Britain and Africa in the Twenty-First Century: Between ambition and pragmatism

Edited by

Danielle Beswick, Jonathan Fisher and Stephen R Hurt

9.

British Campaigns for African Development: the Trade Justice Movement

Stephen R Hurt

With the rise of neoliberal thinking during the 1980s and the associated preference for export-oriented development strategies, trade liberalisation became a firmly established orthodoxy within policy elites. The idea of 'special and differential' treatment for developing countries, within the rules of global trade, came under increasing pressure as a result. In the context of UK policy towards Africa, this is a view that was entrenched during the period that followed the end of the Cold War. As Williams noted 'both the Conservative and Labour Governments have subscribed to … the ostensibly mutually beneficial nature of international trade and FDI' (2004: 52).

However, at the turn of the century and the period beginning with the protests at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial in Seattle in 1999, it seemed like the emergent global justice movement could offer an avenue for counter-hegemonic struggle, which would be able to challenge the ideas and institutions of global governance, particularly those governing world trade. Hence, the theoretical concerns of this chapter are to investigate the extent to which these new social movements have been able to shift both the material and ideational terrain of global trade. Existing critical literature suggests this has proven difficult. For example, Paterson has argued that in the case of the WTO, it has been able to employ a strategy of *trasformismo* so that any changes implemented are simply 'cosmetic and designed to assimilate and absorb counter-movements and ideas to make them consistent with the demands of the global economy' (2009: 57).[1] In a more general sense it has been argued that 'one of the disappointments of NGOs has been their tendency to identify more readily with alternative forms of interventions than with more systemic changes' (Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin, 2008: 5). McSweeney (2014: 280) goes further, in raising the question of whether the problem is simply one of focusing too much on lobbying and policy reforms rather than structural changes, by reminding us that civil society represents a terrain where hegemony can be reproduced as well as resisted.

Within the context of UK-Africa relations, the Trade Justice Movement (TJM) has been at the centre of attempts to challenge the hegemonic assumptions of the developmental benefits of trade liberalisation. TJM became one of the three pillars of the Make Poverty History (MPH) coalition, which played such a key role in 2005 in shaping understanding within the UK of what the main barriers to African development are. Often perceived as the poor relation of the MPH coalition, TJM's focus on the rules of global trade added a crucial structural dimension to the diagnosis of African poverty and underdevelopment. Hence, this chapter's focus on the role played by TJM, within the broader context of British campaigns for African development (see Chapter 8 above for a discussion of the Enough Food If campaign, which was the next major development campaign coalition after MPH).

The research for this chapter included a series of twenty-two qualitative semi-structured research interviews with relevant individuals, which were conducted during the period from July 2015 until September 2016. Interviewees were selected with two key criteria in mind. First, that a range of the most important organisations within TJM were represented and second that the entire period since TJM's formation in 2000 was covered.

TJM was created at a time when a nascent global justice movement was just emerging. In the UK, NGOs were starting to take advantage of the relaxation of charity law constraints that had been achieved in 1995, which enabled them to adopt more overtly political campaigns (Saunders, 2009: 50). TJM is a coalition of NGOs (at the time of writing nearly seventy),[2]

which sought to build on the approach taken by the Jubilee 2000 movement that campaigned for the cancellation of Third World debt.

Its founding statement published in June 2002 focused on the need to rebalance the rules of international trade. Its central argument was that:

> The international trade regime needs fundamental change if it is to succeed and benefit us all. The world needs international trade rules, but to date these have favoured the narrow commercial interests of the most powerful trading nations and the largest corporations, at the expense of the wider public interest and smaller economic enterprises (Trade Justice Movement, 2002).

This initial statement was complemented by a huge mass lobby of Parliament on 19 June 2002, which gave TJM a real sense of initial momentum (BBC News, 2002). At the time, the focus of TJM was on the multilateral rules being negotiated within the WTO. Its formation was a direct response to the launch of the Doha Round of the WTO, which claimed to have the aim of making the rules of global trade fairer for developing countries as its core remit. Since the early 2000s, things have changed quite significantly and the focus of TJM's attention has shifted, as trade liberalisation has been largely enacted through bilateral and regional agreements.

The rest of this chapter is organised as follows. The first section discusses the term 'trade justice' itself and considers both how it has been framed by actors within and outside of TJM and its relationship with 'fair trade', which has often been uneasy. The second section then interrogates the network approach adopted by TJM and how this has both helped and hindered aspects of its work. The third section discusses the evolution of TJM's campaigning and particularly the extent to which African development has featured within its work. The chapter then concludes with some thoughts on the extent to which NGOs can influence the agenda on trade and how this relates to the British debate on African development.

The overall argument of the chapter is that given the peculiarities of development campaigning in the UK and the centrality of Africa to some of its key campaigns, the work of TJM has often been bound-up with broader campaigns for African development. Whilst TJM's campaigns have undoubtedly been important in highlighting the broader structural dynamics underpinning the challenges to development in Africa, due to a range of factors outlined below, its direct impact on policymaking has been somewhat limited. The UK Government's commitment to the developmental benefits of free trade has remained consistent throughout the period of TJM's existence, despite different political parties having been in power. What has changed, however, since the election of the Coalition Government in 2010, is a significant reduction in the close links to policymakers that TJM had enjoyed under New Labour. Nevertheless, TJM has had what can be understood as a discursive impact, by continually problematising the assumption that free trade promotes development, and in doing so attempting to rearticulate the debate on African development within the UK.

The framing of 'trade justice'

During the debates that resulted in the creation of TJM, there was of course significant discussion about what an appropriate name would be. One interviewee recalled that 'there was quite a lot of debate about what phrase to use, but there weren't many obvious alternatives, because it was about trade and people felt very strongly that justice was a more powerful concept than fair trade'.[3] Since its formation the understanding of the relationship between trade and development, within TJM's member organisations and the wider policymaking community, has traversed three distinct positions. First, a liberal conception of

trade justice informed by the idea that a rules-based system of free trade will promote development in the Global South, if the world's major trading powers also commit to opening their markets. Second, a view rooted in the contemporary fair trade movement, which suggests that by adopting an alternative way of doing trade, producers in the Global South can be fairly rewarded for their goods, which in turn will promote development. A third, more radical understanding, views the structural inequalities within the system of global trade as the main obstacle to broad-based human development in the Global South.

Given these competing frames, there remains a common misperception that both 'trade justice' and 'fair trade' are one and the same.[4] Sharman (2007: 385) highlights that there are also overlaps in terms of some of the organisations involved, with some fair trade producers (e.g. Traidcraft) also campaigning for trade justice. The fact the two terms are often used almost interchangeably also highlights the attempts at co-optation by policymakers, which have to some extent served to neutralise the progressive power of the term 'trade justice'. The stance of the UK Government has been largely consistent. Its view of trade justice has been a liberal one, where the emphasis is fairness combined with a belief in the power of free trade as a tool for development. For example, Tony Blair in his landmark speech to the Labour Party conference in 2001, argued that the problem for Africa was that free trade was not being fairly implemented. He argued that Africa needed 'access to our markets so that we practise the free trade we are so fond of preaching' (Blair, 2001). In 2011, then Prime Minister, David Cameron, outlined that trade, rather than aid, was of greater significance in relation to Africa's future development. Adopting a similar stance to that of Blair a decade earlier, he called for free trade governed by rules 'that must be open and fair to all' (Cameron, 2011).

Despite its more radical beginnings, the dominant contemporary conceptualisation of fair trade is focused on improvements to market access for producers from the developing world. This contrasts with the emphasis of TJM's founding statement on the broader structural changes to the global trading system that are needed, rather than simply fair access to Western markets. This has been described by Fridell as the shaped-advantage perspective of fair trade, which simply offers 'capability enhancement to a limited number of Southern partners' (2006: 23). Reflecting on these tensions between trade justice and fair trade, some of the interviewees felt that the latter acts as a positive example of how trade can work differently and in the interests of social development. An interviewee from the Fairtrade Foundation summed up this argument by suggesting that 'fair trade can be a gentle introduction … fair trade campaigners are more likely to want to campaign on trade justice because they are interested in trade and they're interested in supply chains and they are interested in access of African people to European markets'.[5] However, a number of interviewees questioned this premise. For example, one interviewee said that although there is a case to be made 'that buying a fair trade product in a supermarket is a very easy first step to starting to take action. What I'm not at all convinced about is the journey that people make from buying that product to … actively participating in building a group of people who are going to take action in a stronger way'.[6]

The liberal approach focused on market access and specifically the removal of agricultural subsidies in the US and the EU, was adopted by Oxfam International in its own campaign in 2002 entitled 'Make Trade Fair'. This campaign, which received several celebrity endorsements, focused on a global petition that attracted 17.8 million signatures before being submitted to Pascal Lamy, the WTO's Director-General at the time, at the Hong Kong Ministerial in December 2005 (Mallet and Lau, 2005). This caused some tensions in TJM at the time and there was some debate within Oxfam about whether it should continue to support the activities of TJM, given the power of its own brand, and the differences in its approach to conceptualising 'trade justice'.[7]

Hence, there have been, and continue to remain, a variety of opinions over the framing of 'trade justice' as a unifying concept for TJM and particularly how 'fair trade' sits within this. The original goal of some of the key advocates of fair trade within the UK was to create a model of alternative trade based on a more direct relationship with developing countries. However, the Fairtrade Foundation with its emphasis on increasing sales and ethical consumers has become 'ever more reliant on MNCs and supermarkets in order to sustain this growth' (Anderson, 2009: 237). This has recently resulted in the problematic decision taken by some major food companies to replace their use of the official Fairtrade Mark with their own certification schemes. In May 2017 it was revealed that the supermarket chain Sainsbury's was going to drop the use of the Fairtrade Mark for its range of own-brand teas and replace it with the label 'fairly traded' based on its own set of criteria (Rivera, 2017). This has led to a coalition, co-ordinated by the Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), which also includes the Fairtrade Foundation itself, launching a campaign trying to put pressure on Sainsbury's not to ditch the Fairtrade Mark. Meanwhile, Cadbury's is also reported to be switching to the use of the Cocoa Life scheme of certification, which is run by Mondelez International who are the new owners of Cadbury's (Murphy, 2016). In both cases the concern is that these alternatives lack the independence ensured through the Fairtrade Mark given that they are organised directly by the companies themselves.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that many of the interviewees expressed concerns about the increasing tensions and confusions of framing between 'fair trade' and 'trade justice'. One interviewee noted that 'there's an interesting dynamic with … fair trade in its kind of purest form and the kind of emergence of the Fairtrade Mark and movement at the same point in time and the dynamics within that, which I think were never properly understood or resolved'.[8] Another observed that in recent years the Fair Trade Movement in the UK has negotiated relationships with a wide range of corporate suppliers, whereas TJM has campaigned against proposed trade deals, like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) because there is a concern about an advancement of corporate interests over the rights of citizens.[9]

In sum, on the issue of framing, the initial idea behind 'trade justice' was to make a moral or ethical case against the current structures of global trade. The overall aim of TJM has been to raise awareness of the problems with the existing structures and then use popular pressure to get the UK Government to seek to change them. While MPH found it relatively easy to make an accessible case to the public for debt cancellation and more aid, the case for regulatory reform of world trade, by its very nature has always been relatively underspecified. One interviewee noted that even at 'the high watermark of Make Poverty History where the public were engaged with at some level the issues of global poverty, the trade bit never really came through. It was mentioned quite a lot but … people never made the leap of understanding as to what that really meant'.[10] Africa, meanwhile, has featured quite strongly in the way that the issue of trade justice has been framed, particularly during the period of MPH. This compounded the difficulties of trying to define trade as a social justice issue. As Harrison argues, given the longer history of British campaigns for African development, 'MPH illustrated how difficult it is to frame Africa within a British campaign for global social justice' (2013: 178). The difficulties of framing 'trade justice' are also related to the organisational challenges faced by TJM to which I now turn.

Organisational challenges and TJM's network approach

As a network of NGOs, TJM encompasses a wide variety of organisations, including trade unions, Friends of the Earth, and a range of both large and small development NGOs. As Saunders has argued, the adoption of organisational arrangements based on coalitions of

NGOs, as in the case of TJM, 'have allowed once conventional humanitarian, aid and development NGOs to be active in both the global justice movement and the more staid arena of conventional NGO politics simultaneously' (2009: 55). TJM currently has a co-ordinator employed directly by the network itself and then a Board made up of representatives who are elected annually by the member organisations themselves. It is quite a loose network and organisations within TJM can opt-in, as and when they choose to, depending on what the campaign issue is. It grew out of a more informal arrangement known as the UK Trade Network, which one interviewee described as 'trade policy people from each of the main NGOs ... it was literally just a group, it was pretty much the same people who then became the policy group of the TJM'.[11]

The creation of TJM followed the first significant development coalition campaign, Jubilee 2000, which was formed in October 1997. Many of the interviewees noted that the organisational set-up of TJM, was directly influenced by the experience of Jubilee 2000, which was focused on the cancellation of the external debts of developing countries. It had a much larger secretariat than TJM and it effectively became an organisation in itself, with a recognisable identity, rather than being a looser coalition of existing NGOs. One interviewee summed up quite starkly some of the issues related to how Jubilee 2000 had been organised: 'Ann Pettifor who was the Director of Jubilee 2000 was a very strong character, she's high profile and she led the movement and the NGOs didn't like that and so when they came to constructing new movements … like TJM and Make Poverty History they deliberately looked for models where there wasn't a clear leader'.[12]

Within networks of NGOs it tends to be the case that a limited number of organisations play a leading role in setting the overall agenda (Pianta, 2014: 215). This has certainly been true in the case of TJM. Reflecting on his time as the co-ordinator of TJM and the range of views of different member organisations, one interviewee concluded that 'there were times where the different priorities at different organisations were difficult to work out politically ... TJM itself became a place of contestation and tension and that was largely welcome because it meant we needed to sort of sharpen what we were doing and sharpen our communication'.[13] In particular, there were debates within TJM about the balance to strike between pursuing incremental changes and the more fundamental vision of trade justice articulated in its founding statement. More recently, the way TJM has worked has reduced the potential for such conflicts because member organisations are more able to pick and choose which campaigns they wish to support. It is suggested that 'people do work in less formal ways now, so that we kind of know that if we tried to get a massive sign on statement that everyone can sign up to, people are probably not going to be that happy with it'.[14]

TJM is also a domestically-based network within the UK. However, within Europe it has been argued that domestic trade justice campaigns have found it particularly hard to have an impact on policy because trade is an area that is delegated to the EU (Pianta, 2014: 219). There were attempts, particularly during the campaign on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to work across Europe and with African civil society organisations (CSOs) as part of a wider 'Stop EPAs' campaign (discussed below). One interviewee suggested that when a coalition is extended even more, in this fashion, the range of views becomes broader and this can make political agreement and decision-making even more difficult.[15] More recently, TJM has worked with the Seattle to Brussels Network, which operates across Europe, in contributing to the publication of an 'Alternative Trade Mandate', which was launched in November 2013 by a European-wide alliance of CSOs (See Alternative Trade Mandate Alliance, 2013). However, given the broad nature of actors involved in drafting this document it has been viewed as 'an exercise in, not exactly futility, but in just being all things to everybody'.[16]

In sum, what TJM has been able to do over the course of its existence is keep trade on the agenda in the UK campaigning context, despite some of the bigger member organisations not having persisted with it as a priority for any significant length of time. As an established coalition it has been able to preserve access to domestic policymakers.[17] After the dissolution of MPH in early 2006, Oxfam and Christian Aid in particular, shifted their focus to other campaign issues, most notably climate change.[18] However, the work of smaller organisations like War on Want and Global Justice Now (formerly World Development Movement) and the impact of TJM as a co-ordinating network, has meant that some of the peaks and troughs in terms of interest among the big NGOs have been smoothed out.[19] What TJM creates is both a knowledge base on trade and a ready-made structure so that when trade issues come to the fore again (as in the recent cases of TTIP and Brexit) a wider coalition can easily be re-formed.[20] In the next section, I explore in more detail how African development has featured explicitly within TJM's campaigning since its formation.

African development and TJM's campaigning

TJM's initial focus was a campaign aimed at advancing the issue of agricultural subsidies in the North within the WTO and in particular a call for reforms to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In part, this was justified on the basis of supporting African farmers by seeking to improve their market access. However, this was an agenda that was somewhat limited in its critique of existing structures. In fact, the UK Government was at times able to frame it as an issue that could be seen to be allied to the broader push in favour of, rather than critical of, trade liberalisation (Sharman, 2007: 387). It was felt within TJM at this point that whilst there was some traction in terms of the UK Government listening to what it had to say, there was a concern that there seemed to be 'an intention to portray the TJM as pro-trade liberalisation'.[21] Developing countries remained an important part of TJM's campaigning during 2003 as they switched their emphasis to the WTO Ministerial in Cancún. In response to efforts by both the EU and the US to extend trade liberalisation into new areas such as investment, competition policy and government procurement, TJM aligned themselves with several governments in the Global South who sought to block the introduction of these new issues into the WTO's negotiating agenda.

In the UK, trade justice as an idea became more familiar during 2005 as it became one of the three key demands made by the MPH coalition. The other two central aspects of this campaign coalition were the cancellation of the external debts of poor countries and a demand for more and better aid. The idea of MPH was first conceived in October 2003, with the plan being to focus on 2005 given that the UK Government was both hosting the G8 summit in July and would be holding the presidency of the EU during the second half of that year (Saunders, 2009: 52). During 2004 the MPH campaign then set out its key demands and throughout this period, as Harrison suggests, 'the issues remained generic and transnational – that is, based on broad moral arguments with little reference to specific situations, and with no spatial focus beyond that of the Global South' (2010: 394).

However, as the MPH campaign developed, we saw an explicit Africanisation of the agenda. Harrison convincingly argues that despite initial attempts not to focus specifically on Africa, 'MPH consciously selected a historical narrative (abolition, apartheid, and debt) within which to place itself which was to all intents and purposes 'African', which then became a synonym for poverty' (2013: 165). TJM's position within MPH meant it was unavoidably drawn into this framing.[22] One of the members of the MPH co-ordination team concurs with Harrison's reading, suggesting that, during 2005, trade was 'framed within the context of Africa … instead of a focus on the … sweep of neoliberal trade agreements and WTO'.[23] This was all a very long way from the broader rules and structures identified by

TJM at its foundation. As a result, it was possible for MPH to be co-opted into New Labour's 'year of Africa' in 2005 and the idea of trade justice was re-defined in terms of access to Northern markets. This is evident in the findings of Blair's Commission for Africa (CfA), which focused its trade recommendations on the removal of agricultural subsidies to allow African economies to realise their 'true' comparative advantage (Hurt, 2007: 360).

Following the formal dissolution of the MPH campaign coalition in 2006, TJM entered a new era with fewer resources and a significantly reduced public profile. This period saw TJM respond to the shift away from the WTO and multilateral trade governance, towards bilateral and regional trade agreements, and specifically the EU's negotiation of EPAs with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. EPAs constituted an attempt by the EU to move away from its system of non-reciprocal trade preferences for ACP states, to a series of regional free trade agreements that would be compliant with WTO rules. However, the EU also sought to introduce its new trade issues that went far beyond what was required for WTO-compatibility (Hurt, 2012: 501-2). Together with NGOs across Europe and Africa, TJM was involved in the launch of a new campaign, organised by the 'Stop EPAs' coalition. This highlighted the difficulties for UK-based trade campaigners because of the central role played by the European Commission in trade policymaking. TJM had to adopt a two-step approach by first trying to convince the UK Government to alter its policy stance and then encouraging it to push for a change in the EU's negotiating mandate on EPAs.

The central focus of the campaign on EPAs was to prevent the EU introducing the new issues that had been successfully resisted a few years before at the WTO's Cancún Ministerial. It was felt that their inclusion reflected the EU's strategic trade interests, rather than the development needs of ACP states (Trade Justice Movement, 2007). The other main aim was to slow the process of negotiations down beyond the initial deadline of 31 December 2007, which had been set by the EU. In this sense, the work of TJM was effective given that, aside from the EPA negotiated with the Caribbean region, the negotiations were extended well beyond this deadline. As part of this campaign, on 19 April 2007, TJM organised a simultaneous lobby of every European embassy in the UK, which was supported by roughly 1,000 activists (Saunders, 2009: 51). Moreover, the UK Government both accepted that the new trade issues should not be included in EPA negotiations, unless ACP states specifically requested them, and committed to work with other member states to change the European Commission's stance on this (Sharman, 2007: 389).

One of the key points about the campaign on EPAs is that it was part of a wider action that involved CSOs across Europe and Africa. An interviewee from the Fairtrade Foundation highlighted how 'certainly around EPAs there was a whole period when organisations were quite actively bringing concerns being expressed by developing countries'.[24] It has been convincingly argued that this wider campaign had an impact on the discursive nature of the EPA negotiations, by questioning their developmental potential, making them 'a politically contentious issue instead of a technical-administrative affair' (Del Felice, 2014: 159). The discursive impact of this NGO campaign helped enable African states during the EPA negotiations to engage in a process of 'rhetorical entrapment of the EU' (Hurt, Lee and Lorenz-Carl, 2013: 83).

In more recent years, the work of TJM had become less visible since the high-water mark of 2005. Its focus on bilateral trade agreements has continued although this shifted away from Africa and towards the EU's negotiation of both TTIP with the United States and a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada. The main emphasis of this work has been on the potential consequences of regulatory harmonisation for upholding socio-economic and environmental rights within the EU. Of concern for TJM and the wider campaign against TTIP, has been the potential inclusion of an Investor-State Dispute

Settlement mechanism, which would allow transnational corporations to sue governments that introduce measures which they deem to be detrimental to their ability to make profits.

Although, even during this campaign, TJM has sought to try to articulate the precedent TTIP might have for future trade agreements with developing countries. For example, in February 2014 they submitted written evidence to the inquiry into TTIP organised by the EU Sub-Committee on External Affairs within the House of Lords. Here it was suggested that any rules contained in a deal between the EU and US are likely to become the template for future trade negotiations with developing countries.[25] Moreover, in a report on TTIP's relationship to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it concluded that:

> As the blueprint for multilateral trade, it undermines the global partnership for sustainable development and directly challenges the ability of individual countries to develop their own strategies for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Instead, it sets a powerful precedent that promotes privatisation and liberalisation as the de facto policy option and seeks to 'discipline' state involvement in key sectors such as public service delivery and industrial strategy (Trade Justice Movement, 2015: 30).

One of the most significant recent developments in relation to the work of TJM has been the referendum result of 23 June 2016 in favour of the UK leaving the EU. It now seems clear that Brexit will result in the UK leaving the customs union and becoming independently responsible for trade policy. As Langan notes in Chapter 2 above, during the referendum campaign, some leading Brexiteers suggested a good reason for leaving the EU was that it would allow the UK to develop a more progressive trade policy to Africa. Such claims have provided a new urgency and contemporary relevance to TJM's campaigning. Given the focus on securing a trade deal with the EU itself, and other key partners like the US, it seems inevitable that Africa will not be a priority for the UK Government, as it begins to formulate an independent trade policy. The Government's recent White Paper suggests that for future trade with developing countries, the main aim will be to ensure continuity of market access, whereby the UK adopts a preference scheme that at least matches what the EU currently offers (Department for International Trade, 2017: 31-33).

Brexit has therefore provided a context for NGOs in the UK to once again combine a focus on trade with development issues. TJM has argued that Brexit provides an opportunity for the UK to adopt a trade policy that guarantees for countries in the Global South 'the best possible development outcomes by supporting regional integration and market diversification, and by strengthening local industries that develop value-added products' (Trade Justice Movement, 2017: 1). On this basis they are much closer to the Labour Party's emerging position on future trade with Africa. In a recent speech, Barry Gardiner, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade, acknowledged how controversial the negotiation of EPAs has been and that the UK should avoid forcing African countries to liberalise in the future (Gardiner, 2017).

In sum, what this review of TJM's campaigns demonstrates is the reactive nature of much of its work. Rather than determine a definitive blueprint for trade justice it has, to some extent understandably, fallen into a pattern of reacting to ever-changing empirical developments. In part, this is the nature of the issue area and without TJM it is unlikely that trade would have retained the profile it has in relation to campaigning on African development. One interviewee neatly encapsulated how trade is rather different to other key campaign areas for development NGOs, by noting that 'debt and aid are quantitative campaigns, they are saying we want more of something or less of something, trade is not quantitative, it's a qualitative campaign and they are harder, you know because there are

shades of grey. But there ought to be shades of grey on the aid and debt one but there weren't'.[26]

Conclusions: can NGOs influence the agenda on trade?

As other scholars (e.g. Bendell and Ellersiek, 2010) have noted it is hard to make a quantitative assessment of the impact of NGO campaigning on policy. In some cases, it may even be that policies change broadly in line with NGO demands, but for other reasons, and not as any direct result of these. Koenig-Archibugi (2014) suggests that one way to reflect on what aspects might determine the potential influence of NGOs is to consider internal and external factors. Internal factors include the effectiveness of coalition building and the extent to which there are other interest groups providing opposition to the arguments being advocated, whereas external factors would acknowledge the important role played by states and the structures of global governance. The analysis presented in this chapter, suggests that in the case of TJM, whilst internal factors are not insignificant, external factors are of greater importance.

Similarly, different positions exist in the literature on the potential impact of NGOs in the specific area of trade. Pianta (2014) provides quite an optimistic assessment by focusing on longer-term attempts to reframe the issue. He suggests that since Cancún in 2003 the speed of multilateral trade liberalisation has slowed, as a direct result of NGOs forming coalitions with like-minded governments in the Global South, although as a result we have seen the rise of bilateral agreements (*ibid.*: 219). In contrast, De Bièvre focuses more on the day-to-day of trade policymaking and highlights the effective lobbying of firms and business organisations, which for him results in the conclusion that 'CSO influence on global trade policy is a glass quite empty rather than half full' (*ibid*.: 227).

At the European level a formal process of engagement does now take place between policymakers and NGOs, via the Civil Society Dialogue. However, it has been suggested that this has not has been translated into meaningful influence on the outcomes of trade policy (Orbie et. al., 2016: 532). Historically, the delegation of trade policy from the UK Government to the EU has made TJM's work that bit harder, given that without European co-ordination it is hard to have any impact.

At the core of TJM's work since 2000 has been the idea of 'trade justice' as an alternative to free trade, which remains the ultimate and ambitious goal of the coalition. If we use this as our yardstick for measuring TJM's impact, then we would have to conclude it has been limited. The UK Government's support for trade liberalisation remains at least as strong as it was at the time of TJM's formation. Reflecting on this, one interviewee questioned whether this is 'a failure of the movement, I think it's a reflection of how hard it is'.[27]

During their time in power, New Labour were very effective in promoting a position of common cause with the work of TJM, and subsequently the broader MPH alliance during 2005. These rather close links appear to have been far less evident during both the Coalition Government of 2010-15 and Conservative rule since the general election in May 2015. In fact, one could argue that in relation to Africa, the 'prosperity agenda' advanced by both the Coalition Government and its Conservative successor, is even more resolutely in favour of trade liberalisation; with the emphasis on the benefits trade can bring to both economic growth in Africa and UK exporters. As a result, on the issue of trade, where the gap between policymakers and NGOs is much wider than on other issues like aid (where there is a broad consensus among the main political parties on the 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) target), lobbying can be a rather ineffective tool.

Nevertheless, TJM has done much to mobilise UK citizens on the issue of trade. Although the mass lobbies of Parliament and European embassies took place some time ago,

without the important co-ordination role performed by TJM, trade would have struggled to retain a place on the agenda of many development NGOs in the UK. By introducing the concept of 'trade justice', TJM has helped to frame African development within the broader structural logics of the global economy, rather than the more familiar frame based on aid. This has not been consistently achieved, however, and particularly during the era of MPH, the message on trade justice was, to a large extent, drowned out. With Brexit likely to result in an independent UK trade policy, it is an issue area, which will become increasingly important to the debate on African development in the future.

Notes

1 The term trasformismo is a key concept in the work of Antonio Gramsci and is used in this context to explain how potentially transformative ideas are neutralised by policymaking elites.
2 The TJM website (http://tjm.org.uk/our-members) as of 24 October 2017 listed a total of 68 different groups as members.
3 Author interview with Polly Jones (Global Justice Now), London, 23 October 2015.
4 A good example of this is how the *Guardian* newspaper reported TJM's mass lobby of Parliament on 19 June 2002 under the headline 'Fair trade rally to lobby Westminster' – see www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/jun/19/foreignpolicy.uk [accessed 11 June 2017].
5 Author interview with a Fairtrade Foundation representative, London, 9 September 2015.
6 Author interview with Polly Jones (Global Justice Now), London, 23 October 2015.
7 Author interview with Richard English (Oxfam GB), Oxford, 21 October 2015.
8 Author interview with Tom Baker (Bond), London, 1 September 2016.
9 Author interview with Jenny Ricks (Action Aid, UK), London, 10 August 2015.
10 Author interview with Steve Tibbett (Independent advocacy, policy and campaigns consultant), London, 16 September 2015.
11 Author interview with John Hilary (War on Want), London, 27 August 2015.
12 Author interview with Steve Tibbett (Independent advocacy, policy and campaigns consultant), London, 16 September 2015.
13 Author interview with Glen Tarman (Action Against Hunger), London, 20 October 2015.
14 Author interview with Ruth Bergan (Trade Justice Movement), Bristol, 9 July 2015.
15 Author interview with former TJM activist, via skype, 15 September 2015.
16 Author interview with Liz May (Traidcraft), London, 16 September 2016.
17 Author interview with Ruth Bergan (Trade Justice Movement), Bristol, 9 July 2015.
18 Author interview with John Hilary (War on Want), London, 27 August 2015.
19 Author interview with Benedict Southworth (Independent strategic adviser), via skype, 22 September 2016.
20 Author interview with Sam Lowe (Friends of the Earth UK), London, 14 September 2016.
21 This comes from confidential notes of a meeting held between TJM's directors and Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Patricia Hewitt and her advisors on 11 June 2002.
22 Author interview with John Hilary (War on Want), London, 27 August 2015.
23 Author interview with Benedict Southworth (Independent strategic adviser), via skype, 22 September 2016.
24 Author interview with a Fairtrade Foundation representative, London, 9 September 2015.
25 For details see House of Lords, European Union Sub-Committee on External Affairs, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, Written evidence volume, 433-5, www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-c/TTIP/TTIPoralandwrittenevidencevolume120514.pdf [Accessed 12 June 2017].
26 Author interview with Duncan Green (Oxfam), Oxford, 20 September 2016.
27 Author interview with Ruth Bergan (Trade Justice Movement), Bristol, 9 July 2015

References

Alternative Trade Mandate Alliance (2013) *Trade: time for a new vision. The Alternative Trade Mandate*, www.s2bnetwork.org/trade-time-new-vision/ [accessed 30 June 2015].

Anderson, M. (2009) 'NGOs and Fair Trade: the social movement behind the label' in N. Crowson, M. Hilton and J. McKay (eds), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics Since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 222-41.

BBC News (2002) 'Trade lobby gets fair hearing', *BBC News*, 19 June 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2053120.stm [accessed 24 October 2017].

Bebbington, A. J., Hickey, S. and Mitlin, D. C. (2008) 'Introduction: can NGOs make a difference? the challenge of development alternatives', in A. J. Bebbington, S. Hickey and D. C. Mitlin (eds), *Can NGOs Make a Difference? The Challenge of Development Alternatives* (London: Zed Books), 3-37.

Bendell, J. and Ellersiek, A. (2010) 'Advocacy for corporate accountability and trade justice: the role of 'noble networks' in the United Kingdom' in P. Utting, M. Pianta and A. Ellersiek (eds), *Global Justice Activism and Policy Reform in Europe: Understanding When Change Happens* (Abingdon: Routledge), 140-63.

Blair, T. (2001) 'Leader's speech', Labour Party Conference, Brighton. www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=186 [accessed 24 October 2017].

Cameron, D. (2011) 'The time has come for African free trade', *Guardian*, 18 July 2011, www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jul/18/africa-free-trade-david-cameron [accessed 25 October 2017].

De Bièvre, D. (2014) 'A glass quite empty: issue groups' influence in the global trade regime', *Global Policy*, 5:2, 222-8.

Del Felice, C. (2014) 'Power in discursive practices: the case of the STOP EPAs campaign', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20:1, 145-67.

Department for International Trade (2017) *Preparing for our Future UK Trade Policy* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office).

Fridell, G. (2006) 'Fair Trade and Neoliberalism: assessing emerging perspectives', *Latin American Perspectives*, 33:6, 8-28.

Gardiner, B. (2017) 'Speech on trade and Africa at Labour conference', 26 September 2017. www.barrygardiner.com/barry_speaks_on_trade_and_africa_at_labour_conference [accessed 29 September 2017].

Harrison, G. (2010) 'The Africanization of poverty: A retrospective on "Make Poverty History"', *African Affairs* 109:436, 391-408.

Harrison, G. (2013) *The African Presence: Representations of Africa in the Construction of Britishness*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Hurt, S. R. (2007) 'Mission impossible: a critique of the Commission for Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 25:3, 355-68.

Hurt, S. R. (2012) 'The EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations: 'locking in' the neoliberal development model in southern Africa?', *Third World Quarterly*, 33:3, 495-510.

Hurt, S. R., Lee, D. and Lorenz-Carl, U. (2013) 'The argumentative dimension to the EU-Africa EPAs', *International Negotiation*, 18:1, 67-87.

Koenig-Archibugi, M. (2014) 'Introduction: civil society influence on global policy', *Global Policy*, 5:2, 212-3.

McSweeney, J. (2014) 'The absence of class: critical development, NGOs and the misuse of Gramsci's concept of counter-hegemony', *Progress in Development Studies*, 14:3, 275-85.

Mallet, V. and Lau, J. (2005) 'Diverse groups tell WTO what they think about trade terms', *Financial Times*, 13 December 2005, www.ft.com/content/831bfcc6-6b51-11da-8aee-0000779e2340 [accessed 11 June 2017].

Murphy, H. (2016) 'Cadbury cocoa plan raises questions for future of Fairtrade', *Financial Times*, 28 November 2016, www.ft.com/content/2d3967b4-b571-11e6-961e-a1acd97f622d [accessed 25 October 2017].

Orbie, J., Martens, D. Oehri, M. and Van den Putte, L. (2016) 'Promoting sustainable development or legitimising free trade? civil society mechanisms in EU trade agreements', *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 1:4, 526-46.

Paterson, B. (2009) '*Trasformismo* at the World Trade Organization', in M. McNally and J. Schwarzmantel (eds), *Gramsci and Global Politics: Hegemony and Resistance* (London: Routledge), 42-57.

Pianta, M. (2014) 'Slowing trade: global activism against trade liberalization', *Global Policy* 5:2, 214-21.

Rivera, L. (2017) 'Sainsbury's to launch 'Fairly Traded' tea sparking outrage from Fairtrade', *Independent*, 24 May 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/sainsburys-fairly-traded-tea-own-brand-fairtrade-foundation-farmers-producers-a7753561.html [accessed 25 October 2017].

Saunders, C. (2009) 'British humanitarian, aid and development NGOs, 1949-present' in N. Crowson, M. Hilton and J. McKay (eds), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics Since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 38-58.

Sharman, T. (2007) 'The evolution of British trade justice campaigning', *Review of African Political Economy*, 34:112, 385-92.

Trade Justice Movement (2002) *For Whose Benefit? Making Trade Work for People and the Planet*, http://tjm.org.uk/documents/briefings/For-Whose-Benefit.pdf [accessed 24 October 2017].

Trade Justice Movement (2007) *Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs): Sustainable Development in Jeopardy*, Policy Briefing, August 2007.

Trade Justice Movement (2015) *TTIPing Away the Ladder: How the EU-US trade deal could undermine the Sustainable Development Goals*, http://tjm.org.uk/resources/reports/ttiping-away-the-ladder [accessed 12 June 2017].

Trade Justice Movement (2017) *Post-Brexit Trade and Development Policy: Ensuring Trade Justice for the Global South*, http://tjm.org.uk/resources/briefings/post-brexit-trade-and-development-policy-ensuring-trade-justice-for-the-global-south [accessed 28 October 2017].

Williams, P. (2004) 'Britain and Africa after the Cold War: beyond damage limitation?', in I. Taylor and P. Williams (eds), *Africa in International Politics: External Involvement on the Continent,* (London: Routledge), 41-60.