CFID). CFID was launched at the Conservative Party conference in 2011 and continues to actively host events — including annual receptions at the party conference — and operate as a 'safe space' for regular discussions about international development amongst party members.

The success of Cameron, and especially Mitchell, in fostering a powerful and committed constituency for international development within the Conservative Party while in opposition remains one of the most underappreciated reasons why the Tories realised their promise to reach the 0.7 per cent target in 2013. As highlighted earlier, Cameron's commitment to aid spending was unpopular with the right-wing of his party, the right-wing media (Mawdsley 2011) and the public. Despite this, Cameron could rely on the support of a sizeable cohort of pro-development Tories. Recent research investigating the views of the 308 members of the 2010-15 Parliamentary Conservative Party categorised 61.7 per cent (190) of members as aid advocates, 30.5 per cent (94) as aid sceptics and 7.8 per cent (24) as aid critics. According to this study, "Cameron did secure a remarkable success in transforming the position of his party" (Heppell et al. p. 905). The role of Mitchell and Umubano are surely crucial contributing factors of this transformation.

One instance where the emergence of this pro-development Conservative constituency had a tangible policy impact was in relation to the passing of legislation enshrining the 0.7 per cent target into law in 2015. Despite the 2010 Conservative manifesto including

a promise to pass legislation to “lock in” the 0.7 per cent target, backbench opposition prevented Cameron from keeping his promise (Conservative Party 2010). In July 2014, however, a 0.7 per cent bill was brought to Parliament via a Private Members Bill sponsored by Michael Moore, a Liberal Democrat MP (Baker 2015).²² Despite repeated attempts by right-wing Tories to deny passage of the legislation (Holehouse 2014; Mason & Jones 2014), the Bill was eventually passed after its third reading in the House of Lords in March 2015 (Anderson 2015). In concert with the impact of the #TurnUpSaveLives campaign run by a coalition of NGOs (Baker 2015), the fact that the Bill passed various procedural loopholes was dependent on the votes of pro-development Conservatives. Once again, Mitchell played a key leadership role in mobilising the pro-development caucus.

A key strength of Project Umubano was that it was an initiative that emerged organically from within the Conservative Party. Nonetheless, many of the core lessons of Umubano are transferrable. For example, obtaining a tangible experience of ‘development in action’ clearly impacts political actors, while the benefits of cultivating a pro-development cohort in party structures is likely to have a flow-on effect in Parliament. Recognising this, Save the Children Australia, with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been delivering the Australian Aid and Parliament Project since 2015. The project has seen over thirty Australian parliamentarians visit Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Myanmar, Solomon Islands, Jordan and Lebanon, usually as part of small learning groups comprising MPs from a variety of different parties (Wells 2018).

4.2. Pay attention to political and policy (rather than electoral) processes

Aid advocacy efforts informed by the bottom-up model will logically gravitate towards seeking to directly influence electoral processes, aiming to mobilise parts of the electorate to the degree that political actors are obliged to respond. The ‘rules of the game’ articulated in Part I, and the empirical illustrations highlighted in Part II, suggest that an alternative approach — focusing on political and policy processes — is likely to

²² The full name of the Bill was the ‘International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill 2014-15’ and it was introduced on 2 July 2014. For an overview of the progress of the Bill, see Booth and Tyler (2015).

be a more rewarding advocacy investment. This invites an advocacy posture that prepares for major change but expects incremental change.

To acknowledge that major aid policy change is a top-down process is to acknowledge that transformative advocacy efforts need to take a very long-term view. Rather than maintaining a permanent campaign footing, the monitoring of potential ‘policy windows’ (Kingdon 1995) — points where transformative change becomes possible — takes precedence. And while much of this paper has focused on agency, the unique domestic environments in which high-level aid policy decision making occurs clearly constrains and shapes what change is possible and when. While none of these ideas will be new to those involved in advocacy efforts, I hope the theoretical underpinnings provided in Part I provide additional clarity as to why they apply. In the same vein, this final substantive section of the paper offers three concrete examples whereby adopting a mindset informed by the top-down model might help focus aid advocacy efforts.

1. Invest in leaders’ stocks of intellectual capital ahead of time

Influencing a political leader once they are in government is very difficult. The demands on their attention means that “[e]ven the most erudite officials are hard-pressed to think deep thoughts” (Drezner 2017, p. 15). Condoleezza Rice, who served as US Secretary of State (2005-09) under President George W. Bush, has explained how “a policymaker’s intellectual capital stock starts depreciating the moment after taking office” (quoted in Drezner 2017, p. 15). It follows that the best time to invest in creating this intellectual stock is before a future leader reaches office. In Australia and the UK, the period that parties spend in opposition is a crucial period for the harvesting of ideas, testing of talking points, building of consensus, the accretion of policy knowledge and consideration of bold initiatives. Aid advocates need to consider how best to assist and equip political actors to conduct such activities, acknowledging that the payoffs may come decades later.

Consider the examples of Rudd and Cameron, who made their defining commitments to aid spending very early in their respective tenures as Opposition Leader. Crucially, both men were elected to the party leadership after their respective parties had experienced prolonged absence from power. Rudd became Labor’s leader following four Labor federal election defeats, at a time when Howard’s prime ministership was over a decade old. When Cameron assumed the Tory leadership, the Conservatives had lost three

consecutive elections and Tony Blair had served as Prime Minister for eight and a half years. Rudd and Cameron represented a new direction and, because each was seen as closer to the political centre than many party members, they had the potential to broaden the electoral base beyond rusted-on supporters. As personal embodiments of party change, Rudd and Cameron were afforded a higher than usual degree of control over the political agenda, particularly in the early 'honeymoon' stages of their leadership. Both men used this leverage to place aid issues on the agenda. Cameron made achieving the 0.7 per cent target a component of his program of 'Tory modernisation', while Rudd literally 'doubled down' on Howard's aid expansion with the promise to reach the 0.5 per cent target in 2013, personally seeing through his party's expenditure review committee. Both leaders also deployed their commitment to aid as political differentiators, and indeed, both became closely politically connected with their chosen aid targets. Furthermore, Cameron and Rudd both made use of the periods in opposition to undertake deep thinking on aid policy.

2. Seek opportunities to 'lock-in' policy progress

A feature of the UK aid spending expansion, when compared to Australia, was the way in which the policy trajectory was 'ratcheted up' with a series of important policy steps and commitments. Like locks in a canal, these steps secured the uplift of policy progress, reducing the likelihood that gains would be lost. This process started with Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development (1997-2003) under Blair. Perhaps most importantly, Short oversaw the establishment of the Department for International Development (DFID) as a standalone ministry represented in Cabinet by its own secretary of state. Short then oversaw the publication of a pair of influential White Papers, published in 1997 and 2000, that clarified DFID's strategic direction. A capstone to Short's tenure was the passing of the International Development Act 2002, which ensured British aid had to be used to reduce poverty (Barder 2005, p. 17).

While Short started this policy momentum, it continued after her tenure. In July 2004, Gordon Brown committed the UK to reaching the 0.7 per cent target by 2013. This was reaffirmed at the July 2005 G8 summit at Gleneagles. Then, in mid-2006, Cameron committed the Conservative Party to matching Labour's spending promise. In January 2009, Cameron went further, promising to 'ring-fence' the aid budget. In the lead-up to

the 2010 election, each of the three major parties — Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats — included a commitment to the 0.7 per cent target in their manifestos. The coalition agreement which the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats negotiated on forming government also included this promise. Finally, as mentioned earlier, legislation passed in 2016 most emphatically locked in the 0.7 per cent level of aid spending as a legal obligation for the UK government of the day.

In comparison, there were few points at which the aid policy trajectory was ‘locked in’ in Australia. Instead, the Australian aid expansion, from a policy perspective, felt more like an overwhelming wave which rushed in and then suddenly rushed back out. There was a sense that change was too fast to be sustainable (Corbett 2017, Chapter 5). More than just looking for the next wave to ride, the Australian development sector needs to proactively consider how it can influence the environment in which it operates. In this regard, a crucial component of success will be the extent to which the Australian development constituency can integrate more closely with Australia’s foreign policy establishment (Day 2016).

3. Identify ‘choke points’ and seek to influence ‘veto players’

A final observation that stands out from examining the Australian and UK aid expansions from a comparative perspective is the extent to which crucial decisions about aid spending were made in the context of small groups of several political actors constituted for the purposes of providing financial or budgetary oversight. The most important decisions taken on a regular basis regarding aid spending in Australia are made by the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC). In the UK, the ‘Quad’, which emerged organically as part of preparations for the 2010 emergency budget (Laws 2016, Loc 1005; Seldon & Snowdon 2015, Loc 1105) and rapidly became the key decision making body overseeing economic policy in the Coalition government (Forsyth 2012), played a similar budgetary gatekeeping role in the UK.²³

²³ The members of the ‘Quad’ (for the majority of its existence) were Prime Minister Cameron, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne (Conservative), Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg (Liberal Democrat) and Treasury Secretary Danny Alexander (Liberal Democrat).

When these small groups considered aid policy, they did so through the narrow lens of budgetary considerations. This meant that it was crucial for a powerful ‘aid advocate’ to have membership in these small groups if aid spending levels were to be maintained or increased. Rudd and Cameron acted as ‘veto players’ (Tsebelis 1995, p. 2002) for much of the period of the respective expansions. They prevented cuts to aid spending. Conversely, the absence of a powerful ‘aid protector’ within these small groups makes it much more likely for aid spending to be cut. In the Australian context, there were no ‘aid advocates’ on the ERC during the period of the Abbott government, a factor that hastened the aid spending reversal. Despite being the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and the Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop could not function effectively as a ‘veto player’ because she was not a member of the ERC. The significance of veto players within small groups responsible to budget allocations is but one example of a regularly occurring ‘choke point’ in the aid policy process where the presence of a political actor who is supportive of aid policy can wield outsized influence.

5. Conclusion

In summarising the exchange between Caldwell and Senator Fierravanti-Wells that introduced this paper, I highlighted how, on the aid advocate’s side of the debate, the desire to ‘do something’ to alter the politics of aid is regularly voiced. Meanwhile, on the other side of the debate, politicians cite public opinion as a reason why their actions are constrained. The positions of both groups are challenged by the key finding of this paper — that high-level aid policy change is driven by a top-down, political actor-driven process.

For aid advocates, accepting this finding requires acknowledging that the politics of aid cannot easily be altered. The ‘rules of the game’ governing the politics of aid are underpinned by the low salience of aid. While moving the needle on the public salience of aid is very difficult to accomplish, winning the hearts and minds of individual political actors is possible. As the example of Project Umubano shows, consciously fostering a pro-aid constituency amongst political actors is not only achievable and highly impactful but can be accomplished in a relatively short period of sustained effort by the right people in the right conditions.

For political actors, accepting that high-level aid policy change is driven by a top-down, leader-driven process entails acknowledging that their scope for agency in the domain of aid policymaking is potentially greater than they admit. At the same time, political actors who are motivated to pay attention to aid must be aware that, unless they can acquire direct power over the political agenda and maintain it for a substantial period, they will not likely be able to drive transformational change. This means that we should expect that political leaders will almost always be key players in major aid policy change.

Finally, acknowledging the primacy of the top-down model in triggering aid policy change requires aid advocates to resist the allure of directly influencing electoral processes through the shaping of public opinion to invest more in developing understanding and awareness of the political and policy processes that impinge on aid policy. Exposing future political leaders to ideas about aid, locking in policy progress and shepherding crucial reforms through choke points represent 'behind the scenes' interventions that, while requiring a long-term perspective, also promise long-term rewards.

6. References

- Anderson, M 2015, 'UK passes bill to honour pledge of 0.7% foreign aid target', *The Guardian*, viewed 20 February 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/mar/09/uk-passes-bill-law-aid-target-percentage-income>>.
- Baker, T 2015, '11 lessons from #TurnUpSaveLives', *Thoughtful Campaigner*, viewed 20 February 2017, <<http://thoughtfulcampaigner.org/11-lessons-from-turnupsavelives/>>.
- Bale, T 2016, *The Conservative Party: From Thatcher to Cameron*, 2nd Edition, Polity, Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA.
- Barder, O 2005, *Reforming Development Assistance: Lessons from the UK Experience*, Center for Global Development, Washington, D.C., viewed 25 September 2013, <<http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=984062>>.
- Baumgartner, FR, Green-Pedersen, C, & Jones, BD 2006, 'Comparative studies of policy agendas', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 13, no. 7, pp. 959–974.
- Baumgartner, FR & Jones, BD 1993, *Agendas and instability in American politics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Bevan, S & Jennings, W 2014, 'Representation, agendas and institutions', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 37–56.
- Booth, L & Tyler, G 2015, *International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill 2014-15: progress of the bill*, House of Commons Library, Westminster, viewed 20 February 2017, <<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN07034>>.
- Bourke, L 2018, 'Australians don't want to spend more on foreign aid, admits minister', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, viewed 12 June 2018, <<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australians-don-t-want-to-spend-more-on-foreign-aid-admits-minister-20180417-p4z9zi.html>>.
- BritainThinks 2010, *Dealing with the deficit: the citizens' view*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, London, viewed 22 February 2017, <<http://pwc.blogs.com/files/dealing-with-the-deficit---the-citizens-view.pdf>>.
- Burkot, C & Wood, T 2015, *Australian Public Opinion About Foreign Aid 2011-2015*, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, viewed 12 September 2015, <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2652559>.
- Busby, JW 2010, *Moral movements and foreign policy*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Cameron, D 2006, 'Fighting Global Poverty', viewed 10 July 2014, <<https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/600030>>.

— 2011, 'Prime Minister's Speech at Vaccine Summit', viewed 1 September 2014, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-at-vaccine-summit>>.

Capoccia, G & Kelemen, RD 2007, 'The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism', *World Politics*, vol. 59, no. 03, pp. 341–369.

Chandler, J 2012, 'Goodwill hunting: fears budget may shun world's poor', *The Age*, viewed 7 March 2016, <<http://www.theage.com.au/business/federal-budget/goodwill-hunting-fears-budget-may-shun-worlds-poor-20120504-1y4dz.html>>.

Chapnick, A 2012, 'The Politics of Reforming Canada's Foreign Aid Policy', in S Brown (ed.), *Struggling for effectiveness: CIDA and Canadian foreign aid*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal; Ithaca.

Clemens, MA & Moss, TJ 2005, *Ghost of 0.7%: Origins and relevance of the International Aid Target*, Centre for Global Development, Washington, D.C, viewed 28 June 2016, <http://www.cgdev.org/files/3822_file_WP68.pdf>.

Cohen, JE 1995, 'Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda', *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 87–107.

Conservative Party 2010, *Invitation to join the Government of Britain: the Conservative manifesto 2010*, Conservative Research Department, Great Britain, viewed 7 December 2016, <<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/files/conservative-manifesto-2010.pdf>>.

Corbett, J 2017, *Australia's foreign aid dilemma: humanitarian aspirations confront democratic legitimacy*, Routledge, London; New York.

Darnton, A 2006, *Make Poverty History End of Year Notes: From the 'Public Perceptions of Poverty' Research Programme*, Andrew Darnton Research & Analysis, Clevedon, Somerset, viewed 16 January 2016, <<https://celebrityanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/andrew-darnton-make-poverty-history.pdf>>.

Day, B 2016, 'Australian aid after the "Golden Consensus": from aid policy to development policy?', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 6, pp. 641–656.

— 2017, *Paying Attention to Aid: A Comparative Study of Aid Policy Change in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands* Doctoral Thesis, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, <<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/144614>>.

Dellis, A 2009, 'The Salient Issue of Issue Salience', *Journal of Public Economic Theory*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 203–231.

Drezner, DW 2017, *The Ideas Industry*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Fierravanti-Wells, S the HC 2018, 'Australia and the United Kingdom – International Development Partners', viewed 12 June 2018, <<http://ministers.dfat.gov.au/fierravanti->

wells/speeches/Pages/2018/cf_sp_180416a.aspx?w=p2wUlmE1t7kKl1%2BiOm3gqg%3D%3D>.

Flitton, D 2011, 'New target for bureaucracy's jealous eyes', *The Age*, p. 11.

Forsyth, J 2012, 'Politics: Britain's new gang of four', *The Spectator*, viewed 28 November 2016, <<http://www.spectator.co.uk/2012/02/politics-britains-new-gang-of-four/>>.

Franklin, MN & Wlezien, C 1997, 'The Responsive Public Issue Saliency, Policy Change, and Preferences for European Unification', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 347–363.

Green-Pedersen, C & Walgrave, S 2014, 'Political Agenda Setting: An Approach to Studying Political Systems', in C Green-Pedersen & S Walgrave (eds.), *Agenda setting, policies, and political systems: a comparative approach*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago; London.

Gyngell, A & Wesley, M 2007, *Making Australian foreign policy*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK; New York.

Harding, A 2010, BBC - Andrew Harding on Africa: Rwanda, Conservatives and image, viewed 14 November 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/andrewharding/2010/08/rwanda_conservatives_and_image.html>.

Heinrich, T, Kobayashi, Y, & Bryant, KA 2016, 'Public Opinion and Foreign Aid Cuts in Economic Crises', *World Development*, vol. 77, pp. 66–79.

Heppell, T, Crines, A, & Jeffery, D 2017, 'The UK government and the 0.7% international aid target: Opinion among Conservative parliamentarians', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 895–909.

Heppell, T & Lightfoot, S 2012, "We will not balance the books on the backs of the poorest people in the world": Understanding Conservative Party Strategy on International Aid', *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 83, no. 1, pp. 130–138.

Hill, C 2003, *The changing politics of foreign policy*, Palgrave MacMillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York.

Holehouse, M 2014, '0.7 per cent aid law survives attempt to kill it in Commons', *The Telegraph*, viewed 20 February 2017, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/liberaldemocrats/11275518/0.7-per-cent-aid-law-survives-attempt-to-kill-it-in-Commons.html>>.

Hook, SW 1995, *National interest and foreign aid*, L. Rienner Publishers, Boulder.

Höse, A 2011, 'The Cognitive Dimension of Parliamentary Influence: The saliency of European affairs in the United States Congress', in K Oppermann & H Viehrig (eds.), *Issue saliency in international politics*, Routledge, London; New York.

Howes, S 2015, 'Australian aid: the way we were', Development Policy Centre, viewed 7 July 2015, <<http://devpolicy.org/australian-aid-the-way-we-were/>>.

Hudson, D & vanHeerde-Hudson, J 2012, "A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep": Surveys of Public Attitudes towards Development Aid', *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 5–23.

Hudson, VM 2014, *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*, Second edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham.

Jones, BD & Baumgartner, FR 2005, *The politics of attention: how government prioritizes problems*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Jones, J 2011, 'Public opinion on international aid isn't where Cameron thinks it is', *Coffee House*, viewed 6 December 2016, <<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2011/06/public-opinion-on-international-aid-isnt-where-cameron-thinks-it-is/>>.

Kingdon, JW 1995, *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*, 2nd ed, Longman, New York.

Krutikova, S & Warwick, R 2017, *The changing landscape of UK aid*, Institute for Fiscal Studies, viewed 24 June 2018, <<https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/bns/BN204.pdf>>.

Lancaster, C 2007, *Foreign aid: diplomacy, development, domestic politics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Laws, D 2016, *Coalition: the inside story of the conservative-liberal democrat coalition government*, Biteback Publishing, London, viewed 27 February 2017, <<https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=4FA47A40-7CA9-451F-8AD0-1C26747542D9>>.

Lelieveldt, H & Princen, S 2011, *The politics of the European Union*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York, viewed 5 July 2017, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511984693>>.

Lewis, S 2011, 'Foreign aid is "out of control"', *The Mercury*, p. 6.

Lightfoot, S & Szent-Iványi, B 2015, *New Europe's new development aid*, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY.

Lindstrom, J & Henson, S 2010, *Aid to Developing Countries: Where Does the UK Public Stand?*, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, viewed 11 October 2016, <<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/3183>>.

——— 2011, *What Does the Public Think, Know and Do about Aid and Development?*, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, viewed 11 October 2016, <<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/3183>>.

Lundsgaarde, E 2013, *The domestic politics of foreign aid*, Routledge, New York.

Mahoney, J 2000, 'Path dependence in historical sociology', *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 507–548.

Mahoney, J, Kimball, E, & Koivu, KL 2009, 'The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 114–146.

Martin, A et al. 2014, 'The opinion–policy link in Australia', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 499–517.

Mason, R & Jones, S 2014, 'Lib Dem foreign aid bill survives Tory attempt to kill it', *The Guardian*, viewed 20 February 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/dec/05/lib-dem-foreign-aid-bill-survives-tory-attempt-kill>>.

Mawdsley, E 2011, 'The Conservatives, the Coalition and International Development', *Area*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 506–507.

McBride, D 2014, *Power trip: a decade of policy, plots and spin.*, Biteback Publishing, London.

Milner, HV & Tingley, D 2013, 'Public Opinion and Foreign Aid: A Review Essay', *International Interactions*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 389–401.

Milner, HV & Tingley, D 2016, *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.

Mitchell, A 2009, 'Guest Post: Andrew Mitchell's Rwandan Diary', *Iain Dale's Diary*, viewed 5 December 2016, <<http://iaindale.blogspot.com.au/2009/12/guest-post-andrew-mitchells-rwandan.html>>.

———2010, Andrew Mitchell MP: The impact of the work of Project Umubano volunteers on Rwanda and Sierra Leone is a credit to the Conservative Party, *Conservative Home*, viewed 14 November 2016, <<http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2010/08/andrew-mitchell-mp-the-impact-of-the-work-of-project-umubano-volunteers-on-rwanda-is-a-credit-to-the.html>>.

Montgomerie, T 2009, 'Tory members say Defence should be top public spending priority', *ToryDiary*, viewed 6 December 2016, <<http://www.conservativehome.com/thetorydiary/2009/01/tory-members-sa.html>>.

———2012, 'Cut EU spending. Cut aid. Charge for missed appointments. Cap family benefits. Tory members vote for their preferred deficit reduction measures ...', *ToryDiary*, viewed 6 December 2016, <<http://www.conservativehome.com/thetorydiary/2012/11/cut-eu-spending-cut-aid-charge-for-missed-appointments-cap-family-benefits-tory-members-vote-for-the.html>>.

Moore, M & Unsworth, S 2006, 'Britain's New White Paper: Making Governance Work for the Poor', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 707–715.

Moravcsik, A 2004, 'Is there a "democratic deficit" in world politics? A framework for analysis', *Government and opposition*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 336–363.

Morrissey, O 2002, *British Aid Policy Since 1997: Is DFID the Standard Bearer for Donors?*, Centre for Research in Economic Development and International Trade, School of Economics, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK, viewed 28 January 2015, <<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/credit/documents/papers/02-23.pdf>>.

ODI (Overseas Development Institute) 2018, *Australia's Vision for International Development*, viewed 12 June 2018, <<https://www.odi.org/events/4551-australias-vision-international-development>>.

Oppermann, K 2010, 'The concept of issue salience in foreign policy analysis: Delineating the scope conditions of theoretical approaches in the field', in, *SGIR 7th Pan-European Conference on IR*, Stockholm, Sweden, viewed 27 July 2016, <http://www.eisa-net.org/be-bruga/eisa/files/events/stockholm/Oppermann_SGIR2010_The%20Concept%20of%20Issue%20Salience%20in%20FPA.pdf>.

———2014, 'Delineating the Scope Conditions of the Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Noncompensatory Principle and the Domestic Salience of Foreign Policy', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 23–41.

Oppermann, K & Spencer, A 2013, 'Thinking Alike? Salience and Metaphor Analysis as Cognitive Approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 39–56.

Oppermann, K & Viehrig, H 2009, 'The Public Salience of Foreign and Security Policy in Britain, Germany and France', *West European Politics*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 925–942.

Peake, JS 2001, 'Presidential agenda setting in foreign policy', *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 1, pp. 69–86.

Rasmussen, A, Mäder, LK, & Reher, S 2018, 'With a Little Help From The People? The Role of Public Opinion in Advocacy Success', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 139–164.

Riddell, R 2007, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Robbins, A 2013, 'Beyond budgets: Why aid advocates should rethink their strategy', *The Interpreter*, viewed 15 February 2016, <<http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2013/09/27/More-Why-aid-advocates-should-rethink-their-strategy.aspx>>.

Rudd, K 2006, 'Faith in politics', *The Monthly*, viewed 17 October 2015, <<https://www.themonthly.com.au/monthly-essays-kevin-rudd-faith-politics--300>>.

———2007, 'Fresh ideas for future challenges in foreign policy', viewed 7 July 2015, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/pubfiles/Rudd%2C_Arc_of_instability.pdf>.

Schoen, H 2011, 'Two indicators, one conclusion: On the public salience of foreign affairs in Germany before and after reunification', in K Oppermann & H Viehrig (eds.), *Issue salience in international politics*, Routledge advances in international relations and global politics, Routledge, London ; New York.

Seldon, A & Snowdon 2015, *Cameron at 10: The Inside Story 2010-2015*, viewed 8 February 2016, <<https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=CFF95175-5B0F-43BD-89C8-891E73D9DE25>>.

Smillie, I 1998, 'Optical and Other Illusions Trends and Issues in Public Thinking About Development Co-operation', in H Helmich & I Smillie (eds.), *Development Centre Studies Public Attitudes and International Development Co-operation*, OECD Publishing.

Spratt, J 2018, 'Donor policy domains in official development assistance: ideas, actors and rules in and beyond Asia', *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 40, no.2, pp. 83-97.

Tsebelis, G 1995, 'Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 289–325.

———2002, *Veto players: how political institutions work*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.

van der Veen, AM 2011, *Ideas, interests and foreign aid*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Walker, JL 1977, 'Setting the Agenda in the U.S. Senate: A Theory of Problem Selection', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 423–445.

Wells, T 2018, *Influencing Australian Aid: The Australian Aid and Parliament Project*, Save the Children, University of Melbourne.

Wintour, P 2011, 'David Cameron defends aid spending at G8 summit', *The Guardian*, viewed 8 March 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/may/27/david-cameron-defends-aid-g8>>.

Wlezien, C 1995, 'The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending', *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 981–1000.

Wlezien, C 2005, 'On the salience of political issues: The problem with "most important problem"', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 555–579.

Wood, BD & Peake, JS 1998, 'The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Agenda Setting', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 92, no. 1, pp. 173–184.

Wood, T 2018, 'Aid Policy and Australian Public Opinion', *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 235-248.

Zahariadis, N 2016, 'Setting the agenda on agenda setting: definitions, concepts, and controversies', in N Zahariadis (ed.), *Handbook of public policy agenda setting*,

Handbooks of research on public policy, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham;
Northampton, pp.1–21.