

**TACKLING POVERTY AT HOME AND ABROAD:  
NEW LABOUR'S PUBLIC POLITICS OF POVERTY**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis provides a timely retrospective of New Labour's public politics of global and domestic poverty through examination of their speeches and policy documents and secondary literature on the post-war politics of poverty and development, New Labour and public attitudes to poverty. It adopts a 'public politics' approach, in understanding these speeches and policy documents as public political discourse and understanding politics in broad cultural terms as the discursive struggle to embed a particular vision of the social world in the public imagination, and provides a rare example of a cross-domain study of New Labour, seeking to connect analysis of global and domestic policy. As such it contributes to what Colin Hay has called the 'new political science of British politics'.

Both global and domestic poverty received a greater public political profile under New Labour than could have been envisaged in 1997. By the end of their first term they had made high-profile, time-specific commitments in both domains. Global poverty in particular gained unprecedented public attention in the build-up to the G8 Summit in 2005 and New Labour was centre stage in the political spectacle of Make Poverty History. This followed a period of neo-liberal dominance in which poverty was absent from the domestic political lexicon and subsumed by structural adjustment imperatives in the global domain.

This comparative study of the public politics of poverty asks: whether New Labour made explicit connections between their global and domestic poverty discourses and commitments, and if so, what the nature of these connections were; what the 'narratives' employed to justify government action to tackle poverty were, and the similarities and differences between the two poverty domains; whether the general public shared these 'narratives' and, if not, how they differed; how New Labour's 'public politics of poverty' evolved over time in both global and domestic domains; and what the key characteristics of New Labour's public politics of poverty were, how could have differed, and what impact they appeared to have had on public opinion.

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 2005: Making Poverty History**

The summer of 2005 saw the culmination of the Make Poverty History campaign and the leadership of the New Labour Government on the issue of global poverty in the lead up to their hosting of the G8 Summit in Gleneagles. Make Poverty History sought to reframe the issue of global poverty, seeking demonstrative public support for their key demands of the G8 leaders - increased aid, debt relief and trade justice - based on justice not charity. Its prominence across broadcast and print media, and therefore in its popular reach, was unprecedented. It appeared at the time that no one could have escaped consuming the Make Poverty History message. The campaign also offered various opportunities for popular engagement: from traditional political activities - postcard campaigns and petitions addressed to government ministers, lobbying events in Parliament and a rally in Edinburgh days prior to the G8 Summit - to the cultural politics of wearing of a white wristband or attending the Live8 concert. The New Labour Government appeared part of - or even leading - this ubiquitous campaign, urging the 'world to come together in 2005 to Make Poverty History' and calling for 'social justice on a global scale'. Both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown provided visible political leadership, energetically seeking to gain domestic and international support for their global poverty agenda. The shared narrative of this new global public politics was one in which public pressure was necessary to ensure sufficient political will amongst the G8 leaders to Make Poverty History and the enemy was simply a lack of political will or cynicism that politics could make a difference.

This brief description of the events surrounding Make Poverty History as they seemed in 2005 raises many questions about the nature of the politics constructed. However, for those steeped in the politics of domestic poverty there were another set of related observations and questions. First, the success of the Make Poverty History campaign and the proliferation of the word 'poverty' within the public realm appeared all the more remarkable given its absence from official political lexicon under the Conservative administration and the perceived challenges of gaining public support for a domestic poverty agenda. Second, given that by the end of their first term in office the New Labour Government had made ambitious commitments, with time-specific targets, on both global *and* domestic poverty, it raised questions about: the lower profile of domestic poverty as a public political issue and differences in the political leadership in the two domains; and the degree of discursive connection between the two poverty commitments. Third, this led to the practical question of what could be learnt from Make Poverty History for the public politics of domestic poverty, both in terms of the campaigning methods employed and in the reframing of the issue as one of justice, as well as the possibility of making direct discursive connections, and engaging the

public in ‘making poverty history at home’. These were the concerns that originally inspired this thesis.

### **1.2 An evolving focus**

During the early stages of the thesis the original idea of uni-directional cross-domain learning was challenged. First, it was thought that there were differences in assumptions, analyses and language between the two policy domains, and that New Labour was more radical in the global than the domestic domain. This was based on: an impressionistic view of New Labour discourse, especially the rallying calls made in some global poverty speeches; preliminary corpus analysis on New Labour’s speeches in their first two years in office (Fairclough 2000); an understanding that policy domains are influenced by different discourse coalitions (Hajer 1993); and that New Labour felt electorally constrained in the domestic sphere. On the other hand, a degree of discursive connection was expected given: the Labour Party’s self-identification with concern about poverty and its internationalist tradition; the degree of conceptual connection in the UN’s poverty discourse; and the overlap between national and transnational policy communities, as exemplified by the central role of the key New Labour players, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, in both poverty domains. Indeed, early analysis of New Labour speeches and policy documents revealed many discursive similarities, not least the central globalisation narrative, and therefore these two policy domains required examination as both distinct and interrelated.

Second, public attitudes literature suggests that popular engagement with the Make Poverty History message was limited and a shift from a charity to a justice frame had not taken place in the public imagination (Darnton 2007). Tellingly perhaps, despite its seemingly ubiquitous nature at the time, when explaining the purpose of this thesis to people I have met throughout the years, it is often not easy for them to recall Make Poverty History and it appears associated in people’s minds with televised charitable events such as Live Aid, Comic Relief, Children in Need. On the other hand though, discussion of Make Poverty History in undergraduate seminar groups on Citizenship and Globalisation sometimes led to unprompted discussion of poverty in Britain and in other developed country settings, suggesting some opening up of discursive space. This thesis therefore also returned to some of the questions generated by the political moment of Make Poverty History itself and highlights the complex and contingent nature of the public politics of poverty in both domains.

### **1.3 Examining New Labour’s public politics of poverty**

This thesis provides a timely retrospective of New Labour’s public politics of global and domestic poverty through examination of their speeches and policy documents and secondary literature on the post-war politics of poverty and development, New Labour and public attitudes to poverty. It adopts a

'public politics' approach, in understanding these speeches and policy documents as public political discourse and understanding politics in broad cultural terms as the discursive struggle to embed a particular vision of the social world in the public imagination, in this case set within the context of electoral politics. It also provides a rare example of a cross-domain study of New Labour, seeking to connect analysis of global and domestic policy. As such it contributes to what Colin Hay has called the 'new political science of British politics'. Chapter Two describes this approach taken in this thesis in more detail and sets it in within a wide-ranging literature. It also provides a discussion of the research methods used.

This comparative study of the public politics of poverty asks:

- a) Did New Labour make explicit connections between their global and domestic poverty discourses and commitments? If so, what was the nature of these connections? (Chapter Three);
- b) What 'narratives' were employed to justify government action to tackle poverty? What were the similarities and differences between the two poverty domains? (Chapter Four);
- c) Did the general public share these 'narratives' and, if not, how did they differ? (Chapter Four);
- d) How did New Labour's 'public politics of poverty' evolve over time in both global and domestic domains? (Chapters Five and Six respectively);
- e) What were the key characteristics of New Labour's public politics of poverty? How might they have differed and what impact did they appear to have on public opinion? (Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

## **2 Locating an examination of New Labour's global and domestic poverty discourses**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter locates this thesis' examination of New Labour's global and domestic poverty discourses within existing literature on the nature of poverty, politics, policy and discourse. It describes the methodological approach adopted, as well as the actual process of the research undertaken. First, it discusses poverty as a social problem and provides an articulation of poverty influenced by social constructionism and critical realism. Second, it outlines the 'public politics' approach, adopted both as a response to these literatures and as a way of responding to and examining New Labour on their own terms. This approach is influenced by writers from critical realist, ideational and neo-Gramscian traditions. Third, this thesis examines academic and political projects that have reconnected the global and the domestic, and in particular the few cross-domain studies of New Labour, highlighting the importance of the cross-domain research undertaken here. Whilst a wide range of literature is drawn on, the approach adopted here conforms to the 'new political science of British politics' identified by Colin Hay (2002a:1). His articulation of a critical political analysis as well as his own analysis of New Labour's globalisation discourses have been important sources - although this thesis does not share his view of New Labour's motivations for deploying these discourses (Hay 2002b; Hay 1999; Watson and Hay 2003). Fourth, it describes the research questions, the data used, the process of data collection and the analysis undertaken.

Before proceeding, it is important to stress that this chapter - and this thesis as a whole - highlights the artificial distinction between academic and political worlds. This is particularly pertinent in the study of the politics of poverty, as the term poverty implies the need for political action, and the various conceptual connections of global and domestic poverty are highly political projects, one notable example being the work of Peter Townsend in creating the United Nations' definition of poverty. Furthermore, much of the literature reviewed here has a normative 'progressive' agenda, some of which has directly influenced New Labour's discourse. In particular they drew on the sociological, if not the political, analysis of Stuart Hall, discussed below. Indeed, New Labour's political project and its constructions of poverty, politics and policy can be seen as part of an on-going debate amongst those on the left and centre-left of British politics. This understanding draws on Fitzpatrick's (2003:12) description of a political ideology as 'a constellation of 'nodes' (ideas, principles and concepts) which establish a set of relations between one another that are constantly evolving, due to the theoretical developments of that ideology's supporters and critics, and to changing circumstances both in society and in other ideological formations'. As such, the articulation of the approach undertaken in this thesis has evolved as

much in response to the process of engaging with New Labour discourse as by examination of the academic literature.

## 2.2 The social problem of poverty

The last few decades have seen a growing interest in social constructionism throughout the social sciences as the importance of culture, ideas and discourses has been acknowledged. Poverty provides a case study of this evolution in thinking about social problems and the political nature of their construction. Booth and Rowntree's poverty studies were grounded in a positivist epistemology in which a social problem was 'discovered' as a verifiable fact. Thus, an objective need was recognised within the public domain and this recognition formed the basis for a policy response (Clarke 2001; Manning 1985). The insight from social constructionism is that social problems are matters of social definition and we need to ask: 'who says this is a social problem - and what sort of a problem do they say it is?' (Clarke 2001: 6). In different social and historical circumstances the existence of people without adequate means of subsistence has been considered a private misfortune, a social problem and a natural state of affairs (Clarke 2001). Indeed, these interpretations often coexist in a given society.

The term 'poverty' itself implicitly describes a social problem: it is 'not just a state of affairs, but an *unacceptable* state of affairs' (Alcock 1997: 4). Research on poverty has been conducted by those who want to influence the policy debate and rectify the situation. However, there is no agreement on what the problem of poverty is and how it should be tackled. It is a contested political concept with different definitions of the problem requiring different policy responses and ultimately offering different views of the social world. As Alcock (1997: 4) says 'in understanding poverty the task is to understand how these different visions and perceptions overlap, how they interrelate and what the implications of different approaches and definitions are'.

Ultimately, social constructivism brings the politics back into policy analysis, addressing the first part of the agenda-setting process, how an issue is defined and identified. Representations of social problems - definitional, conceptual and contextual - provide the space but also set limits on political discussion and possible policy action. There is an obvious link here to Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) famous study of the anti-poverty effort and the political process in a particular community and their articulation of a second face of power; 'the mobilisation of bias' in determining what does and does not get on the policy-making agenda. Therefore it is crucial to examine how social problems are constructed through political discourse and to understand

this as a struggle for power. As Fischer (2003: 55) says:

*'Politics is about social meanings. It is about politicians, interest groups and citizens who hold multiple and changing social meanings about the political actions and events...The creation of meaning is a crucial dimension in the political manoeuvre for advantage...Such meaning creation is basic to the mobilization of support for particular actions as well as to efforts to immobilise the political opposition...The most basic strategy for generating support in a democratic system is the evocation of social and political interpretations that legitimize the desired course of action'.*

A common criticism levelled at social constructivism is that it denies the reality of social problems. Burr (2003 ch5, drawing on Edley 2001) argues that this is somewhat of a misinterpretation of relativism within social constructivism, which is epistemological rather than ontological. However, this sidesteps the fact that the two philosophical standpoints are closely related and different strands of social constructivism have adopted different positions on ontological questions. For example, Hay (2003) discusses the different positions taken on whether ideas or discourse have a causal role independent of material factors. He presents a dialectical view of the ideational/discursive and the material associated with a 'thin' constructionism or critical realist approach.

Taking this 'thin' constructionist or critical realist ontological standpoint, this thesis adopts Lister's (2004:36) articulation of poverty: 'The phenomenon of poverty has to be understood both as a painful reality experienced by millions of human beings and as a construction of competing conceptualisations, definitions and measures'. Further, 'what distinguishes poverty from inequality is the experience of deprivation in both its material and social forms' (Lister 2004:53), and the political and public discourses of poverty play a critical role in shaping how this deprivation is experienced in a given society. First, these discourses have shaped and continue to shape the institutions and policies concerned with poverty, within the dialectical process described above, and thus influence the material conditions of poverty. Second, the discursive construction of poverty influences how poverty is lived as a social - or relational - experience in a given society.

This case study of poverty as a social problem highlights its public and politically constituted nature. Its meaning is continually being constituted and reconstituted through the mobilisation of support for a particular understanding of poverty and the social world it inhabits. This 'public politics' is discussed further in the next section. What is emphasised in this section is the impact of this 'public politics of poverty' for the lives of those for whom poverty is a painful reality.

## **2.3 A ‘public politics’ approach**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

The section describes the ‘public politics’ approach adopted in this thesis. First, it discusses the sources for this analysis - speeches and policy documents - as forms of public political communication and thus the need for a complimentary examination of public discourses and attitudes. It highlights the importance of language for New Labour, the fact that they articulate a public politics in both their poverty discourses and the traditional lack of attention paid to the domestic public politics of foreign policy. Second, it discusses the literature on electoral politics and public opinion before moving on to a broader concept of politics. Third, ideational and discursive approaches to explaining political change and the use of the concepts of framing and storylines across a number of academic disciplines are discussed as resources for analysing New Labour’s public politics. Fourth, the neo-Gramscian concepts of politics and their application for studying New Labour are outlined drawing particularly on the work of Stuart Hall. Fifth, three ontological criticisms of New Labour’s political project and its public politics are discussed before, sixth, describing the nuanced nature of their project and the ‘publicness’ it constructs. Finally, this thesis’ position is discussed in relation to New Labour motivations for ‘redistribution by stealth’.

### **2.3.2 Public political communication**

There are alternative conceptions of the political in the field of political analysis and, as might be expected from the discussion so far, this thesis sides with the many perspectives that view the political as more than simply ‘what government does’ (see schema in Hay 2003). This thesis examines the speeches of members of the New Labour Government and associated policy documents to investigate how their political discourse constructs poverty and the politics of poverty reduction in both global and domestic policy domains. As Finlayson and Martin (2008:446) note though, ‘for all their ubiquity in political life and its analysis, we do not yet have a systematic approach from the perspective of political studies that seeks to relate the general phenomenon of the political speech to political activity and institutions more broadly’. They are a particular type of political discourse that intrinsically assume the public must be appealed to and persuaded (Edelman 1964). They have a political communicative function and are intended for public consumption - albeit often in a mediated form and for multiple different ‘publics’. Indeed, part of the creative act of political language in speeches - and policy documents - is speaking to different audiences simultaneously; ‘to purposefully assemble an audience within a common horizon of concern by addressing various, sometimes diverse, constituencies as if they were one’ (Finlayson and Martin 2008:450) and different speeches are aimed at different multiple audiences. They need to be understood as ‘public political discourse’; as part of a ‘public politics’ that influences the dynamics of electoral politics and wider political cultural change. Speeches are ‘elements of what Gramsci called a ‘purely political’ moment: a point of connection

between political institutions, citizens and politicians...the exchange of arguments, images, expressions and moods' (Finlayson and Martin 2008:452). As Fairclough (2000: 157, emphasis added) puts it:

*'It is an inherent property of the practice of democratic government that action arises from public contestation between discourses - discourses are deployed by different parties and groups to win sufficient political support for particular visions of the world to act.'*

As such, this thesis considers New Labour's poverty discourses in relation to the available evidence on public discourses and attitudes to global and domestic poverty.

Discursive analysis is also a particularly important approach in understanding New Labour in particular. First, 'political struggles have always been partly struggles over the dominant language', but language has become more significant over the last few decades as politics and government have been pursued through the media (Fairclough 2000:3), and 'New Labour is perhaps the first government genuinely committed to the view that presentation is part of the process of policy formation' (Franklin 1998: 4). As Golding (1995:231) puts it, 'politicians must appeal to their electorates in terms that are meaningful, and in turn will respond with measures designed to elicit support'. The electoral imperative was a crucial factor in Labour 'modernisation' and the New Labour project in particular. They pursued an agenda aimed at extending their appeal to a broader electoral constituency and re-establishing credibility as a party of government, particularly on the question of management of the economy. The salience of both policy content and presentation amongst key voters was given great weight and subjected to focus group testing (Franklin 1998). They also sought to frame the mediated political debate through a 'rebuttal unit' responding quickly to Conservative criticisms, the active engagement of the journalists and editors of the high-circulation tabloids (Driver and Martell 1998), as well as the central coordination of the context and timing of departmental speeches, policy documents and press releases.

Second, both global and domestic poverty have low salience amongst the British politics and have not been electoral issues, although related concerns about 'welfare' and issues of public spending and redistribution in the domestic domain have greater salience and have featured in electoral debates. New Labour developed anti-poverty agendas in both domains and - to a greater or lesser extent - sought to increase their salience. Indeed, in the global domain they sought to develop a 'global public politics', an aim shared by donor institutions and governments. They stressed the need for greater public support to ensure progress both globally and domestically, although the process of this interaction was never specified. This thesis discusses the nature of the politics and citizenry inherent in their poverty discourses.

In reviewing accounts of domestic and global poverty policy development, it is clear that the public sentiment and opinion has not been neglected in accounts of the domestic politics of poverty and welfare (see for example, Donnison 1982; McGregor 1981; Deakin 1994), although it is often absent from accounts of New Labour's various public policies. In the field of international relations the focus of geo-politics has traditionally been at the state actor level and scant attention has been paid to the interaction of these actors with domestic, or even global, publics. To some extent this reflects the traditional bi-partisan nature of foreign affairs, its lack of salience with domestic publics, and the lack of evidence of a relationship between policy development and public opinion (van Heerde and Hudson 2010). This focus is changing as the theoretical work on global citizenship is supplemented by the study of emergent global sensibilities, actions and movements. Nonetheless it is important to emphasize this thesis' location within the field of 'public politics' whilst acknowledging that the extent of public engagement with these issues remains limited and the creation of a 'public politics of global poverty' is a contested and unfinished project.

### **2.3.3 Electoral politics: the policy making: public opinion nexus**

There is large body of empirical literature on the policy making: public opinion nexus largely based on the United States experience. Leaders in the field, Soroka and Wlezien (2009) have reviewed this literature and describe two aspects of electoral representation: indirect representation, through elections in which the public choose politicians to deliver their policy wants, and direct representation, where elected politicians respond to public wants. They argue that the degree of direct representation varies by institutional context, with less to hold parliamentary government to account between elections than in the presidential system. As they point out though, indirect representation also implies direct representation as incumbent politicians will be judged by their time in office when they seek re-election. As discussed above, this interaction has been particularly noted within the New Labour political project and they appeared to be constantly in election mode. It may be that this rise in attention to direct representation partly reflects a focus on transatlantic learning amongst the political elite. It is also reflective of a political party continually reshaping itself within the bounds of electoral possibility. As Norris (2005) argues, New Labour's centrist strategy meant that their electoral success brought a limited mandate for radical policy change. Indeed, this thesis shows how they characterise themselves as constrained in office.

Soroka and Wlezien (2009) describe a thermostatic model of policy responsiveness, in which the public adjusts its preference for 'more' or 'less' policy - or spending - in response to policy change, wanting 'more' policy when policy decreases and vice versa, and have found health, welfare, education and defence spending in the United Kingdom compatible with this model. Brooks and Manza (2006) have applied this work to social policy responsiveness. As they argue, the possibility of mass public opinion

influencing welfare state development is purported in power resources and path dependency theories but has not been empirically tested and is dismissed by other scholars. They found that cross-national differences in social policy preferences help account for a proportion of differences between welfare regimes, and that there were greater direct effects of these preferences than indirect effects through the election of leftist parties. Horton and Gregory (2009:79) draw on this research to argue that:

*'While a good deal of the effects of mass preferences is mediated by elections, much of it is ethereal, an invisible hand that guides and constrains policymaking across the political cycle. This is something to remember for those who invest hope in a simple notion of 'political leadership': yes, leadership is necessary, but over the long term public preferences will probably determine the shape of the welfare state independently of who gets elected.'*

This appears a fatalistic account of political possibilities, but the argument they derive from this is simply that 'real leadership isn't doing what you think is right regardless of public opinion; it is doing what you think is right *and taking the public with you*' (Horton and Gregory 2009:80, emphasis in original). (Their contention being that welfare institutions shape the social context in which attitudes to welfare are formed and therefore universalism is crucial for embedding solidarity.) In fact, then this allows for the possibility that political leadership *can* change mass preferences and therefore shape the welfare state and who gets elected *has and will* make a difference. It is this process of change that is missing in the thermostatic model. Its pluralist underpinning in testing the assumption that advanced democracies should be responsive to their publics says nothing about decisive moments of change in policy and in mass preferences and shifts in political culture.

Before moving on to perspectives that elucidate this, it is worth reflecting on the 'invisible hand' described above, as it is not well articulated in policy making theory. It is clear that this has been a concern for the Labour Party in government in the 1960s and 1970s when it came to poverty policy, just as it was for New Labour in the 1990s and 2000s (see Chapter Six, drawing on Banting 1979), although it might be expected that New Labour felt this force more strongly because of the fragility of the electorate coalition that they had created both inside and outside Westminster. It is also the case that civil society groups - variously categorised as non-governmental organisations, pressure groups and social movements - also intervene in this political dynamic and compete to create a (mediated) 'public' discourse on a particular issue. The conceptual frames constructed are often the proxies of mass preferences that politicians draw on, and in turn shape those mass preferences.

### **2.3.4 Ideational and discursive approaches: Framing the debate**

The ideational approaches strongly associated with neo-institutionalism in international relations and political science point to a broader understanding of ‘public politics’. The turn to ideas was a response to the need within institutionalism to explain change (Starke 2006) and as an ontologically consistence extension of the existing theoretical framework (Blyth 2002). Institutions are ‘crystallised ideas’ about how to organise things, and once established these institutions ‘embody and give continuing content to agents’ wants’ (Blyth 2002:309). Institutional change therefore involves challenging the ideas the institutions rest on. Hall (1992) used this analysis to explain the change from economic management to monetarism in the UK, showing how institutions influenced the way new ideas emerged in political and administrative discussions. He introduced the term ‘policy paradigms’ to refer to ‘a framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing’, with ‘paradigm shifts’ explaining path-altering transformations (Hall 1993: 279, quoted in Beland 2005: 5). In the same vein, Hay has explored the discursive construction of globalisation within contemporary politics and argues that ‘it may play a crucial independent role in the generation of the effects invariably attributed to globalisation and invariably held to indicate its logic of inevitability’ (Hay 2002b: 204).

There have been many interpretations of the ideational and discursive within policy analysis. Importantly for this thesis, Beland (2005) has refocused Hall’s concept of policy paradigms providing a public-facing view of discourse. He argues that political actors draw on relatively stable ideological repertoires to construct frames aimed at convincing the population to support the policy alternatives they put forward. Policy alternatives are therefore applied ideas embedded within more general assumptions that form a policy paradigm. For Beland (2005:2), ‘ideological frames are not policy ideas, in the precise sense of the term, but the discourse surrounding debated alternatives.’ He distinguishes between general paradigms that impact on political decisions across policy areas, and sectoral paradigms that, though often embedded within a general paradigm, belong to a specific policy area. Beland’s focus on the appeal policy-makers make to the public helps to elucidate the complex dynamic relationship between ideas or discourse, public policy and public opinion. He regards framing as a ‘strategic and deliberate activity aimed at generating public support for specific policy ideas’ (2005:11) and that the ability to frame a policy programme in a politically and culturally acceptable way is crucial to policy success. The way issues are constructed in political discourse explains why public views on particular policy issues change over time. For example, Schmidt (2002) has shown how Thatcher’s superior campaign justifying the need for reform explained why her neo-liberal campaign was more successful than the one launched in New Zealand.

This ‘argumentative turn’ in policy analysis also led to Hager’s (1995, described in Fischer 2003) concept of discourse coalitions around narrative ‘storylines’. In this view, instead of being constructed around preconceived beliefs, policy coalitions are held together by storylines that interpret events. Storylines condense the facts and values basic to a belief system and combine elements from different domains to provide symbolic references that suggest common understanding and ‘sound right’. They provide ‘the essential discursive cement that creates communicative networks amongst actors with different or overlapping perceptions and understandings’ (Hager 1995: 61-3). This addresses the question of how people from widely varying backgrounds seem to find ways to communicate in policy-making (Hager 1993). This thesis draws on the concepts of frames and storylines and applies them to a ‘critical’ public political approach to policy making. It argues that in order to build a more progressive agenda, it is necessary to identify prevailing attitudes and cultural understandings. Political language must engage with these attitudes and understandings in ways that appeal to the public and work can then be undertaken within the text to bridge to more progressive language and ideas (Fairclough 2000). Political discourses and policy options interact dynamically with public opinion: discourse storylines must resonate with public conceptions but successful discourses may change those conceptions.

In the field of international relations, the ideational approach has been used to counter realist assumption that competitive self-interest and material power explains inter-state relations, and to theorise transnational governance. This has led to a reconnection of the global and the domestic that is discussed further in Section 2.4. Of interest here is Finnemore and Sikkink’s (1998) work on norms in the policy making process. They describe a three-stage process of: *norm emergence* when ‘norm entrepreneurs’ seek to convince a critical mass of states (norm leaders) to embrace new norms through the reframing of issues; *broad norm acceptance* as the norm leaders attempt to socialize other states, facilitated by a combination of pressure for conformity, desire to enhance international legitimization, and the desire of state leaders to enhance their self-esteem; and *internalization* when a norm is taken for granted and no longer a matter of public debate. As Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:897) point out, ‘the construction of cognitive frames is an essential component of norm entrepreneurs’ political strategies, since, when they are successful, the new frames resonate with broader public understandings and are adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issues’, but they ‘must compete in a highly contested normative space’ against ‘firmly embedded alternative norms and frames that create alternative perceptions of both appropriateness and interest’. Yanacopulos (2004:720) argues that, ‘this norm cycle framework can be a useful tool in explaining how attention to an issue can gain momentum and become important to both policy makers, organizations and the general public’. She uses this concept to explain the emergence of debt cancellation as an issue for donor governments and international institutions, arguing that debt cancellation campaigners changed the way the general public reacted to

'third world' debt cancellation as a development issue by shifting the 'norm' around it, reframing it from an economics to a justice issue.

The importance of discursive frames and values as prior to, and determining, attitudes to issues of poverty, inequality and redistribution has received renewed interest in recent years. For example, in seeking to explain the complex data on attitudes to inequality Orton and Rowlingson (2007:29) drew on a theoretical literature on values as expressing a more underlying motivational structure, higher in people's evaluative hierarchy and more durable than attitudes. The work of the cognitive linguist, George Lakoff (2002, 2004) in analysing the success of American Conservatives in terms of their framing of political debates and the importance of the Democrats constructing their own oppositional frames, has been of interest within the Labour Party. He highlights the use of metaphor - how the framing of estate taxes as 'death taxes' altered the nature of the debate and how the use of the term 'tax relief' implies the relieving of an affliction, and he argues that people vote their values and identities, often against their best interests. He writes as a 'cognitive activist' providing examples of how 'progressives' can reframe debates. There is a parallel interest in frames and the work of Lakoff in the global poverty domain with Darnton's (2011) recent work on how to engage the public. This is of particular interest for this thesis' examination of how New Labour appealed to the public in making a case for anti-poverty policies in both domains and the different articulations of self-interest therein (Chapter Four).

### **2.3.5 Cultural politics: neo-Gramscian perspectives**

Another important literature that moves beyond a technical focus on electoral politics to a broader concept of the political and the process of political change is the neo-Gramscian analysis of cultural politics. As Leggett (2009: 139) argues, 'Gramsci expanded our conception of the political by showing how, in complex modern societies, the struggle for hegemony or to develop a new common sense is played out not just in the formal institutions of the state but in the labyrinth of civil society.' Gramsci's cultural Marxism rejected the economic determinism of traditional Marxism, rather his analysis of hegemony emphasised human agency in giving due attention to political leadership and organisation. He argued that to gain political power it was first necessary to challenge the particular prevailing conception of the world, envisaging the political party as an intellectual organisation performing an educational and cultural function (Schwarzmantel 2009). This explanation of social change has been developed into varying articulations of neo-Gramscism, but a distinction shared by the writers discussed below is the rejection of class as the necessary feature of a hegemonic project. Instead they define politics as 'the process by which social meanings are contested, and political alliances and identities formulated and reformulated' (Finlayson 2003: 122). Crucially then, political actors and their interests are not fully formed but have to be politically constructed and co-opted to a hegemonic project, such that 'one group in society sets out to convince a number of

other groups that their interests will be well served by entering into a social coalition in which the hegemonic group is the leading partner' (Gilbert 2000: 223, quoted in Leggett 2009). It could be read from this that progressive change requires the building of social coalitions, made up of social democratic governments, non-governmental organisations, trades unions at both domestic and global levels of governance and New Labour's public politics of poverty can be assessed in this light.

Stuart Hall, with others writing for *Marxism Today*, pioneered neo-Gramscian analysis in the British political context. Hall's work is important for this thesis in two respects: first, it was an influential contribution to the intellectual debate on the left about how to respond to Thatcherism that preceded the establishment of New Labour and their third way politics; and second, its conceptualisation of politics and the political contrasts with and critiques those of New Labour (Finlayson 2003; Leggett 2005). In his article 'The Great Moving Right Show' (1979, reproduced in 1988) Hall stressed the importance of understanding Thatcherism as a response to the 'organic crisis' of Labourism and producing a new 'historic bloc'. This discursive project succeeded in appealing to traditional Labour-voting members of the working class because it 'operated directly on the real and manifestly contradictory experience of the popular classes under social-democratic corporatism' (Hall 1988: 50). Thus Thatcherism had responded to and shaped social change and its success could not be dismissed as the to and fro of electoral politics nor as a result of 'mere illusion, pure false consciousness' (Hall 1988: 49). As Leggett (2005: 127) puts it:

*'not only had the material conditions of the post-war social-democratic settlement collapsed, but it was the right who had perceived this collapse and were giving it their own inflection...the neoliberals had perceived that the corporatist state had come to be seen as overbearing, and capitalised on this by setting themselves up as the champions of freedom... [They] were engaged in a hegemonic project at the cultural level.'*

For Hall this required 'a renewal of the socialist project in the context of modern social and cultural life' through the production of collective political identities beyond Labour's traditional class base (quoted in Finlayson 2003: 118). However, Hall's articulation of 'New Times' shared similar sociological analysis but not the same political response as those who shaped New Labour's modernising Third Way agenda. As Finlayson (2003:118) argues, New Labour shared the understanding that it needed 'a guiding theme enabling its critique of the present, shaping an alternative, and the transformation of a political culture' and aimed to make the party into the 'hegemonic force that shapes the new century'. So for those in the neo-Gramscian tradition, the New Labour project was 'hegemonic in intent' but the politics of the project have been a disappointment and served to adjust us

to a post-Thatcherite settlement (Leggett 2009, Finlayson 2003). A crucial aspect of this political project is the type of ‘public politics’ it constructs.

Neo-Gramscian thinkers provide three interrelated ontological challenges to New Labour’s Third Way, all of which highlight its depoliticising nature. First, they argue that it is based on the false premise of no alternative particularly evident in their articulation of globalisation. As Watson and Hay (2003) famously put it, their political discourse renders the contingent necessary. For these critics the process of globalisation needs to be viewed as the consequence of previous political decisions, and they assert that social changes are never immutable. Hay (1999:57) calls for political leadership arguing that to ‘impose a new trajectory upon the institutions, processes and practices of the British economy and polity, then it must first win the battle to define and project a new economic paradigm - a battle for hearts and minds’. Second, they argue that contrary to neo-Gramscian understandings of subjectivities, New Labour seeks to engage with subjects that are ‘already out there, fully formed, requiring only to be focus-grouped into position’ (Hall 1998) and that, in keeping with neo-liberalism and public choice theory, they believe they need to be appealed to as self-interested individuals (Hay 2007). Third, in defining a Third Way beyond left and right, New Labour denies antagonism as a central feature of politics, projecting what Mouffe (2000: ch5) calls ‘politics without adversity’. She argues that ‘democracy requires the creation of collective identities around clearly differentiated positions as well the possibility to choose between real alternatives’ (Mouffe 2000:117). New Labour represents an ‘extremist Centre’ that ‘fails to acknowledge that there are multiple Centres and many different forms of social democracy’ and instead searches ‘for a unified coalition that will support a pragmatic instrumentalism where politics is about efficient management and ‘what works’ (Fitzpatrick 2003: 27). As these criticisms of New Labour are made it is interesting to note the continuity with the past, if not in terms of a politics without enemies then in the fear of a pluralist politics of the left. Hall (1979, reproduced in Hall 1988:51) identified the ‘statism’ inherent in Labour socialism that ‘refused like the plague the mobilisation of democratic power at the popular level’ as part of the conditions seized on by Thatcherism.

### **2.3.6 Representations of politics, publicness and citizenship**

In the wake of the critique above, Leggett’s (2005) work is important in demonstrating the different representations of the space for political agency in New Labour’s discourse. These range ‘from a position which subordinates politics to the imperatives of social change, to one which emphasises the role of values and political leadership’ (Leggett 2005:51). In seeking to examine how New Labour constructs the public political space for anti-poverty policies through discursive and policy interventions, this thesis views New Labour’s political project as complex and multifaceted and different constructions of politics and the public are expected in different domains - and indeed within the same domain.

Newman and Clarke have used an eclectic discursive approach to create an important body of work examining New Labour and the construction of 'publicness' in public services. They also take this more nuanced view, arguing that there are problems in reading emergent forms of publics and publicness as 'either the product of global neo-liberalism or as its antidote'; rather they seek to 'explore the ambiguities, uncertainties and paradoxes associated with the contemporary condition of publicness; and to draw out the conditions, tendencies and contradictory dynamics associated with the politics of the public' (Newman and Clarke 2009:7-8). They do however highlight the transformative work done within New Labour's discourse and the closing down of alternatives. In 'Creating Citizen-Consumers' they use the hyphenated term to represent the reworking of citizenship under New Labour, in which older conceptions of citizenship are drawn on and transformed through the articulation of the image of the consumer. In this way New Labour took account of different positions but in doing so subordinated them to their mission, 'attempting to dissolve their differences (and thus status as alternatives) in the process' (Clarke et al., 2007:46).

Crucially their work has also engaged with public discourses and demonstrates contestation of and resistance to this project (see also Taylor-Gooby 2000 and Morrison 2004). The collection of essays on the ethics of welfare edited by Dean (2004) is also noteworthy in exploring both New Labour and public discourses of responsibility. Both projects provide examples of the ideal citizen constructed through New Labour's discourse (Newman and Clarke 2009; Doheny 2004). When examining the public politics of poverty that New Labour purported to want to generate then, it is important to remember that their broader discourse reconstituted relations of citizenship, making welfare citizenship increasingly conditional (Dwyer 2000).

### **2.3.7 Assigning motivation**

The public politics of poverty that Hall's analysis constructs is diametrically opposed to the more usual interpretation given by New Labour and its more sympathetic commentators. The recourse to a tactic of 'redistribution by stealth' is not for fear of a hostile electorate - or perhaps a negative media-constructed 'public' response, rather it is for fear that 'a more vocal and organised constituency should develop around it' (Hall 2003: xx). He describes New Labour's 'double shuffle' in which they repositioned themselves from centre-left to centre-right: 'the neo-liberal project, which is in the leading position in its political repertoire - is paralleled by another, subaltern programme, of a more social-democratic kind, running alongside...The latter always remains subordinate to and dependent on the former, and is constantly being 'transformed' into the former, dominant one.' (Hall 2003: xx). He argues that the subaltern programme is 'the necessary 'cost' of maintaining loyalty amongst its traditional supporters...It must therefore find space in its programme to address these subordinate pressures

and constituencies - provided they are not allowed to de-rail the progress towards a more developed market state.' (Hall 2003: xx).

Whilst this thesis will draw on many of the neo-Gramscian criticisms of the limitation of the politics that New Labour constructs, it provides a different perspective of their motivations in expending political energy on the public politics of poverty, holding the view that they were still recognisable as a government of the centre-left. There are many interpretations of the New Labour project and there is not the space to review them here. Fitzpatrick (2003:15) provides a useful overview and weaves an account that draws on each of them 'as each helps to temper the potential excesses of the other'. This thesis too seeks to demonstrate the nuanced and contingent nature of the New Labour's project through the exploration of their public politics of poverty. Crucially though it is aligned with authors such as Driver and Martell (1998) and Coates (2001) in interpreting New Labour as the politics of post-Thatcherism - not social democratic as traditionally conceived nor a continuation of neo-liberalism. As Fitzpatrick (2003:14) puts it, 'an adaption to the society and economy which Thatcherism engineered, and which involved a substantial leap to the Right, though with some tilting back towards the Left, albeit a Left that rejects socialism and embraces the market economy'.

It gives more emphasis to structural constraints than the authors described above, taking a neo-revisionist view that globalisation is a political constructed process but *also* a historical process that places real constraint on possibilities, particularly in Britain's open economy (McGrew 2004). McGrew (2004) argues that rather than a simple capitulation to neo-liberalism, globalisation is associated with processes of convergence of macroeconomic strategy and divergence in terms of welfare regimes.

*'In Britain, the unique conjunction of intensifying globalisation, economic and social transformation, and Labour's successive electoral defeats reinforced the process of modernisation which culminated in the 'New Labour project'. This 'Third Way' politics reflects the Party's pragmatic, much more than its programmatic, tradition in both its dismissal of ideology and its technocratic and managerialist impulses. It represents, in other words, a distinctly British resolution of the political dilemmas consequent upon 'making social democracy safe' for a globalising era'.*

(McGrew 2004:149)

This is not to deny that there were 'alternative Centres' that were advocated from both inside and outside the Labour Party. In seeking to hold together its electoral coalition, New Labour employed a dominant discourse that constantly negated 'alternative Centres' and deployed a populism that often undermined more deliberative and educative projects, ultimately limiting attempts at 'renewal in office'. Correspondingly, despite the

constraints of their particular adaption to globalisation, there was still space for a more progressive domestic strategy and this thesis documents attempts to drive broader public political change on poverty. Ultimately, though New Labour felt constrained by a perceived lack of public support and in turn contributed to a diminished public discourse.

Leggett's (2009:146) work is also important here in arguing that Gramscian 'ideas such as passive revolution and transformism help us to account for much that is complex and paradoxical about New Labour particularly in its relationship to both neo-liberalism and social democracy' whilst presenting 'problems around structural determinism - seeing New Labour as inevitably reproducing neoliberalism - and voluntarism - seeing the project as more coherent, purposeful and, indeed, devious than it is'. In examining political agency and 'its complex interplay social change and economic imperatives', he argues that 'Gramsci's observation that no political formation is ever wholly reactionary or progressive is vital for those seeking to find spaces for Left alternatives from *within* the context of neo-liberalism' (Leggett 2009:148, emphasis in original). Thus he uses neo-Gramscian analysis to highlight the possibilities of the modernising, analytical insights of New Labour in developing 'a more recognisably social democratic project that differentiates them both from the Third Wayers and modernising Conservatives' (Leggett 2007:362).

### 2.3.8 Conclusion

This section has outlined a public political approach. This approach views politics as more than 'what government does' and analyses New Labour's speeches and policy documents to explore their 'public politics'. These sources are 'public political discourses' in the sense that they represent a political moment that connects political institutions, citizens and politicians. They are the essence of politics understood as the public contestation of different visions of the world. They are part of the functioning of democratic politics, understood not just in electoral terms but as a broader cultural politics. Crucially, these sources reveal - both explicitly and implicitly - the nature of New Labour's project and the public politics they sought to create. This thesis therefore seeks to comparatively examine the public politics of poverty in the global and domestic domain under New Labour. These public political interventions also suggest a comparative analysis with the available literature on public discourses and attitudes.

As this section has illustrated, the relationship between public opinion or mass preferences and the political process of policy making is not easy to ascertain, but this 'invisible hand' influences policy. The corresponding problem of explaining broader political and social change - or how politics can influence public opinion or mass preferences - has also been problematic, but the ideational and discursive approaches provide a way of theorising this as a political process in which the social world is framed and reframed. The neo-Gramscian perspective also provides a broader concept of cultural politics and

has been influential in New Labour's development and as an analytical tool for understanding their political project. This thesis will draw on many of the neo-Gramscian criticisms of the limitation of the politics that New Labour constructs. However, it draws on understandings of the process of continual discursive (re-)construction to argue that it is complex and multifaceted project, with different constructions of politics and the public both within and between policy domains. It also holds a different perspective of the constraints it faced, both as a party of the centre-left in government and in the particular context of the time, and of its motivations in expending political energy on the public politics of poverty. Drawing on Legget's neo-Gramscism and neo-revisionist accounts it holds that there was a progressive social democratic element to the New Labour project and in the public politics of poverty.

## **2.4 Reconnecting the global and the domestic**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

This section now turns to the comparative aspect of this thesis; the cross domain analysis of New Labour's global and domestic poverty discourses. This thesis provides a comparative discursive and policy analysis of two policy domains but more importantly it compares *global and domestic* policy and is also a comparison of narratives and policy prescription for the developed and developing world. Over the last few decades there has been a 'global turn' in many disciplines. A global social policy agenda has emerged in which connections, comparisons and policy learning have taken place. There has also been much theorising of the consequences of globalisation for traditional understandings of the domestic and the international, and more specifically domestic and global poverty have been reconnected in academic and policy arenas, and a globalised politics, policy and 'publicness' have been conceptualised. First this literature is selectively reviewed with particular reference to poverty, policy and politics; then the small amount of literature comparing New Labour's global and domestic agendas is discussed; followed by the few studies of public attitudes to both global and domestic poverty. Other studies of New Labour poverty discourses and policy and of public attitudes to poverty that deal only with the global or the domestic are drawn on in the main body of the thesis. In conclusion, this section draws attention to this thesis' public politics and comparative global: domestic approach's consistency with Hay's (2002a) 'new political science of British politics'.

### **2.4.2 Reconnecting global and domestic poverty and politics**

Traditionally global and domestic poverty have been seen as very separate policy issues, with poverty of the global South conceptualised as 'absolute' and that of the North as 'relative', and as such, there was little interaction between academic disciplines and policy domains. It is notable though that the treatment of poverty within the international agenda has often mirrored domestic policy orientations in the US and UK (see Chapter Five). In the last few decades, this analytical separation has been challenged and indeed, from

a language perspective the use of keyword ‘poverty’ implies this approach (Williams 1976). As Ringen et al., (2005:1) puts it:

*‘We generally believe that there is or may be poverty in both poor and rich countries and we usually believe it is meaningful to discuss that problem in the language of poverty whether we are considering high income or low income countries. That being so, we must believe that we are at least on one level speaking about the same thing irrespective of economic environment.’*

It is worth reiterating the point made in the beginning of this chapter though; positions taken in this debate are linked to their political implications and their application for policy (Lister 2004). Absolute poverty is sometimes defined in terms of survival, but is more often used to refer to a subsistence level of need necessary to ensure physical capacity for production and reproduction (Lister 2004). This is a non-situated notion of poverty defined in terms of physiological and not social needs. In contrast, advocates of a relative definition hold that poverty cannot be removed from its social context. Not only has it proved impossible to define adequately a purely physiological efficient level of resources (Viet-Wilson 2004), but attempts to do so deny the nature of what it is to be human (Townsend 1981). For Townsend (1993) human needs vary between societies because different societies have different requirements for participation. Needs are socially determined and relative poverty is therefore understood as lacking resources to live a minimum acceptable life or to participate in society.

Whilst the conceptual problems of an absolute definition have been outlined, the applicability of a relative definition to developing countries requires consideration. A relative definition could lead to the unacceptable conclusion that if the majority of people have insufficient income and resources, only those with the very lowest income and resources would be defined as poor (Lister 2004). Townsend has suggested two solutions to this: first, a definition based on ‘what could be the majority’s standard - given a better redistribution of resources or a reorganisation of institutions in that society’ (1979: 413); second, that it is ‘necessary to accept the relativity of need to the world’s as well as to national resources’ (1987: 99). This second suggestion highlights global inequalities and acknowledges that in a globalised world of mass communication, people’s point of reference may be influenced by ways of life beyond country boundaries.

The argument remains though, that ‘the [relative] definitions of poverty used in the advanced industrial societies are not sensitive enough to cope with the breadth and depth of deprivation in third world countries’ George (1988: 127). To this end, George and Howards (1991) propose a composite definition of poverty, ranging from starvation to subsistence, to social coping and social participation. Another way of re-conceptualising poverty in a way that transcends the absolute: relative debate is provided by Doyal and

Gough's universalistic understanding of human needs, sensitive to social, cultural and historical context (1991, described in Lister 2004). They draw on Sen (1983: 159) who configures the absolute: relative debate arguing that there is 'an irreducible absolutist core in the idea of poverty', with basic human needs 'the universal pre-requisites for successful... participation in a social form of life' (Gough 1992: 8-9) and 'socially relative satisfiers' the actual commodities through which these needs are met differing both between and within societies (Doyal and Gough 1991). Both these conceptual frameworks have been important in moving the debate beyond the absolute: relative dichotomy and foreshadow broader developments in intellectual and policy learning.

The intellectual barriers between poverty analysis in the North and the South are slowly being challenged, with both the disciplines of social policy and development studies broadening their focus beyond their traditional setting and the emergence of global social policy analysis (for example, Hall and Midgley 2004; Deacon 2007). There has also been an interchange of conceptual thinking: the European term 'social exclusion' has been applied in the development field (see for example, de Haan 1998); poverty researchers in the global North have been influenced by the participatory approaches to poverty policy in the South (Bennett with Roberts 2004); and Sen's (1983) concept of poverty as capability failure has also been adopted within both disciplines. Non-governmental organisations have also played an important role in conceptual and policy learning (Lewis 1999). Save the Children, Oxfam, and Comic Relief, all work overseas and in the UK. Oxfam, for example, is guided by a belief that the underlying causes and experience of poverty are similar and that their experience of working in the developing world enables them to bring new perspectives to tackling poverty at home (Oxfam 2006). Many of these non-governmental organisations have moved their focus from service delivery to policy advocacy (see discussion in Chapter Six).

The implications for politics and more particularly a 'public politics' of this multi-level policy arena has been explored by a number of writers. As Cerny (2006:105) argues 'globalization makes such publicness more problematic ... reshaping multi-level governance around various 'new architectures' that will recreate the 'public' either at a higher level or through a more complex network structure'. As touched on when describing Finnemore and Sikkink's concept of norm cycles above, the role of different actors is starting to be theorised within the emerging study of global public policy-making. They describe the interconnection of domestic and international norms, arguing that 'international norms must always work their influence through the filter of domestic structures and domestic norms, which can produce important variations in compliance and interpretation of these norms' (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:893). This is further developed by Keck and Sikkink (1998:89) who describe transnational policy networks in which 'actors work internationally on an issue...bounded together by shared values, a common discourse and dense exchanges of information and services'. They

'participate simultaneously in domestic and international politics, drawing on a variety of resources, *as if they were part of an international society*', whilst using 'these resources strategically to affect a world of states and international organisations constructed by states' (Keck and Sikkink 1998:90, emphasis in original).

They provide a typology of tactics that these networks use: *information politics*, or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it where it will have most impact; *symbolic politics*, or the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories to make sense of a situation for an audience who is frequently far way; *leverage politics*, or the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence through; *accountability politics*, or the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies and principles (Keck and Sikkink 1998:95). All these are activities that take place in a public realm, but they describe both moral leverage - 'the mobilisation of shame' and material leverage in which public support is vital: 'although NGO influence often depends on securing powerful allies, making those links still depends on their ability to mobilise the solidarity of their member, or of public opinion via the media...in democracies the potential to influence votes gives large membership organisations an advantage' (Keck and Sikkink 1998:97). As discussed earlier though, the effect of these issues on voter behaviour is believed to be limited. This typology provides a way of examining New Labour's global - and also their domestic - public politics, and in particular, their attempts to build an 'accountability politics' around their own agenda in both domains.

Stone (2005) provides a different focus, drawing on Hager's work on 'discourse communities' and describing 'transnational discourse communities' consisting of elite-level actors working in international institutions. Indeed, in earlier work describing 'knowledge networks' and development (Stone 2005:23) she notes that the public 'are still largely unaware of the roles, reach and influence of global networks...Combined with the technocratic character of many such networks, the public is excluded and political responsibility is undermined'. Attempts have been made to get inside this 'black box' of policy making, with Sindzingre (2004) for example, exploring the political economy of knowledge within the World Bank and the evolution of its current emphasis on poverty.

However, it is also noted that 'UN agencies, such as UNDP and UNIDO have become institutions central in researching and articulating dimensions of "publicness" in the global sphere' (Stone 2008:23-4). This has been a key feature of the emerging public politics of poverty as the late 1990s and early 2000s which saw a growing consensus amongst international institutions and donor governments on the need for greater global education and their own advocacy roles (O'Loughlin and Wegimont 2007). There are overlapping motivations: first, it is argued that greater public knowledge and support is

crucial in securing donor governments' commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (Stern 1998); and second, the World Bank perceives public support as a strategic tool for persuading governments to commit as much as possible in aid (Hudson and van Heerde 2009). This is the international context in which New Labour's public politics of global poverty is discussed in this thesis.

Examining the issue of global inequalities can take further the conceptual reconnection of global and domestic poverty and aid understanding of the nature of global policy making. The last few decades have seen growing global inequality between the North and South but also between and within countries in both the North and South. This trend is drawn on in the transformationalist account of globalisation. In contrast to neoliberal accounts of economic globalisation as a force for prosperity and peace throughout the world and radical accounts of Western imperialism producing further polarisation between the North and South, they focus on 'the ways in which contemporary globalisation is reordering the relations between rich and poor, North and South, dominant and subordinate states in the global system' (McGrew 2000). Hoogvelt (1997, described in McGrew 2000: 351) argues that 'there are new patterns of inclusion and exclusion which cut across all the countries and regions of the world', describing 'a nested arrangement of four concentric circles - each cutting across all regions and societies - and constituted by the world's elites, the affluent middle-class, the marginalized and the dispossessed respectively'.

The transformationalist school argues that globalisation has resulted in the blurring of domestic and international boundaries, such that politics takes place more and more 'along the domestic-global frontier' (Rosenau 1997). For McGrew (2000) this requires governments to reconsider how to achieve national goals in an interconnected world, and he gives the example of the Geneva consensus, which recognises development as a shared global responsibility. Implicit in this argument though, is the need for greater level of linkage across all policy domains. Townsend with Donkor (1996: 15) argued for the principle of 'duality' in policy making: international and national poverty policies designed so that they complement and reinforce each other, and the building of an international welfare state. Peter Townsend was a highly influential actor in the politics of poverty surrounding the 1995 UN World Summit on Social Development, in particular the conceptualisation of a global poverty affecting all countries and therefore the requirement that all states tackle poverty in their countries and the adoption of a two-level definition of poverty for that purpose. He argued that this provided a good precedent of the model of theory, strategy and policy he envisaged but failed to address the policy-related causes of poverty (see Townsend et al., 2005). There are some parallels between the transformationalist view of globalisation and that of New Labour, and this thesis finds conceptual connections of global and domestic poverty in the discourses and policy linkages in both domains as well as a number of explicit

connections in the same speeches. However, there are also important differences in the response to the current form of economic globalisation and its governance.

For Payne (2005) this transformation also requires us to re-examine the notion of development. Drawing on Cox's (1983) application of Gramscian theory to the political economy, he calls for an analysis of the 'global politics of development', highlighting the intensity and complexity of the connections that bind states and societies and that these are in part shaped by the diverse and intrinsically competing development strategies of a whole range of state actors. Crucially it rejects the 'exceptionalism' of a special category of countries deemed in need of development and recasts development as a universal 'transnational problematic' in which 'all societies are developing as part of a global process' (Pieterse 1996: 543, quoted in Payne 2005), whilst at the same time acknowledging power differentials operating as states seek to make globalisation in their own image (Boas and McNeill 2004). Payne (2006) draws on this concept in analysing the events surrounding the G8 Summit in 2005 and the politics of New Labour and Make Poverty History. It is also an interesting conceptual development in light of the developmentalist discourse of 'social investment' employed by New Labour in both domains - crucially without reference to power differentials.

Noël and Thérien's work has been important in theorising a global politics of poverty. They have also undertaken related public attitudes work, discussed below, so their research agenda has been influential for this thesis. They characterise the global politics of poverty as a part of the continual dialogue between political left and right (Noël and Thérien 2008). Following Bobbio (1996) they use equality as the fundamental distinguishing criterion, and classify the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations agencies as occupying Right and Left positions respectively (Thérien 2002; see also Boas and McNeill 2004 for similar analysis). They distinguish three historical periods of global poverty politics: 1960s and 1970s saw a projection of 'Keynesian liberalism from the domestic into the international arena' (Thérien 2002:239); the 1980s to mid-1990s was a period in two opposing views of poverty emerged in the international institutions with the UN institutions seeking to counter the dominant Bretton Woods paradigm; and the mid-1990s witnessing a third way 'convergence of the analyses of Left and Right with respect to the problems of poverty and inequality' (Thérien 2002:241).

Noël (2006: 306) sees the rediscovery of poverty as involving 'less the emergence of a new consensus than that of a new locus of opposition'. 'Ideas that catch fire involve a few, and probably two, antagonistic conceptions of justice that together contribute to reshape social conflicts and debates around a core public policy issue' (Noël 2006: 310). Poverty was able to become a key issue on the global agenda because it was a way of criticising the dominant neo-liberal agenda on its own terms, and the convergence of many processes in the global context were conducive to change: the rise of

poverty and inequality, the East Asian financial crisis, the visibility of anti-globalisation movement and the street protests around the G8 and WTO meetings, and crucially for this thesis, the election of centre-left donor governments. Thérien (2002: 248) argues that ‘the politics of the ‘third way’ helped to create a more people-centred international environment and to transform the traditionally hostile relations between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations agencies’.

This ‘new global politics of poverty’ is not restricted to global poverty debates but includes similar trends in European and domestic discourses. Noël (2006:311) argues that the changes at different policy levels - global, European and national - ‘may have been mutually reinforcing but, to a large extent, they were parallel and driven by distinct factors and agents’. Taken together though, he subscribes to Hemerijck and Schludi’s (2000:127) analysis that this represents ‘a system-wide search for a new, economically viable, politically feasible, and social acceptable profile of social and economic regulation’. This is one lens through which to contextualise New Labour’s public politics of poverty. Aspects of their global and domestic poverty discourses have been distinct yet mutually reinforcing. Equally though approaching from a British politics perspective, other aspects of their discourses have been self-consciously connected in applying a Third Way politics ‘system-wide’ and New Labour actors, Gordon Brown in particular, have been key players in both global and domestic discourses. As discussed in the body of the thesis, discursive similarities between New Labour’s two poverty domains and between New Labour and the international institutions have been found and attention is paid here to the role of political actors in drawing on and shaping this discourse.

#### **2.4.3 Reconnecting analysis of New Labour**

There are few cross-domain studies of New Labour’s discourse. This subsection reviews Fairclough’s preliminary study of poverty discourses and then goes on to discuss the work of Hay and colleagues on New Labour’s political economy and its discourse(s) of globalisation. New Labour’s discourses of global and domestic poverty were compared in Fairclough’s (2000) critical discourse analysis ‘New Labour, New Language’. He compiled a computer ‘corpus’ of New Labour texts which could be searched for instances of particular words or phrases and in examining instances of the word ‘poverty’, he found striking differences as well as overlaps in collocations (co-occurrences of words in texts) depending on whether reference was made to domestic or global poverty. More radical aims were applied to global but not to domestic poverty, i.e. global poverty was the object of verbs such as eradicate and eliminate. There were also differences in the words poverty was coordinated with: debt/injustice/underdevelopment for global poverty; and social exclusion/social division/unemployment/welfare dependency for domestic poverty. Two points can be made about this analysis. First, the corpus was made up of texts from the first few years of the Labour Government and did not include the Beveridge lecture of March 1999 in

which Blair pledged to ‘end child poverty in a generation’ or subsequent texts which have reiterated this ‘radical’ commitment. Second, findings from corpus analysis are only a starting point. As Fairclough himself argues (2003:6), ‘their value is limited and need to be complemented by more intensive and detailed qualitative textual analysis’. As such, then, the very preliminary findings from corpus analysis that there are differences in New Labour’s language of domestic and global poverty need revisiting and suggest a need for further detailed qualitative investigation.

On a more general level, Hay and Marsh (1999:14, emphasis in original) called for ‘recognition of the complex, contingent and *dialectical* relationship between domestic and international dynamics’ and in a similar vein Coates and Hay (2001) argue that the separation of political science and international relations has meant that the relationship between foreign and domestic policy has not been explored. This has been an historical feature of studies of the Labour Party and also of analysis of New Labour’s Third Way. At the time of publication they found no analysis that bridged this divide, and this has subsequently been a feature of Hay’s scholarship, and an aim that this thesis seeks to contribute to. Their analysis found an impressive degree of consistency in what they call the internal and external faces of New Labour’s political economy, but tellingly they question whether New Labour have chosen theories that will enable it to square its social ambitions with its economic programmes (Coates and Hay 2001). As Berry (2008:19) points out, Hay and his co-authors created a ‘third wave’ of globalisation theory, ‘arguing that globalisation is best understood not as a process of change in material, structural change, but rather an idea produced by certain actors (dupliciously) in order to justify or legitimise change’. Watson (2002:198) argued that ‘the core principle of increasing financial market openness is strategically embedded in the social and institutional relationships of the electoral coalition that the Government is seeking to hold together’ and Watson and Hay (2003) identified the ‘globalisation thesis’ - that policy must be made in response to the external constraints imposed by economic globalisation - as central to Labour’s modernisation.

However, in office, different characterisations of globalisation have been detected in New Labour’s discourse (McGrew 2004, Hay and Smith 2005). Hay and Smith (2005) identify what they describe as three mutually incompatible discourses of globalisation, each of which are appealed to consistently in different policy domains. In the context of the domestic political economy, globalisation is appealed to as a non-negotiable but positive process which circumscribes the parameters of political and economic choices; in foreign policy, it is a contingent and positive process in which economic liberalisation is potentially beneficial for all; and in development policy, it is a contingent process, the character of which is dependent on political choices and must be made beneficial for all. Hay and Smith (2005:131) argue that the ‘distinctive and seemingly consistent patterning in both the appeal to globalisation and the character of the

process that is being appealed to, suggests less confusion and incoherence so much as the strategic and rhetorical deployment of globalisation'. They argue that the foreign and development policy discourses emerged in office and are largely restricted to international forums. These discourses acknowledge and respond directly to the challenge of anti-globalisation protesters, and, as yet, there are no parallels in the domestic sphere, such that there is no acknowledgement of the 'distributional asymmetries which might be associated with globalisation-conforming domestic reforms' (Hay and Smith 2005: 132). The authors suggest that this is possibly because these concerns have not found a prominent oppositional voice. However, they also suggest caution in making a direct causal connection with policy outcomes, arguing that despite the discourse, 'foreign economic policy is characterised by its defence of the global political economy as a liberal order' (Hay and Smith 2005: 135).

There is however a different interpretation to their argument that these discourses are mutually incompatible. Whilst recognising that they are different discourses constituted within different policy domains and discursive communities, this thesis argues that there is compatibility in New Labour's various constructions of globalisation. They describe a situation in which domestic political choice is circumscribed through global economic interdependence. This argument is made in both domestic and global discourses about the position of developed and developing country governments. In this situation policy intervention and regulation needs to be made at a global level so that globalisation can be made to work for everyone. Its reliability as an account of the realities of globalisation is open to challenge, but it appears to be a consistent construction of the effects of globalisation on different levels of governance. This thesis challenges the assumption of duplicitous use of discourses in Hay's work whilst acknowledging that all political discourse is employed selectively and strategically. As Berry (2008:26) argues, 'the fact that New Labour's discourses of globalisation vary in different political contexts while converging upon a single core meaning is entirely normal ideological activity. Globalisation's core meaning (as they see it, external economic constraint) is everpresent, but acquires different peripheral meanings in different political settings'. And, as discussed below, New Labour was a constantly evolving project constituted through the discourse of multiple actors. This thesis illustrates the similarities in the construction of poverty and in policy prescriptions presented in the global and domestic domains.

#### **2.4.4 Connections between public attitudes/discourses of poverty?**

There are no comparative studies of the relationship between attitudes towards domestic and international 'poverty' as such. However, a number of cross-national studies have explored the relationship between donor countries' provision of domestic welfare and of international aid, thus contributing to the growing notion that domestic values and politics impact on international policies (Noël and Thérien 2002). The Scandinavian countries

have received most attention due to the comparative generosity of their welfare state and aid programmes and have led scholars to highlight the importance of socio-political values in determining aid policies (Pratt 1989 and Stokke 1989, quoted in Noël and Thérien 2002). Lumsdaine's (1993) cross-national study found coherence between individual attitudes towards domestic and international redistribution, with respondents who approved of development assistance also in favour of domestic programmes of redistribution. However, Noël and Thérien (2002) compared aggregate public opinion data across nations and found a negative association between support for redistribution at home and abroad. They argue that a country's political context solves the apparent contradiction between Lumsdaine's results and theirs'. They conclude that when the Left has been powerful, introducing universal social programmes and reducing income disparities, domestic inequalities appear less preoccupying and foreign aid easier to advocate, whereas when poverty at home remains a significant issue, foreign aid is a more distant concern. It is not possible to discern how the UK was categorised on various measures in their analysis, but this explanation does not seem to correspond with the situation in the UK where domestic poverty levels remain comparatively high and yet support for aid is comparable with other European nations.

These studies highlight the complexities in interpreting and comparing attitudinal data. In particular, there is a danger in framing questions about reducing the numbers of the very rich and very poor in the domestic context and about helping Third World countries as indicators of support for 'redistribution'. As they themselves note, values do not translate into policy in a coherent way: 'Political power is not won or lost in debates over equality, considered as a value and isolated from competing considerations, but in electoral arguments over public policy, arguments over what the government is specifically allowed or obliged to do' (Sniderman et al., 1996:247, quoted in Noël and Thérien 2002). Despite this difficulty, these studies are also important in exploring politics of global justice and how nationalist and cosmopolitan principles interact in public deliberations. Noël and Thérien (2002:650, own emphasis) interpret their findings as demonstrating that counter to positions found within the philosophical debate, 'citizens do not see global justice as an either-or issue':

*'It is true that the commitment to redistribute is stronger at the national level, but relationships of solidarity do not stop at national boundaries. The achievement of justice at home in fact sustains justice abroad. The idea that "charity begins at home" is not a "trap" that prevents us from treating foreign aid as a moral obligation... It is a fairly reasonable assessment of the real politics of global justice.'*

This will be returned to later in the thesis, as it is asserted that the limited impact of Make Poverty History in changing the public's framing of global poverty (Darnton 2011) suggests the importance of the progressive framing of

domestic poverty for both domestic *and global* poverty politics. Finally, these studies draw attention to the need for further research in this highly topical area of public opinion. No UK specific studies have compared survey attitudes to both global and domestic poverty, and whilst comparisons between poverty in the global North and South have emerged in qualitative work, no studies have specifically juxtaposed discussion of domestic and global poverty.

#### **2.4.5 Conclusion: a ‘new political science of British politics’**

As this section has illustrated, poverty, policy, politics and development are being reconceptualised as globalised phenomena. Correspondingly, New Labour’s discourse and policy and public understandings of poverty are also starting to be analysed from this perspective. As discussed, these literatures are important resources for this thesis and are part of a development that it seeks to contribute to. Colin Hay has been important in this respect and indeed he has argued that a new political science of British politics is necessary to deal with ‘complex interdependence’ (Hay 2003:188). This concept has been discussed throughout this chapter, most notably in relation to the interaction between the material and the discursive and the context of a globalised world. He argues that whilst ‘divided by the absence of a common theoretical perspective, self-styled behaviouralists, philosophical realists, neo-institutionalists, constructivists and interpretivists increasingly appeal to a common set of concerns’ (Hay 2003:184) - also the concerns of this thesis (Hay 2002a:11):

1. A greater tendency to contextualise contemporary dynamics, both historically (temporally) and internationally (spatially).
2. A greater emphasis on institutional and ideational mediations and a concern to trace the process of political change from inputs to outputs.
3. A greater recognition of the contingency and indeterminacy of political outcomes and an associated emphasis on the significance of unintended consequences.
4. An acknowledgement, linked to point 1 above, of the need to locate Britain comparatively.
5. An associated blurring of the once rigid demarcation of the domestic and the international and a growing recognition of the significance of processes of multilevel governance.
6. A broadening and respecification of the legitimate terrain of political analysis and a growing recognition of extrapolitical variables (such as cultural and/or economic factors) in the determination of political outcomes.
7. A greater recognition of the importance of ideational variables (values, paradigms, ideologies, rhetorics) in the causation of political outcomes and of the need to consider such ideational factors not in isolation but in their relationships to the material contexts in which they arise and on which they impact.

## **2.5 Interpreting New Labour's public politics of poverty**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

As is clear from the discussion above, this thesis uses New Labour's speeches and policy documents to explore their public politics of poverty. This section now details the research questions, the sources used, the approach taken in relation to methods of discourse analysis and the situated nature of the research, accessing and sampling the speeches, and the methods employed and the nature of speeches as data.

### **2.5.2 Research questions**

This thesis uses New Labour speeches and policy documents and secondary literature to examine:

- whether New Labour actors make explicit connections between their global and domestic poverty commitments and the nature of these connections (Chapter Three);
- how the arguments for tackling poverty were made to the public in both domains and the motivations that the public subscribe to (Chapters 4);
- how the public politics of poverty evolved in both domains under New Labour, the nature of this politics and how New Labour portrayed it, public attitudes and discourses of poverty and the similarities and differences between the two domains (Chapters 5 and 6).

In doing so, this will provide a retrospective account of New Labour's public politics of poverty.

### **2.5.3 Sources for analysing New Labour's poverty discourses and their public politics**

In analysing 'New Labour's' poverty discourses this thesis draws on speeches given by Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and the Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions and for International Development throughout the period of the New Labour Governments of 1997-2010, as well as relevant policy documents from HM Treasury and the two departments of state. These departments held the primary responsibility for New Labour's commitments on poverty as set out in their Public Service Agreements with the Treasury. It is acknowledged that the domestic poverty domain extended beyond DWP, the Treasury and the Blair-Brown duumvirate, and indeed under Gordon Brown the newly-created Department for Children, Schools and Families was also included within the PSA. As discussed below, relevant speeches from other departments were included if they came to light but were not systematically searched for.

Extensive secondary literature on New Labour is drawn on throughout the thesis in interpreting this data. The chapters describing the trajectory of New Labour's public politics of poverty and their historical context are largely literature based. The analysis has also been aided by attendance at Labour Party conferences and associated fringe meetings, Fabian Society and Compass events, the Make Poverty History and the Keep the Promise

marches, as well as discussions with MPs, speechwriters, and political actors within the broader Labour movement ranging from the snatched conversation to recorded interviews. Part of the character of political discourse is relational to other contemporary discourse (Fairclough 2000) and as such, speeches and policy documents of the Conservative Party in opposition, following the election of David Cameron as party leader, are drawn on in places. It is acknowledged though, that any claims about these sources are made tentatively and without recourse to in-depth analysis of Conservative Party discourse. The importance of the discourse of international institutions for New Labour's global discourse is also acknowledged but its analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis (Fairclough 2000, Cammack 2001).

As discussed above, in focusing on New Labour's discourses as part of a public politics it is necessary to consider how this discourse is received, or at least to explore contemporaneous public attitudes to, and discourses of, poverty. Collection and primary analysis of this data is beyond the scope of this thesis but secondary literature is drawn on.

#### **2.5.4 Approaching discourse analysis**

There is a considerable literature on methodological approaches to studying New Labour's discourse and politics but there is an absence of discussion about the actual methods employed and data selection decisions made. The exception to this is Norman Fairclough's work. His book '*New Labour, New Language*' provided one of the first analysis of New Labour's discourse and he explains the difference in his approach - Critical Discourse Analysis - in its detailed analysis of text (Fairclough 2000: 158). He has outlined his approach, combining linguistic analysis with critical social theory, *and* the practice of close textual analysis (see in particular Fairclough 2003). This thesis draws on many of Fairclough's interpretation of discourse - and indeed his interpretation of aspects of New Labour's discourse - but does not undertake linguistic analysis. Instead it employs a broader qualitative method focusing on the narratives and frames revealed in New Labour's discourse through carefully interpretative reading and re-reading.

This chapter has discussed the epistemological standpoint from which an analysis of discourse is undertaken in this thesis. However, to reiterate, Gill's (2000:174-5) four themes of discourse analysis are subscribed to: a concern with discourse itself - rather than seeing it as a means of getting at, or comparing with, a 'reality'; recognition that language is constructive and constructed; emphasis on discourse as a social practice in its own right; and a conviction in its rhetorical organisation, that is, all discourses are organised to be persuasive.

It is recognised that this thesis is approached from a particular position - a social democratic standpoint - and it is clear from the methodological discussion above that this is always the case:

*'There is no such thing as an 'objective' analysis of a text, if by that we mean an analysis which simply describes what is 'there' in the text without being 'biased' by the 'subjectivity' of the analyst...our ability to know what is 'there' is inevitably limited and partial. And the questions we ask necessarily arise from particular motivations which go beyond what is 'there'.*

(Fairclough 2003:15)

### **2.5.5 Accessing and sampling the speeches**

Despite the public availability of speeches and policy documents there remain important considerations in terms of accessing and selecting a sample. Representativeness is often not required for discourse analysis. However, the comparative nature of the research questions requires some attempt at representativeness or at least confidence that 'key' speeches have been included in the analysis. As such, the process of accessing the speeches is discussed. It remains the case though that claims about the absence of particular frames or narratives cannot be definitive.

There is no single source for accessing ministerial speeches given outside the House of Commons. By convention these were to be lodged with the House of Commons Library, but this is not common in practice (conversation with House of Commons librarian, 2006). The main sources for accessing such speeches are departmental websites. Hay and Smith's (2005) study of the discourse of globalization in different policy domains, for example, was based on a sample of speeches obtained from a keyword search of the No.10 website.<sup>1</sup>

All four departments provided a list of downloadable speeches on their website, but there was variation in terms of ease of navigation, how far back the archive went, and the amount of speeches available. In all four cases there were few speeches available from New Labour's first term of office and a steady increase during subsequent terms. This no doubt reflects the development of the internet as a social media tool. No.10. and Treasury websites were searched for speeches by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown containing the word 'poverty'. Technical problems with DfID search facilities meant that it was not possible to isolate the Secretary of State's speeches containing the word 'poverty', so they were searched manually. There were few speeches made prior to 2004 available; only five made by Clare Short and none by Baroness Amos. The Department for Work and Pensions provided access to least speeches and there was no access to speeches made prior to 2002 in its predecessor Department of Social Security. This appears to reflect

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<sup>1</sup> No.10 Downing Street is the official residence of the British Prime Minister.

the fact that the DWP is the least ‘public-facing’ of the four departments. The DWP speeches were searched manually for the word ‘poverty’.

The incidence of the word was noted, and for Tony Blair and Gordon Brown’s speeches, whether the reference was to global or domestic poverty, or to both. In the case of speeches by the Secretary of State for International Development a high number containing the word ‘poverty’ was expected - and found - as the Department’s *raison d'être* is defined in terms of eliminating global poverty and the word ‘poverty’ is used in an all-encompassing way. All the speeches accessed in this way continue to be publicly available through the National Archives’ UK Government Web Archive.

It should be noted that only certain speeches are made available to the public and, in accordance with Ministerial and Civil Service codes, transcripts are edited for party political content or where audio quality is poor (No 10. website, 2006). Editing for party political content would occur when opposition proposals are contrasted with Government policy, although pre- and post-1997 comparisons are allowed as this can be seen as representing the Government’s record in office. However, one speechwriter described this editing as rare because speeches are crafted as statesman-like addresses (conversation with DWP speechwriter, 2006). The process through which some speeches are made available to the public on the websites varies between departments and has changed over time, but it is clear that some speeches that are important in the public politics of poverty are not available this way, such as Tony Blair’s first speech as Prime Minister given on the Aylesbury Estate and the Beveridge Lecture in which he committed his Government to ending child poverty (Blair, June 1997; Blair, March 1999). It was therefore necessary to use other means to obtain a purposive sample of speeches.

Additional speeches were obtained through the MP’s parliamentary offices, the Parliamentary Labour Party Resource Centre, think tank websites, academics in the field and from edited works (Walker 1999, Brown 2006, 2010). Labour party conference speeches were also sought due to their high profile within the political year and to counter the lack of party political content in the ministerial speeches, and more specifically Blair’s 2001 party conference speech is a particularly significant intervention on global poverty and global governance in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. These were accessed from BBC and Guardian websites and from transcripts of party conferences held at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre in Manchester. Again, these were searched for the incidence of the word ‘poverty’ and whether reference was made to global or domestic poverty. As expected given the Labour Movement’s self-identification, both global and domestic poverty was mentioned in many party conference (and trades union) speeches and the incidence varied between years from ‘name-checking’ to more detailed treatment.

A number of approaches were taken to identify 'key' speeches. This was to filter the speeches already sourced and also to identify speeches that were still needed. First, speeches already collected with a high incidence of the word 'poverty' and in which poverty was the central theme were easily identified as key speeches. Second, ministerial speeches fall into two categories: those that ministers are asked to give at a conference or event; and those containing a new way of thinking or message that the minister wants to get out and require 'placing'. A speechwriter in one department confirmed which recent speeches were in the latter category (conversation with Department for Work and Pensions speechwriter, 2006). Third, the newspaper database LexisNexis was searched (with the word 'poverty' in the title and announ\* or speech elsewhere) and reports of speeches given by the relevant New Labour figures were noted. Sometimes this corresponded with speeches already collected, other times there was a press notice available, but, despite enquiries to the various sources described above, it was rarely possible to locate further speeches from these references. Fourth, in a similar vein, timelines of 'key events' for poverty - publication of White Papers and annual progress reports, milestones in poverty targets, international summits - were produced, drawing on academic literature and back copies of the journal *Poverty*.

This process produced a smaller sample of speeches. However, whilst there was a relative lack of earlier speeches and of DWP speeches in particular, the high number of speeches focusing on global poverty made by Gordon Brown and the Secretary of State for International Development required a further level of selection to produce a manageable sample. This process was incremental as the data collection was started during New Labour's period in office.

In addition, when speeches on poverty made by other New Labour actors came to light these were also included for analysis. In the Departments of Work and Pensions and International Development, it was found that Ministers of State also gave key poverty speeches, as did Ed Balls in his role as Economic Secretary to the Treasury, and Ed Miliband as Minister for Social Exclusion. Given the thesis' focus on 'public politics', speeches on the nature of politics, the government's relationship with civil society actors and on engaging the public in development issues were selected for analysis. Other poverty texts, such as White Papers, annual reports and other policy documents, were also included in the sample.

### **2.5.6 The process of 'discourse analysis' and the nature of political speeches**

Gill (2000:188) defines discourse analysis as 'a careful, close reading that moves between text and context to examine the content, organisation and functions of discourse'. As discussed, the speeches were read to determine which were 'key' and these key speeches were read and reread. The initial

research questions were broad: Do New Labour discursively connect their global and domestic poverty commitments and what are the similarities and differences between the two discourses? The 'public politics' approach and the specific research questions that form the chapters of this thesis evolved through this process and the wider reading undertaken. The early stages involved 'free writing' of initial impressions and emerging themes as well as case studies of speeches. Various qualitative analytic tools for coding data into categories were considered and trialed, such as diagrammatic mapping of the speeches (see Jones 1985) and the computer packages Nvivo and Framework. In the end the speeches and policy documents were saved as word documents for the four actors considered - and for Blair and Brown/Treasury these were separated further by whether they concerned global poverty or domestic poverty/both. These were searched for specific occurrences, e.g. when the domestic and the global are discursively linked or when motivations for tackling poverty are asserted, and these chunks of text copied into new word documents for each actor (separated for Blair and Brown by the poverty domain referred to). These were then searched for different narratives and frames with the relevant text cut and pasted into a subsequent word document for each actor/department with the source speech or document noted. These were then coded further through marking the text, note taking including diagrammatic mapping of themes or further level of extraction to another document. Whilst different narratives and frames are explored, the analysis paid close attention to the different political actors, their institutional location and their context within the discursive and policy trajectory of each poverty domain.

The first search example - the linking of the two domains - is relatively straightforward, but the second - motivations asserted - requires an understanding of the broader argument made in the text about the nature of contemporary conditions and this is where decisions about the limits of a particular research question need to be made. Of course this is true of all qualitative research, but this is particularly challenging when analysing speeches as the art of speechwriting is in the interweaving of concepts and images and the shaping and reshaping of these (Fairclough 2000).

Indeed, the creation of the data used requires consideration. All speeches are written for oral performance as a monologue at a particular time for specific but multiple audiences. Speeches and policy documents have multiple authors and important speeches will have been reviewed by numerous political actors. The process of speech writing is different for each political actor considered, based on different approaches to the writing process within each partnership with the speechwriter. Some speechwriters have worked for a number of ministers and therefore 'departmental' frames might be expected, although others have worked exclusively for a particular political actor and will be aware of their style, frames and phraseology. Party political speeches will of course be drafted with different speechwriters and advisors. Ultimately though, the political actor is responsible for the speech or policy

document they present. As discussed earlier, the New Labour's message was tightly controlled but there was also an opportunity for the intervention of political actors in intra-party politics through their particular discursive framing of issues.

Unlike many other forms of data, the study of speeches is the study of deliberate and sustained attempts to portray a particular vision of the social world to an audience, albeit one tailored for different audiences, constantly refined and rearticulated, and shaped to a greater or lesser extent by the particular political actor and their institutional setting. When, as in the case of Gordon Brown in this study, a political actor makes numerous speeches on the same subject, there is much duplication between speeches, but also the same argument is made slightly differently or is taken in a different direction. Furthermore, connections between domains can be observed easily by the use of the same language, phrases or even passages of text in his speeches, although of course these need close examination for the different uses and associations made. For example, the 'what we want' in 'what we want for our children, we want for all children' is framed as the ability to reach their potential and a community of rights and responsibilities is asserted in both domains but the ownership of these rights and responsibilities, the emphasis placed on each and their nature, differ between speeches and across domains. This analysis is discussed further in the body of the thesis.

Finally, if a particular phrase or section of a speech is quoted or referred to, an illustrative reference is provided to a speech in which it can be found. As the discussion may indicate, the phase may also be found in other speeches, however this analysis does not concern itself with counting the number of occurrences, nor does it reference every speech in which it is found. For ease of reference, when a speech made by a New Labour actor and quoted by another author is included, its source is attributed to the other author in the text but it is referenced in the sources rather than the bibliography section of the thesis.

### **2.5.7 Conclusion**

This section has detailed the research questions used to explore New Labour's public politics of poverty. It discussed the use of speeches, policy documents and secondary literature, as well as additional insights gained from attendance at various political events and conversations with political actors. It outlined the approach taken in terms of the focus on the narratives and frames revealed through careful interpretative reading, the nature of discourse analysis and the situated nature of this - and all - research. Finally it described the process of accessing and sampling the speeches, methods of data handling and analysis, and the nature of political speeches as data.

## **2.6 Chapter Conclusions**

This chapter sought to locate this thesis' examination of New Labour's global and domestic poverty discourses. Section 2.2 started by discussing the public political nature of poverty as a classic social problem, its meaning continually constituted and reconstituted through the mobilisation of support for a particular understanding of poverty and the social world. Drawing on critical realism, it recognised that this 'public politics of poverty' impacts on those for whom poverty is a painful lived experience. Section 2.3 then articulated a 'public politics' approach, influenced by writers from critical realist, ideational and neo-Gramscian perspectives, and also as a way of responding to and examining New Labour on their own terms. This approach understands New Labour's speeches and policy documents as 'public political discourses': representing a political moment which connects political institutions, citizens and politicians; the essence of politics understood as the public contestation of different visions of the world; and part of the functioning of democratic politics, understood not just in electoral as well as broader cultural terms.

This section discussed the empirical literature on the politics: public opinion nexus, before going on to discuss the possibilities of explaining broader political change provided by the ideational turn in a number of disciplines. Again, this highlighted the importance of the way issues are framed for policy success: discourses must resonate with public conceptions but successful discourses may change these conceptions. In the field of international relations this ideational approach has been used to counter realist assumption that competitive self-interest and material power explains inter-state relations and to theorise transnational governance. On a domestic political level, the importance of discursive frames and values as prior to, and determining, attitudes to issues of poverty, inequality and redistribution has received renewed interest in recent years by those seeking a more progressive settlement. Neo-Gramscian analysis understands discourse as prior to interests and politics as the process through which interests are formulated and reformulated, and is also important in emphasising that this political struggle for hegemony is played out beyond state institutions in civil society. As this section has discussed, these ideas contributed to the reshaping of the Labour Party in the 1980s and can be drawn on as a way of understanding New Labour's sociology, as well as offering a critique of their construction of the political.

It went on to discuss the closure of political possibilities inherent in New Labour's construction of the political, before examining literature that provided a more nuanced discussion of New Labour's 'publicness', highlighting those that undertook complementary work on public discourses. Stuart Hall's interpretation of New Labour's 'redistribution by stealth' was used to discuss the alternative perspective this thesis takes to their motivations in expending political energy on the public politics of poverty and describes a nuanced, contingent and post-Thatcherite political project.

Having discussed the ‘ideational/discursive turn’, Section 2.4 highlighted the ‘global turn’ in many disciplines, and more specifically the way domestic and global poverty have been reconnected in academic and policy arenas, and a globalised politics, policy and ‘publicness’ have been conceptualised. It discussed Noël and Thérien’s concept of a ‘new global politics of poverty’ as a way of understanding the emergence of poverty on the domestic and global level and describes this thesis’ complementary focus on New Labour as British political actors. The section went on to highlight the limited number of analyses that consider the domestic and the global in relation to British politics, to New Labour and to public opinion on poverty, and discussed their findings. Finally Section 2.4 located this thesis in what Colin Hay called a ‘new political science of British politics’ that is attentive to the discursive and the global.

Section 2.5 described the research questions used to explore New Labour’s public politics of poverty. It discussed the use of speeches, policy documents and secondary literature, as well as additional insights gained from attendance at various political events and conversations with political actors. It outlined the focus on the narratives and frames revealed through careful interpretative reading, the nature of discourse analysis and the situated nature of this - and all - research. Finally, the process of accessing and sampling the speeches, methods of data handling and analysis, and the nature of political speeches as data were discussed.

Chapter Three goes on to examine whether New Labour actors make explicit connections between their global and domestic poverty commitments and the nature of these connections.

### **3      Claiming connections: How New Labour discursively link global and domestic poverty**

#### **3.1    Introduction**

This chapter examines the discursive connections that New Labour made between global and domestic poverty. Thus before examining the similarities and differences between their two poverty discourses, it asks whether New Labour themselves claimed that there is a connection, and if so, in what ways and for what purposes. Their attempts to discursively connect the two domains in turn provide a further internal rationale for the comparison of their two poverty discourses and therefore require close examination. Three types of discursive connection are identified and discussed: domestic to global connections made in terms of Labour values, social justice and poverty, and their leadership providing hope to the world, in which speeches by Gordon Brown figure predominately (Section 3.2); global to domestic connections including claims about Making Poverty History at home, and Ed Ball's comparison of the two public politics of poverty and the lessons for the domestic campaign (Section 3.3); and finally the conceptual connections made by Secretaries of State for International Development, in particular the cross-domain learning advocated by Hilary Benn (Section 3.4).

These connections highlight many of the themes that are discussed in subsequent chapters, but more importantly, they demonstrate the purposes for which poverty and the politics of poverty are drawn on by New Labour politicians and the different ways in which the domestic and global poverty agendas have been used as a discursive resource to reinforce each other. They illustrate the way that the agency of individual politicians, as well as affiliated organisations and anti-poverty non-governmental organisations as 'transnational political actors', has been instrumental in making these connections.

#### **3.2    Domestic to global connections**

##### **3.2.1   Introduction**

This section examines 'domestic to global' discursive connections made by New Labour actors in relation to policy, and poverty policy in particular. First it discusses the assertion of Labour's traditional internationalist values and the consistent application of their values at home and abroad. It also discusses the argument that global policies are necessary to achieve domestic goals in an interdependent world and that 'values and self-interest merge' in community (Section 3.2.2). Section 3.2.3 then discusses the connections made in terms of social justice and poverty as denial of potential made even prior to the domestic child poverty pledge and considers the motivations of those making these connections. Finally Section 3.2.4 discusses the narrative of Britain providing leadership and hope as further justification of domestic policies.

### **3.2.2 Labour values at home and abroad**

Commitments on poverty have particular emblematic importance within the Labour Party and feature regularly in speeches to Party and Trades Union conferences. Strong associations are made with the traditions of the Labour Movement. In Gordon Brown's Party and Trades Union conference speeches, for example, ending child and pensioner poverty in Britain and action to end global poverty formed part of a list of 'great causes worthy of our party's ideals' and represent 'Labour values in action'. Indeed, they 'show why if a Labour Party did not exist it would have to be created to fight for justice for all'. It is claimed that both policies exemplify Labour values and thus demonstrate the consistent application of these values in both domestic and global spheres. As Vickers (2000) notes, this position has historical antecedence as the Labour Party has traditionally argued for a foreign policy guided by moral purpose in opposition, although it has faced difficulties implementing this vision in office. Labour foreign policy has been 'pulled in different directions' over time as the different factions within the Party have held to the belief that 'the principles guiding domestic policy could be projected onto the international arena' (Vickers 2000: 34).

On entering office, Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary (May 1997 - June 2001), sought to promote a new foreign policy, initiating a debate about the reconciliation of Britain's traditional concerns - security and commercial interests - with an 'ethical dimension' (Abrahamsen and Williams 2001). 'The Labour Government', he argued, 'does not accept that political values can be left behind when we check in our passports to travel on diplomatic business' (Cook, May 1997) and he linked this ethical dimension and the Third Way (Wheeler and Dunne 1998). Despite little reference to foreign policy whilst in opposition, Blair too described foreign policy as 'part of our mission for domestic renewal' (Blair, November 1997) and 'since 1998 [he] located the Third Way within an international context and sought to flesh it out as a guide to foreign policy' (Wickham-Jones 2000b:14). Whilst the values drawn on to define the Third Way vary for different audiences, 'internationalism' was fairly consistently identified as one such value (Fairclough 2000).

A key claim of the Third Way was that it represents the application of Labour's traditional values in a new globalised world. This drew on the transformationalist discourse of globalisation, in which global interdependence requires governments to reconsider the means of achieving national goals and ensure that national and international policy is consistent and reinforcing, and amounts to a rejection of realist 'zero-sum' understandings of social relations (McGrew 2000; Townsend 1996, discussed in Chapter Two). New Labour foreign policy was thus based on the notion of global interdependence in which the separation of domestic and foreign policy no longer makes sense (Abrahamsen and Williams 2001). Labour's traditional commitment to the consistent application of its principles across domestic and global domains was represented as required by a new

interdependent world where ‘values and interests merge’ (Blair, April 1999). Cook made a similar point in setting out the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s mission:

*‘We live in a world in which nation states are interdependent. In that modern world foreign policy is not divorced from domestic policy but an essential part of any political programme. In order to achieve our goals for the people of Britain we need a foreign strategy that supports the same goals’*

(Cook, May 1997, quoted in Vickers 2000: 37)

In discussing their global poverty commitment, Clare Short’s 2001 Labour Party conference speech also combined appeal to Labour’s tradition of internationalism with the argument that this is necessitated by contemporary conditions, such that it is required for social justice at home:

*‘Our Party has always been internationalist - but we have in the past seen it as our primary duty to create conditions that would honour these values in our own country. But growing interdependence means that we cannot have economic security and social justice at home without an end to poverty, conflict and oppression across the world. Globalisation makes this task more urgent and progress more feasible. But it requires a strengthening not a weakening of our global institutions and a stronger commitment to development and the reduction of poverty.’*

(Short, September 2001)

Correspondingly the Department for International Development’s first White Paper (DfID 1997:50) recognised that ‘domestic, foreign and development policies need to be applied in a consistent way if the world’s poor are to benefit’ and this is asserted as a global good in the second White Paper (DfID 2000:19):

*‘Policies no longer fit into neat sectoral boxes, and the distinction between domestic and international policy is increasingly blurred. Most ‘domestic’ policies such as taxation have international aspects, and most ‘international’ policies such as trade have domestic dimensions.’*

The recasting of self-interest took place in both domains. The assertion that national interest cannot be separate from the mutual interest and shared values of the international community echoed the domestic discourse in which self-interest must be realised through community. Blair made this link explicit in a number of speeches, including a speech to the Global Ethics Foundation in which he built on a discussion of ‘community within a nation’ to that of ‘community as an international idea’ (Blair, June 2000), and in his

2002 Party Conference speech:

*'In all of this, at home and abroad, the same beliefs throughout: that we are a community of people, whose self-interest and mutual interest at crucial points merge, and that it is through a sense of justice that community is born and nurtured.'*

(Blair, September 2002)

The next chapter discusses in detail the appeal to morality and self-interest in both poverty domains. What is clear here is that both domestic and global poverty policy are used to demonstrate the application of Labour values at home and abroad, but this does not amount to a conceptual connection beyond the two policies.

### **3.2.3 Social justice and poverty connections**

Another Third Way conflation was that of economic prosperity and social justice and New Labour made a conceptual connection in professing to apply the principles of social justice at home and abroad. For example, the first Department for International Development White Paper (DfID 1997:16) states:

*'The present British Government was elected on 1 May 1997 on a renewed commitment to the principles of social justice - security for all, access to health and education services, strong social institutions, greater equality and the provision of opportunity. What we want for our children, we want for all children. These principles form the basis of our international as well as our national policies.'*

The reference to children here predates the strong discursive focus on child poverty in the domestic domain. This assertion 'what we want for our children, we want for all children' moves from the personal to the universal, and was subsequently used in both the domestic child poverty and the global poverty discourses by a number of New Labour actors. It may be that appealing to the welfare of children is less symbolically problematic than other universal assertions as it implies the universal concerns of parents, focuses on a group that cannot be blamed for their conditions and appeals to a better future rather than the more difficult and politically potent task of changing current social and material relations. In this context it may also signify the developmentalist social investment strategy articulated in both domains. No direct connection was made between domestic and global poverty in the body of the White Paper, instead principles of social justice are listed, including greater equality and opportunity.

Whilst the commitment Tony Blair made in his 1999 Beveridge speech to end child poverty was regarded as representing a sea-change in the government's language and policy approach (Stewart and Hills 2005), poverty had not been entirely absent from New Labour's domestic lexicon. Indeed, attempts were

made to connect their domestic and global agendas in terms of poverty and these are illustrative of particular political actors' attempts to shape New Labour's discourse and the work done in reshaping a discourse to the critical point in which a new paradigm is identified.

In his speech to the UN Security Council on Africa, Robin Cook asserted that the Government's determination to reduce poverty at home conferred 'a moral obligation to fight poverty abroad' (Cook, September 1998, quoted in Abrahamsen and Williams 2001:254). Coates and Hay (2001:456) argued that proposals to reform the international economic agencies were 'viewed within New Labour circles as an international parallel to their attack on poverty at home' and they cited a political circular in which Gordon Brown supplements his 'modern agenda for tackling poverty' in the UK with a section on debt relief for the poorest countries (Brown, January 1998). Few speeches from this early period in office are available to investigate the extent of this discursive connection. In both these cases the issue of intra-party politics is raised. Coates and Hay (2001:456) claimed that Brown's circular was issued when he was 'floating his long-term claim for party leadership'. Wickham-Jones (2000a and 2000b) noted that Robin Cook was one of the few ministers to pick up on the Third Way and that he did so in both a domestic and international context. He argued that Cook was conscious of his role as a standard bearer of the Labour left and the deployment of the Third Way and the initiation of an ethical dimension to foreign policy reflected his desire to influence domestic as well as foreign policy.

Months after the Beveridge speech, Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development addressed the TUC conference. Again, it is the values of social justice that provide a historical connection between members of the Labour movement and between Labour's global and domestic agendas. In this representation though, social justice is clearly defined in relation to poverty in both domains.

*'Labour and trade unions have come a long way together, united by our shared commitment to social justice for all...Social justice at home - to undo years of growing inequality and poverty. And social justice abroad - working systematically to reduce the poverty of the world's poorest people.'*

(Short, September 1999a)

Whilst concepts of poverty can be implied by the words with which it is coordinated - in this example 'inequality' - there are few examples in New Labour discourse when it is explicated. This speech provides one such example with a conceptual connection made between global poverty today and nineteenth century Britain and is discussed below (Section 3.4.3). It is worth highlighting here though that despite this historical connection and the reference to poverty in both domains, there is no suggestion that similar analysis is employed in understanding poverty as currently experienced

domestically and globally. This contemporary connection was later asserted by Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development (October 2003 - June 2007), as one of systematic injustice (Benn, February 2007).

By the time the second Department for International Development White Paper was published in 2000, New Labour had a time-limited pledge on domestic child poverty as well as on global poverty. In the foreword to this White Paper Tony Blair stressed cross-departmental working and the link with domestic poverty policy.

*'It reflects our commitment to work across all parts of Government in order to help eliminate world poverty...It is consistent with our determination to tackle poverty and social exclusion in the UK.'*

(DfID 2000)

Given this connective discourse, it is interesting to speculate about the extent to which the two poverty discourses developed with reference to each other. Hewitt (2001) suggests a high degree of cross-domain thinking in the publication of the second DfID White Paper 'Making Globalisation Work for the Poor' as a globalisation narrative. He argues that the first justification for its publication was a response to 'post-Seattle emotions'... 'to decide in favour of capitalism, it seems because there is so little alternative, but to assert the importance of a long-term programme to eliminate poverty'. However, the second justification, in the context of the problem of child poverty in Britain was that 'a robust international policy on poverty elimination and...a major domestic push to eliminate child poverty, brings globalisation back home in language more understandable than MFN, GSP, derivatives and even the Kyoto Protocol' (Hewitt 2001: 295).

The continuation of the transposition of the domestic agenda onto the global is evident in Gordon Brown's speech to the Amicus conference in 2002, in which poverty is one of a list of challenges that must be addressed for Britain and the world. This connective discourse comes in the final section of the speech and Brown moved to the conclusion presenting a list of aims commonly drawn on in his domestic discourse with the additional aim of 'every country playing its part in a just and inclusive world'. The speech structure and the emphasis on 'everyone - whatever their birth, background or race - having the chance to reach their potential' universalise these domestic aims. Indeed, examination of Brown's domestic and global poverty discourses reveals that in both domains the chance to achieve one's potential is defined as a justice goal that poverty prevents. There is the same conflation of reasons for these national and international goals - 'economic as well as equity reasons'. As such, this speech provides the clearest articulation of the connection Gordon Brown made between these two agendas.

### **3.2.4 Providing leadership and hope**

The linking of domestic and global agendas went beyond a commitment to consistency across domains. Brivati's (2004: 232) analysis of Labour internationalism highlighted the 'striking regularity with which the underlying assumption was that Britain would naturally assume a position of leadership'. This assumption of a leadership role for Britain and for the Labour Party is evident in the discursive connections New Labour made between domains. Gordon Brown's assertion that the challenges we address for Britain, we have to address for the world is illustrative of this (Brown, June 2002). For some commentators the way that New Labour articulated responsibility for tackling global poverty is a form of new imperialism (Biccum 2005) whilst others saw social democratic intent (Payne 2006). This assumption of leadership is also evident in the way in which the Third Way was actively promoted for export to other countries and as a model for the international community. This led to arguments familiar in the domestic domain made in relation to international policy, with Abrahamsen and Williams (2001) for example, criticising Tony Blair's endorsement of the South African Government's abandonment of its socialist principles to more neo-liberal policies as 'Third Way South African style'.

An interesting aspect of this leadership discourse is the further justification of domestic policies by their ability to show others what can be achieved. Gordon Brown made these connections for the Third Way and for investment in public services. In his 2005 party conference speech Brown described Labour's achievements as 'showing the world that economic prosperity and social justice can advance together'. In the previous year's conference speech this 'inspirational role' for Britain was particularly linked to developing countries. In this context the re-election of the Labour Party was given international symbolic importance.

*'And so, I want everyone in this party to share in this ambition: for the first time in our party's history, a third term Labour government, creating that progressive consensus. And this matters not just to us here in the Labour party or in Britain but far wider than that - to all countries especially developing countries seeking also to build economic prosperity and social justice for their people...But the contribution we can make is more than money. It is the inspiration that comes from Britain leading by example by combining prosperity with justice.'*

(Brown, September 2004)

Hope for the future had been a discursive theme in New Labour's early domestic discourse and the first Department for International Development White Paper (DfID 1997) starts with a quote from Tony Blair made in the election campaign of 1997, transposing this future-orientated goal from the domestic to the global:

*Together you and I will begin to build the new society, a society in which each of us has the chance to grow, to achieve, to contribute, to create dignity for ourselves, and not for ourselves alone, but for others also; a society in which each of us has a stake, a share; and we will give back to our children what they deserve - a heritage of hope.*

Brown's connection between public services in Britain and access to universal free healthcare and education in the developing world is made in party and trade union conference speeches. The nature of the connection requires particular examination as an example of a substantive domestic and global policy link. Here the global poverty agenda was used as a discursive resource in the party political debate over the future of domestic public services.

Public services are differently situated in relation to poverty in the two policy domains, reflecting differences in the scale of poverty and level of state provision. In the global poverty discourse lack of access to healthcare and education was discussed as an aspect of poverty and establishing universal free access to public services was a key justice claim. In the domestic context the threat of the introduction of a private system 'in which poverty would bar the entrance to the best hospitals' and 'the only health care you could be sure of is the health care you were able to pay for' was raised (Brown, June 2002). However, the connective discourse focuses on the NHS as an example of a principle of provision that was successfully fought for and must be defended. Investing in public services was often one of the defining commitments that Brown lists, along with tackling child and pensioner poverty, and was a related but separate aspect of ensuring a socially just Britain.

A connection was made between the NHS and, to a lesser extent, schools and the welfare state, and the global poverty agenda in a number of speeches. It was one of the challenges we must address for Britain and for the world (Brown, June 2002) with Britain 'leading the worldwide effort to ensure universal free public services' (Brown, September 2005). The Treasury provided a strong line on the need for free education and healthcare and the abolition of user fees in developing countries, and following an internal debate and a number of impact assessments, the 2006 White Paper committed DfID to help partner governments abolish user fees (DfID 2006). This emphasis on universal free public services can be seen as part of an agenda to re-establish a role for the state in international development policies. The role New Labour ascribed for the state both domestically and in developing countries, represents both change and continuity in that its new enabling function is limited to supply-side interventions. It appealed to the NHS as founded on altruistic principles of need and separate from the market. In his 2003 Labour Party conference speech Brown argued that beyond the domestic reasons for protecting the principles of the NHS it is also crucial for Labour's traditional goal of ending global poverty. A considerable proportion of the speech makes this connection, describing a universal progressive cause

in which the NHS is a symbolic resource providing hope and inspiration (Brown, September 2003).

*...But if we allow the Tories to undermine and destroy the principles of free health care in Britain, if the only working model of health care available to governments and people round the world is not our British model but private medicine, private charges and private payments, what hope is there for Africa?*

*...I believe that it has been the historic role of our party to inspire hope where hope does not exist; to bring optimism where pessimism alone flourishes; to stand for justice where injustice stalks the land. And if inspired by our Labour ideals, we, here from Britain, can show the world a model of a health service based on need not ability to pay. If the poorest of the world know that hospitals need not be centres for profit but are for service and compassion. If Africa knows that health care need not be a commodity but can be a right. Then whatever the distance that separates us. Whatever the diversity of needs and experience. However different the languages we speak. However varied the cultures.*

*We will have created a chain of hope, a great fundamental and universal cause, that starts with the frailest pensioner in each of our communities who needs a free health service and extends to the poorest new born child in the poorest country who needs that free health care too: the richest of the world saying to the poorest: need will come before ability to pay - and by the strong helping the weak we will all be stronger.'*

(Brown, September 2003)

The connection Brown made between healthcare in Britain and the developing world can be seen as strengthening Labour's claim of ownership of the global poverty agenda and the NHS as well as providing an internationalist vision for party supporters. In 2003 the NHS was a key domestic party political issue. In February 2002 Tony Blair had responded to recommendations in the Wanless Report and pledged to raise funding for the NHS up to the EU average and in the same year National Insurance was increased to pay for the investment in the NHS. This was represented as a significant political moment and an example of government leading public opinion: '...that was the first time in a generation that a western government had made a case for a tax rise, not because of an economic problem but to make the positive case for supporting public services' (Balls, March 2006). In comparison, in the summer of 2002 the Conservatives had abandoned their earlier pledge of matching Labour's spending on health and education and in June 2003 had produced the policy document 'Setting Patients Free' in which they proposed tax relief for those using private healthcare (Conservative Party 2003). Both parties have introduced elements of the private sector

delivery, but the political division at the time appears to have been around the universal nature of NHS provision.

The establishment of the NHS is very much part of Labour's self-narrative and ownership was asserted in a number of ways. The Conservatives were characterized as opposing the British model of universal healthcare and in this way the NHS was claimed as being synonymously British and Labour. Similarly, Brown asserted that it is through Labour ideals that Britain can show the world the possibilities of free healthcare, and hence reasserts the global poverty agenda as distinctively Labour. In this speech the historical role of the Labour party in providing hope and justice was emphasised and in later speeches the history of domestic social progress - 'the battle we have had to fight' - is both that of Britain and of the Labour movement.

The possibility of change was a constant theme in New Labour's global poverty discourse. Many of Brown's speeches responded to the counter argument set up that universal free schooling and healthcare in Africa is not possible and drew on British public services as examples of progress realized (e.g. September 2005). These sat with examples of the abolition of slavery, the end of apartheid and debt relief used more frequently in Gordon Brown's global poverty speeches as examples of successful causes that were driven by norms and principles of empathy or altruism and thus challenge realist accounts of international policy making (see Yanacopulos 2004; Finnemore and Sikkick 1998). His 2003 speech provided an internationalist vision of a 'chain of hope' connecting people in Britain and in the developing world through the understanding of healthcare as a right. The personalization of this connection with reference to 'the frailest pensioner in each of our communities' and 'the poorest new born child in the poorest country' presented a connection that spans generations as well as geography.

Interestingly though this also emphasizes the limits of domestic and global connection in terms of poverty. The discursive purpose of the connection made here is that universal healthcare and schooling are domestic achievements that provide hope for the global poverty agenda. Any direct connection made in this context in terms of the importance of these public services for those in poverty in the UK would distract from the claim of domestic achievement. The connection that Brown made between the domestic and global agendas remains at a broad programmatic level. Correspondingly, he framed his entire domestic social policy as an anti-poverty agenda.

### **3.2.5 Conclusion**

This section has considered a number of domestic to global connections. First both poverty agendas have symbolic importance within the Labour movement and were held up as exemplifying their enduring values. As part of New Labour's broader claim of their foreign policy being both value-led and integral to their Third Way programme, a more specific 'domestic to global'

connection was also made, such that their global poverty agenda demonstrated the same values at home and abroad. Second, in both domains this was articulated in terms of social justice and poverty framed as the denial of potential. Connections made in terms of poverty predated Tony Blair's pledge to tackle child poverty, illustrating the early discursive work done by key New Labour actors, Robin Cook and Gordon Brown, to articulate a domestic anti-poverty agenda. Third, in keeping with Labour Party tradition a global leadership role was asserted, with domestic universal public services providing hope to the developing world. In this way their global poverty policy goals were discursively employed to support their domestic goals and connections made in broad programmatic terms.

### **3.3 Making Poverty History at home**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

This section considers 'global to domestic' connections made following the Make Poverty History campaign. Firstly, it illustrates how Labour Party actors and affiliated organisations, as well as non-governmental organisations attempted to link to and learn from the public politics of global poverty, and discusses Ed Ball's argument on this in detail (Section 3.3.2). It then considers the limited connections made by the Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions (Section 3.3.3) before discussing the use of the Make Poverty History phrase and the appeal to its supposed popular sentiment in the Conservatives' rebranding (Section 3.3.4).

#### **3.3.2 Public political issues**

Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History have received considerable academic and political attention as high profile public campaigns that achieved widespread public support and intergovernmental action. Yanacopulos (2004), for example, described the changing norm around debt cancellation through direct lobbying of governments and shaping the debate via the media and broad-based public campaigns. There is much evaluative discussion about the depth of support and understanding generated amongst the public for the debt relief and poverty reduction, and the amount of policy change actually achieved, as well as an ongoing debate about the framing of these complex and political issues and this is discussed later in the thesis. Nevertheless, these campaigns are part of a history of British development NGO campaigning in which each successive campaign has generated unprecedented levels of public involvement (Mitchell 1991; Saunders 2011, discussed in Chapter Six). Make Poverty History was of considerable interest to NGOs and political parties both as a model of public political action and as a successful public movement with which to be associated. Unsurprisingly, the questions about what can be learnt for the domestic poverty debate that originally inspired this thesis were being asked both within and beyond the Labour Party.

Ed Balls is particularly associated with the argument that the Make Poverty History campaign provides a model for generating a ‘progressive consensus’ on domestic issues (see for example, Balls, June 2006), although it was also championed by other members of the Government, including the Secretaries of State for International Development, Hilary Benn and Douglas Alexander. This was part of a debate within the Party and wider movement as they entered a third term in office about how to achieve a change in the public political culture. Gordon Brown called for a progressive consensus in his 2004 speech to the Labour Party conference, arguing that it was necessary to build a shared national unity of purpose so that progressive reforms could not be undone no matter what government was in office and, as Leggett (2007:347) noted, the 2005 Party Conference was dominated by discussion of ‘how the next phase for New Labour might involve a bolder advocacy and entrenchment of social democratic values’. Ensuring that their domestic commitment to ending child poverty becomes a political imperative for all politicians was a key part of this broader goal of building a ‘progressive consensus’ (Brown, September 2004; Balls, June 2006). Balls argued at the time that the dilemma the Party faced was how to renew while in power without having a damaging public fight. In part this was an intervention in the longstanding battle between Blair and Brown for control of the Labour Party, but it was also part of a broader debate about possibilities of centre-left politics.

The connections Balls made between global and domestic poverty as public political issues drew on his experience as Chief Economic Advisor to the Treasury and a close ally of Gordon Brown. Under Gordon Brown the Treasury not only shaped domestic social policy but was also a key player in ensuring British leadership in global economic institutions, promoting their vision of the global political economy and of a ‘Global New Deal for Africa’. As such, the Treasury was the site in which the global and domestic poverty domains co-existed. He engaged with domestic poverty campaigners and was an executive member of the Fabian Society that actively advocated on, and made discursive connections between, domestic and global poverty.

Given New Labour’s commitments on poverty in both domains, campaigners and politicians made direct comparisons between global and domestic poverty as public political issues and this comparison was particularly salient following the culmination of the MPH campaign around the G8 Summit in June 2005. As discussed in Chapter Two, many academic individuals and institutions, NGOs, and groups affiliated to the Labour Party had long made connections between the two domains. Two events are illustrative of the connections being made at this time. Leading representatives of the Trades Union Congress, End Child Poverty, Oxfam, the Unemployed Workers’ Centres and BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development) - many of whom worked across the global and domestic domains - organised the event ‘Poor Relations - Making UK Poverty History’ on 17 October 2005, on the annual UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and in March 2006 the

Fabian Society held a policy conference entitled 'Ending Child Poverty at Home'.

There is much to suggest a high degree of Government involvement with these events. The Poor Relations conference was used as the venue for David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to launch the seventh Opportunity for All report and reaffirm the Government's pledge to tackle child poverty. Ed Balls, then a newly elected MP, spoke at both events. A third event, a speech given by Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development, hosted by the Fabian Society, Overseas Development Institute and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Overseas Development in February 2007 continued to make the connection in terms of a public politics as well as conceptually (discussed in Section 3.4.4 below). A number of other political interventions by groups affiliated to the Labour Party made this connection. The membership-based think tank Compass, linked the two agendas in their manifesto 'The Good Society', in a highly optimistic reading of the available evidence on public attitudes: 'Eight million wore wrist bands to make poverty history, and the majority of us would support increasing taxes to end child poverty' (Shah and Rutherford 2006:12), and the Christian Socialist Movement, published a pamphlet by David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture, entitled 'Making poverty history at home' (Lammy 2006).

In his speech to the Poor Relations conference Balls focused on connections between global and domestic poverty as public political issues and his argument is considered in detail here. He drew attention to the difficulty of advocating a global poverty agenda not matched by progress on tackling domestic child poverty.

*'Yet here in Britain, I think we know we cannot with credibility and in all conscience call for an end to world poverty if we cannot take the necessary actions - and build a political consensus - to end child poverty here in Britain - in our own backyard.'*

(Balls, October 2005)

This argument presents a 'feedback effect' from the global to the domestic domain. As discussed above, New Labour's foreign policy and their commitment to tackling global poverty had been presented as morally consistent with their domestic agenda. However, by late 2005 the high-profile of their global poverty commitment drew critical attention to their record on domestic poverty. As Balls acknowledged, the credibility of the leadership role New Labour assigned itself on global poverty was challenged by Britain's relatively high levels of child poverty. Being able to advocate 'in all conscience' for action on global poverty required a consistent approach to domestic poverty. Thus arguments both external and internal to New Labour's discourse led to anti-poverty claims in the domestic domain.

Given the perceived success of the Make Poverty History campaign, he identified four lessons to be applied in ‘making child poverty history at home’. A successful campaign to end child poverty should have: a track record of success; ambitious long-term goals; institutional reform and a broad-based political consensus demanding change (Balls, October 2005). What is striking in this account is the extent to which Government action is presented as part of this campaign.

In terms of the first element for a successful campaign - a track record of success, Balls pointed to Make Poverty History’s ability to persuade its supporters and the media that their goals were achievable by pointing to the progress already made on debt relief and aid expenditure. For domestic poverty he cited New Labour’s track record of child benefit increases, the New Deals, minimum wage, increased maternity and paternity pay, tax credits and Sure Start, and the resultant reduction in child poverty rates. It should be said though that in the domestic domain it was the ambition of the target that was often stressed in Government speeches.

This was Ball’s second lesson for a domestic campaign. He highlighted the Millennium Development Goals as ‘an ambitious, long-term and tangible moral standard around which to rally, and galvanising the international community to act’. These goals, emanating from ideas of human development and public management within the OECD’s development committee, were adopted by the newly formed Department for International Development, to provide a public narrative for international development and to develop targets for the New Labour Government results-based management system (Hulme 2007). Balls drew a parallel between the MDGs and the Government’s domestic commitment to end child poverty. There has been much speculation about Blair’s decision to make this commitment in his 1999 Beveridge Speech. The existence of the two poverty commitments does not necessarily indicate the direct global to domestic policy learning that Balls implies. However, the ideational influences that Hulme identified are certainly pertinent to the domestic agenda and Balls’ comparison highlighted the Government’s approach to the strategic use of long-term targets. Across a number of policy areas, targets were not only used as a management tool but were a key framing device as part of New Labour’s political project. They set the terms of the political debate and also provided a time-scale around which campaigners and the media can focus.

In addition, pressure emanating from global level poverty discourse can be added to the list of possible factors that contributed to the domestic poverty commitment (see Chapter Six for discussion of others). In the late 1990s, domestic poverty campaigners were lobbying for a government target on domestic poverty, arguing for the British Government to fulfil its obligations as a signatory to the 1995 UN Summit on Social Development to produce a strategy and time-bound goals for poverty reduction. Tony Atkinson (1998:3), one of a small circle of academics advising Blair in preparation for the

Beveridge speech, made this case with reference to the numerical targets the New Labour Government had already made, including the commitment to increase development aid to 0.7 per cent of GDP, and with a connection to global poverty concerns:

*'My concern here is with poverty in the United Kingdom, which is very different from poverty on a world scale. While it is my own personal judgment that world poverty has priority, this does not preclude consideration of poverty in the UK. A target for reducing poverty in the UK is fully consistent with meeting our international responsibilities, and many people must be asking themselves why a Labour Government can accept an inflation target before setting one for poverty reduction.'*

The third area of learning that Balls identified is that of 'lock[ing] in progress and entrench[ing] your reforms into the institutional machinery of government', because governments and targets can change. On a global level, he cited the replacement of the Structural Adjustment Programmes with Poverty Reduction Strategies as entrenching country-ownership and pro-poor polices and the British led campaign for an International Finance Facility as locking in long-term financial support. Domestically, he argued that the New Deals entrenched a pro-opportunity focus to employment policy, Sure Start embedded anti-poverty strategies into public services and Tax Credits ensured that child poverty goals were integrated into the mainstream tax and benefit system through the principle of progressive universalism<sup>2</sup>. This is where his argument appears weakest as the difference between policy development and the 'entrenching of reforms into the machinery of government' is not made clear and there are two omissions.

The domestic counterpart to the International Finance Facility is arguably the Public Finance Initiative in the funding of health and education capital expenditure projects and is another aspect of the Treasury approach not explicated. While they used different financial mechanisms, both provide a means to front-load expenditure and crucially, by-pass the traditional public accounting for expenditure rises. The description of institutional change was also silent on the creation of the Department for International Development and the legislative entrenchment of its central objective of global poverty reduction in the 2002 International Development Act.

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<sup>2</sup> Progressive universalism was defined as 'support for all, and more help for those who need it most, when they need it most' (HM Treasury 2003: paragraph 5.1). Payments were awarded high up the income scale but higher payments were made to families on low incomes.

As Clare Short (November 2001, quoted in McAuslan 2003:564) said in the parliamentary debate:

*'The purpose of the Bill is legislatively to entrench poverty reduction as the overriding aim of United Kingdom development assistance and to ensure that ...money for development assistance is spent for that reason alone... Under existing legislation, the Secretary of State... has an undesirable amount of flexibility in using development assistance resources, and a future Secretary of State could, for instance, reinstate a policy of tying aid, thus distorting its use and decreasing its efficiency, or use the aid budget to pursue other short-term political or commercial ends. Clearly any future Government have the right to change policy, but ... I believe that [it] should be required to seek Parliament's approval for a shift away from poverty reduction as our central objective.'*

There was also domestic precedence in the form of the 2000 *Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act* that established the Government's duty to publish a strategy with a time-specified target for the end of fuel poverty. However, it was not until Gordon Brown's first conference speech as Labour Party leader and Prime Minister in 2007 that legislation enshrining the child poverty target was announced. By the end of their period in office New Labour had attempted to 'lock in' their poverty goals and targets through legislative means and in doing so they generated public political space for their agenda in the form of parliamentary debate, the requirement for political parties to vote for or against the Bill and the associated media coverage.

In terms of the fourth lesson, the need for a broad-based political consensus demanding change, in both domains Brown had called on campaigners to generate or keep up public pressure to support the Government's poverty agendas, and advocated learning from global to domestic poverty campaigns. Both Brown and Balls have appealed to domestic poverty campaign groups to generate the public demand achieved by campaigns such as Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History. They provided a model of policy making in which policy change is achieved through a progressive government and campaign organisations working together in generating and demonstrating the necessary public support for government action. In this model the Government needs to encourage and then draw on the resource of a political spectacle to argue for their cause. Crucially, despite the differences in institutional and political contexts, they applied this analysis to both poverty domains. In the case of global poverty this resource was employed in negotiations with other country governments, as well as generating further support for their global poverty agenda within the UK. Domestically this would involve creating the political space for, and changing the popular consensus on, an anti-poverty agenda so that it became a political imperative for all parties.

*'When I was at the Treasury, Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History would regularly surround the Treasury building with a ring of campaigning steel - with bells and whistles and trumpets and megaphones. And we would ring our international partners in other G7 governments and say: There are not just thousands of postcards arriving, but now they have surrounded us and blockaded the building. And before the big international meetings, we would call Jubilee 2000 or Make Poverty History and say - isn't it about time you surrounded the Treasury? So we can ring up our international partners, and urge the case for progress...So my questions today is this: Isn't it about time the Treasury was surrounded by bells and whistles and buggies and placards demanding an end to child poverty in Britain?'*

(Balls, October 2005)

The establishment of the End Child Poverty coalition, and events such as the 'Keep the Promise' rally, were encouraged and supported by the New Labour Government, and aimed at creating a public spectacle of visibly holding the Government to account on their child poverty commitment prior to the 2009 budget. This echoes the demands of the Make Poverty History coalition that global leaders stick to their commitments to fund the Millennium Development Goals.

This speech provides a relatively detailed account of the connections made by key New Labour actors in terms of the public politics of poverty. These aspects of New Labour's public politics are returned to later in the thesis.

### **3.3.3 Domestic poverty connections**

It is acknowledged that the examination of the extent of explicit discursive connections made in the domestic poverty domain is limited by the lack of governmental speeches from Secretaries of States for Social Security/Work and Pensions publicly available and therefore present in the sample. The earliest example (accessed directly from the Labour Party) is in a speech made by Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to the Save the Children conference in March 2005 as the Make Poverty History campaign was building and global poverty was moving up the public political agenda. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Save the Children is one of a number of charities that is a vocal advocate across the two poverty domains. The extract from this speech outlines the difficulty for the domestic anti-poverty agenda: popular discourses of poverty do make a connection between the global and the domestic domains, but this is through the framing of poverty in absolute terms, with images of extreme poverty in Africa leading to a rejection of the possibility of poverty in Britain except though individual failings.

*'When people think about poverty today - they often think first of the problems in Africa and the developing world.*

*And it's absolutely right that we should be acting now to help developing countries to build economic prosperity and social justice for their people; and that the Chancellor should be leading the international effort to meet the Millennium development goals and to make absolute poverty part of global history.*

*But there's also a problem much closer to home. In the mid-to-late 1990s, the UK suffered higher child poverty than nearly all the other European nations. Over a period of 20 years, the proportion of children in relative poverty had more than doubled and by 1997, one in every three babies born in Britain was born poor.*

*Too often, people who have been unaffected by this don't understand what it means. They don't believe that anyone in Britain could be living in poverty. Worse, they see TV programmes or press stories about some individuals spending their benefits on alcohol and cigarettes and it fuels the myth that parents living in poverty will squander extra money rather than spend it on their children.*

*It's time to dispel such myths.'*

(Johnson, March 2005)

Whilst it reasserted the existence of poverty in Britain, drawing on evidence to show that extra resources are spent on children in low-income households (Gregg et al., 2005) and sought to describe the struggle of living in poverty, it did not take the more controversial step of conceptually connecting global and domestic poverty. Comparisons with Make Poverty History and the domestic poverty agenda continued to be made by government ministers beyond 2005 and addressed the issue of public attitudes. Ed Miliband, formerly an advisor in the Treasury and then Minister for the Third Sector, argued in a speech to Barnardos that, in addition to the obvious extreme nature of global poverty, another reason for a lack of comparative success domestically is that of social dislocation and stereotypes of people in poverty.

*'...there is a sense in which people both live with people who are poor but don't live with them. In other words, there are people who are poor who are around them, but they don't know them. And in a sense, if you are going to build a campaign to tackle domestic child poverty, you have to find ways in which we bring people together so they really understand, not just what it is like to be in poverty, but get over some of the stereotypes that people often have. We do not want to be an unequal society where people often do not mingle and do not meet, and we need to find a way to tackle this in all kinds of ways.'*

(Ed Miliband, March 2007)

David Lammy (2006:9), Minister for Culture, in his publication on making poverty history at home, also wrote about the Government's role in creating a 'stronger 'encounter culture' in which it becomes easier and more rewarding to interact with and respect others', arguing that 'Government cannot legislate for people's attitudes, but the decisions we make around investment in public spaces, arts, culture and sport all impact on our understanding of each other'. Whilst both speeches discuss ways of increasing interaction, they are silent on - or assign to civil society groups - the role of campaigning against these stereotypes and on the Government's own culpability. However, Ed Balls was credited with recognising that some of the language New Labour deployed to talk about people in poverty impeded the development of an anti-poverty consensus (Lister 2005a).

Other examples of a connection made by ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions are at a more rhetorical level, describing their goal of 'making poverty history at home' or doing 'our part in the UK to make poverty history' in 2005 and 2006. One of the speeches of David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions during the summer of 2005, is illustrative of this. In the concluding paragraphs of a speech to the left-leaning think tank, Institute of Public Policy Research, on asset-based welfare, he asserts that:

*'Collectively we must examine how we face the asset and aspiration gap at home - just as we are concentrating rightly at the G8 on the much bigger, much more difficult and more dangerous gap worldwide. Together we must work to bridge the gap between the asset-rich and the asset-less. Together, Government and the financial services industry must work with individuals, families and communities to unlock the potential of an asset state and build a future of welfare that does our part here in the UK to make poverty history.'*

(Blunkett, July 2005)

A number of observations can be made about this example of connecting discourse. This speech was made a day before the G8 Summit to a think tank closely associated with New Labour so the connection of this policy initiative as complementary to the global poverty agenda was timely and no doubt welcomed. Whilst the worldwide gap was set up as quantitatively different - bigger, more difficult and more dangerous - this connection reinforced the domestic situation as one of potential danger. Earlier in the speech Blunkett described the 'real challenge' posed by the 'divide between a smaller number of have-nots and a larger number of those sharing in prosperity', describing these 'have-nots' as 'a dangerous potential persistent excluded minority'. This discourse of poverty as threat is discussed in Chapter Five. It is also noteworthy that the actual conceptual connection between the two agendas was left unstated, such that the domestic 'asset and aspiration gap' is matched with an unqualified worldwide gap. The concern in New Labour's domestic discourse about the aspirations of the poor is not matched in global poverty discourse, so this omission avoided attention being drawn to these

differences. Whilst it may be taking the analysis of this extract a step too far beyond its limited rhetorical intent, it can also be noted that asset ownership was part of the international policy agenda and an area in which domestic policy makers and scholars have sought to learn from experience in developing countries. Indeed, the issue was given more detailed treatment in this context in Hilary Benn's speech discussed below.

A second speech, David Blunkett gave to Labour Party conference in September 2005, described New Labour's approach to tackling global poverty as the same task to be achieved 'here at home', continuing the theme discussed above, that Britain and/or New Labour provides hope through its discursive and policy interventions. In both domains, it was about giving hope that poverty can be overcome. In both domains this was about individual empowerment in opposition to paternalism - 'liberating men and women from barriers, exploitation and burdens' and 'helping people to learn and to break out of the cycle of disadvantage' - although it was silent on the nature and cause of these obstacles.

*'Across the globe both Tony and Gordon have led the drive to eliminate poverty. Even from a relatively small nation, we've given hope to people by changing the climate and culture to make it possible to overcome poverty. Not by paternalism, not by hand-outs, but by liberating men and women from the barriers and from the exploitation and the burdens that they carry.'*

*So, here at home we have the same obligation, the same task to achieve...Here in Brighton there is an organisation, organised to mentor children, to support lone parents, to give hope where despair existed, which I think we should support and replicate with HomeStart and similar organisations across the country, helping people to learn and to break out of the cycle of disadvantage.'*

(Blunkett, September 2005)

### **3.3.4 Compassionate Conservatism**

An indication that the political elite perceived the Make Poverty History slogan to have been successfully embedded within the public imagination is the Conservatives' branding of their domestic policies as 'Making British Poverty History' both in speeches and as the title of their policy paper (Conservative Party 2008). Despite this rhetorical connection examination of this policy document and related speeches reveal that no further connections were made, with the exception of a speech given by David Cameron in his campaign for leadership of the Conservative Party (Cameron, November 2005). This was made in similar ways to New Labour in terms of economic empowerment and providing 'new hope for Britain and new hope for the World'. He described the success of economic liberalism in generating wealth but acknowledged that both in 'our poorest neighbourhoods' and in sub-Saharan Africa 'the rising tide has not lifted all the boats'. However, he

dismissed Gordon Brown's approach as well-intentioned but top-down and bureaucratic domestically and overly concentrated on aid globally, arguing for 'a modern Conservative model of economic empowerment'.

*'I believe that a modern Conservative model of economic empowerment would apply the same approach to sub-Saharan Africa as it does to Britain. We need to fix the broken rungs on the ladder of prosperity.'*

(Cameron, November 2005)

Interestingly in seeking to construct his form of 'compassionate Conservatism' as attune to public sentiment, he assigned universal motives to those involved in Make Poverty History such that their concern for the global poor is paralleled by a concern for those in poverty in the UK. In doing so, he goes further than New Labour actors who remained cautious about public opinion on domestic poverty. Research with participants of Make Poverty History has not put this question explicitly, and the extent to which global poverty campaigners are involved in, or even see connections with, domestic poverty campaigns has not been explored, but based on existing evidence of public attitudes it would seem unlikely.

Despite drawing on New Labour discourses, it is notable that, in contrast to the New Labour's inclusive mantra of 'prosperity for all', Cameron presented the British people's concerns as 'prosperity for themselves and progress for the poor' in what could be interpreted as a traditional Conservative concern with the residual poor.

*'This summer, millions of British people took part in the Make Poverty History campaign. A new generation of concerned citizens want prosperity for themselves and progress for the poor - whether living on the other side of the street or the other side of the world.'*

*Modern, compassionate Conservatism means responding to their demands. I believe that as Conservatives, we have a vital contribution to make to the debate about creating wealth, and the debate about eliminating poverty...*

*Because of our insights about how markets work, we can remove the barriers that hold wealth creation back. Because we understand that markets must be matched by compassion...because we understand how to help people climb the ladder of prosperity from dependency to self-sufficiency...it's because of these things that we can remove the shackles that lock poverty in.*

*So a new Conservative economic strategy will use economic liberalism to create wealth, and economic empowerment to eliminate poverty.*

*This will bring new hope for Britain, and new hope for the world.'*

(Cameron November 2005)

In a later speech David Cameron adopted a relative definition of poverty, explicitly distancing the Party from the absolute definition associated with the Conservative Governments of the 1980s. He discursively constructs both global and domestic poverty (Cameron, November 2006). He 'understands' John Moore's assertion that there was no poverty in Britain in relation to the extreme poverty he has personally witnessed in Darfur, whilst asserting that there is material want in Britain and that even if there were not, relative poverty still matters. In this way both main political parties now provide a discursive framing that is ahead of that of the general public on domestic poverty (Sefton 2009).

### **3.3.5 Conclusion**

This section described the 'global to domestic' connections provided by the Make Poverty History campaign. First, for key New Labour politicians, affiliated organisations, and the domestic poverty lobby the Make Poverty History campaign provided a particular powerful example of a publicly supported progressive goal and with lessons for domestic child poverty agenda. Many of these organisations are part of a transnational discursive community that has long made connections between global and domestic poverty. Ed Balls has been associated with this interpretation of the public politics of poverty and the lessons he applied to the domestic campaign were discussed in detail. Second, the political salience of Make Poverty History resulted in a few 'global to domestic' connections in speeches by the Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions and was also drawn on by David Cameron in his reconstruction of the Conservative's position on domestic poverty. However, there was limited conceptual substance to these 'global to domestic' connections.

## **3.4 Conceptual connections**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

This section discusses the connections made by the Secretaries of State for International Development. It briefly discusses the discursive devices used to provide their audience with conceptual connections to global poverty and the potential of their position as inner city Labour MPs with an international brief for cross-domain thinking (Section 3.4.2). Section 3.4.3 deals with the historical connections made between conditions of poverty in eighteenth century Britain and in the developing world today, as well as the portrayal of industrialisation and globalisation as parallel 'historical shifts' and producing a need for social campaigns. Section 3.4.4 provides a detailed treatment of

Hilary Benn's speech in which he made contemporary connections between tackling poverty in Britain and in the developing world.

### **3.4.2 From constituency MP to Secretary of State for International Development**

As might be expected, a number of connections were made between the global and the domestic by the Secretaries of State for International Development, as their brief involved making global matters immediate to domestic audiences. The first discursive device used to make real the challenge facing developing countries is describing it in terms of the area or population of British cities or with historical reference, such that life expectancy in Afghanistan is equivalent to that in Britain 100 years ago (Benn, June 2006).

*'...we need to bring clean water to 300,000 people each day, every day for the next ten years to meet the goal. That's like supplying water to the cities of Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and Birmingham, every week, every month, every year for the next decade. In sanitation we have to double our current global effort.'*

(Benn, October 2006)

Secondly, language was deployed to convey a connection between the audience and those being portrayed, such that 'there are six billion of us who share our planet and one in five of us is living in abject poverty' (Short September 2002), and maternity mortality rates in Ghana are compared with those in 'the country in which we happen to live' (Benn, March 2004).

*'But at heart, all of us want the same thing - whether you live in Leeds, whether you're that farmer in Malawi I mentioned: security, a decent job, education and healthcare when we're ill, the chance to raise a family, the opportunity to play a role in society, and to hand on a better future to the next generation.'*

(Benn, February 2006:a)

Before going on to discuss the nature of the historical and contemporary conceptual connections drawn on, it is worth noting that these were often portrayed as individual reflections of MPs working in both domestic and global domains. Clare Short described how her visits to countries with high levels of malnutrition and illiteracy made her reflect on the 'the days when equally bad conditions were common in the UK' and related a local historian's description of Britain's industrialisation and the conditions in Birmingham, her home city and parliamentary constituency, in the 1840s (Short, September 1999). Hilary Benn claimed that his speech comparing poverty in the developed and developing world today was the result of his reflections on his work as Secretary of State for International Development and as an inner-city Leeds constituency MP for an area with one of the highest child poverty rates

in Britain (Benn, February 2007). Both Hilary Benn and Douglas Alexander also provided a personal narrative in claiming the politics of poverty.

*'It didn't just happen and it wasn't inevitable. It speaks to who we are, where we come from and what we came into politics to do. Thirty years ago I was being taken by my parents on Christian Aid sponsored walks. Twenty years ago I was working as a volunteer in a school building project in Kenya. Ten years ago this month I was seeking election to the House of Commons and making the case that we should tackle poverty not just at home but also abroad.'*

(Alexander, October 2007)

The use of the personal obviously has an important rhetorical function, but taking these claims at face value, it is worth noting that as Labour Secretaries of State for International Development, they will not only have engaged on a policy level with issues of both domestic and global poverty, but their visits to developing countries and their constituency casework will have provided images of poverty. Despite this, a contemporary connection was rarely made and only one speech provided a detailed treatment (Benn, February 2007). When talking to other MPs involved in international development, it does not appear to be a connection they had made. For example, when this was put to one MP they described instead initial difficulty relating to their constituents' concerns following a visit to a developing country. Another initially rejected any comparison, but then described a common theme of empowerment in domestic and global poverty agendas (informal conversations with author, 2008). Similarly, a speechwriter in the Department for International Development saw no conceptual connection or learning opportunities for the domestic poverty lobby (conversation with author, 2007).

### 3.4.3 Historical connections

Both Clare Short and Hilary Benn's speeches provided a number of historical comparisons. Short equated the extreme poverty in the developing world with that of nineteenth century Britain. This is not just a connection in terms of the conditions of poverty; rather she described globalisation as a similar 'historical shift' to that of industrialisation, bringing economic and social change and generating great wealth, but requiring intervention to ensure greater equitable distribution. In speeches to the Trades Union and to the Labour Party, the history of the Labour Movement was linked to this endeavour.

*'There is no doubt that people across the world are feeling troubled by the speed of change. In the developing world people also feel worried that they will be permanently marginalised from the new wealth being generated by the globalising world economy.'*

*'There is, in my view, a clear parallel here with the period of the industrial revolution. This was a time of enormous change, driven by*

*changes in technology. It generated massive new wealth and led to a society where some had plenty and others lived in squalor. The whole inspiration of our political tradition was a commitment to democratic action to ensure that the wealth of industrialisation was shared by all the people. Today, the challenge is to manage globalisation for all - to share the new wealth across the world and usher in a new era of massive poverty reduction.'*

(Short September 2000)

Many speeches simply made this historical comparison, thus providing a narrative of historical progress, and therefore appear to present a view of development rooted in the modernisation thesis. Rarely though an unfinished project was described; the speech to the TUC below described an on-going struggle for social justice, of which New Labour's policies of reducing child poverty were a part.

*'The history of the British trade union movement and of the Labour Party is the history of Britain's struggle, first for democracy and then for social justice. A struggle to ensure that the wealth created by industrialisation was fairly shared by all people and that education, healthcare, decent housing and a decent income was available to all. Clearly that job is not complete. Our Government is working to reduce child poverty and increase opportunity.'*

*But many people in the world today exist in poverty and squalor as bad as that of British people in the 1850s. I have, for example, recently visited Sierra Leone, where average life expectancy is 35; Bolivia, where 70 per cent of people are malnourished; and India, where one third of the population of nearly one billion people lives in extreme poverty.'*

(Short, September 1999)

It was asserted though that 'absolute material deprivation has all but disappeared from our countries' and it is the contrast between our lives and those of our great-grandparents and those in the developing world that was emphasised (Short, September 2002). There is even a rare example of connection between the domestic and the global which is made personal and 'we' are implicated in the global inequity: 'The race to the bottom...can mean - increasingly does - the poorest children in the world missing their schooling while they make trainers, footballs or other luxuries for our children' (Short, September 1997).

Both Short and Benn argued for media reporting and the collection of statistics with reference to the work of previous generations of British writers and social reformers - Cobbett, Tressell, Dickens, Rowntree (Short, November 1999, Benn, November 2004). Benn did not make explicit connections between globalisation and industrialisation but constructed equivalence between the domestic campaigns and politics from the nineteenth century to

the establishment of the welfare state - 'that's our history, our development story' - and the global campaigns today. This got detailed treatment in a speech to the Women's Institute and a number of connections were made.

*'The causes your members took up in 1930, calling for improved water supplies in villages; better medical care of pregnant women; and reaffirming faith in the League of Nations and the cause of peace. The very same concerns that the local council members raised with me in Lashkar Gah on Monday...'*

*The Make Poverty History Campaign - the global equivalent of social reformers of the 19th century.'*

(Benn, June 2006a)

As discussed in Section 3.2.4 these connections asserted that change is possible and in Benn's discourse this was explicitly about the power of politics. This reflects the focus of the Department for International Development's 2006 White Paper on governance and political participation and Benn made a case for the role of politics domestically and on a global scale, with reference to Make Poverty History.

*'Because ultimately I believe government can and does make a difference to peoples' lives. Politics has done this here in the UK, changing the lives of poor people in a way that would be unrecognisable to their ancestors. And poor people in developing countries want politics to do the same for them, and they want to be part of the process.'*

(Benn, February 2006a)

*'It was politics that achieved all this. The landslide victories of 1906 and 1945 were an expression of peoples' desire for a better life, free from poverty. A better life based not on handouts, not on charity, but on the collective provision of human rights.'*

(Benn, February 2006b)

#### **3.4.4 Contemporary connections**

In a speech hosted by the Fabian Society, the Overseas Development Institute and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Overseas Development, Hilary Benn discursively connected contemporary global and domestic poverty and this is discussed at length here (Benn, February 2007). He argued that there should be greater dialogue between those fighting poverty in Britain and those fighting poverty in the developing world. He asserted that all countries face a similar choice in response to globalisation and drew parallels between the nature of poverty and solutions to it in developing countries and in Britain. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is akin to Payne's (2005) reconnection of 'developing' and 'developed' countries, in arguing that all countries should be considered as pursuing strategies of development, albeit without Payne's

emphasis on the power differentials between countries to create the conditions of their development.

*'Successful development is going to depend more and more on sharing expertise and knowledge. The main point I want to make today is that this should not be one way traffic, partly because the differences between developed and developing countries are shrinking fast....'*

*All countries in this century now face the same fundamental choice: do we either embrace multilateralism and make the thing we call globalisation work in all our interests in fighting poverty or do we fall prey to isolationism, protectionism and narrow nationalism?*

(Benn, February 2007)

Benn highlighted three areas of two-way learning for domestic and international policy and for developed and developing countries: education and jobs, asset-building and democratic participation. The Make Poverty History campaign was also presented as a template for the domestic anti-poverty agenda. It was portrayed as representing popular re-engagement with (conventional) politics and as having made a difference to the outcome of the G8 Summit. Indeed, this speech was characteristically punctuated with the strong assertion that politics matters. This construction of the public politics of global poverty as the exemplar of politics is discussed further in Chapter Five.

The rationale for this speech is the connection between the fight against global and domestic poverty and as such it provided an explicit conceptual connection:

*'And I think that what really links poverty and disadvantage here in Britain and in the developing world is wasted human potential. The lack of choice. Self-confidence undermined. Humanity denied. What could have been, but is not.'*

(Benn, February 2007)

As described above in Section 3.2.3, whilst rarely connected in the same speech, this concept of poverty as the denial of human potential was a common theme, and associated particularly with Gordon Brown in both domains. The accompanying phrases Benn used are also used frequently by Brown.

In coming to this connection, Benn acknowledged that many people cannot connect African and British poverty, and indeed some reject the existence of poverty in Britain with reference to images of African poverty. He conceded that African poverty is much starker, describing the number of infant deaths, children denied an education and deaths from diseases. However he argued against complacency, referring to the UNICEF report in which Britain was

scored bottom out of twenty one developed countries on child wellbeing (UNICEF 2007) - one of the few external interventions in the domestic poverty debate. He described an unequal country in which communities with the highest rates of child poverty adjoin affluent communities and a sixteen year difference in average life expectancy between men living in Kensington and Bethnal Green. He then drew on aspects of material exclusion - having a holiday once a year, owning two pairs of all-weather shoes - as well as political exclusion - being less likely to be involved in activities that aim to influence decisions, in the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain. Crucially for a public politics of poverty, this survey used a variety of measures of poverty, including the lack of socially perceived 'necessities' derived from focus group work with members of the public (Gordon et al., 2000).

The first domestic: international policy link Benn made was the importance of education as 'the best way to fight poverty'. Here the domestic focus on education means that 'our priority for the world must be education' and was why the Government had committed to fund developing countries ten year education plans. This education linkage moved directly to the centrality of work.

*'Focusing on education, support and training to help people into work has been absolutely crucial in our success so far. The minimum wage, flexible working, benefit reform and tax credits have meant that the poorest families with children in Britain are now on average £3,350 better off than they were. Developing countries too look to work - to earn a living as the best route out of poverty - and on providing people with the skills they need. Because, just as in Britain, it's economic growth - not charity or handouts - that will help end dependency and give people the chance of a better life.'*

(Benn, February 2007)

This provided the macro-level connection in which all governments must 'empower' their citizens to compete in the market economy. Echoing the connections made by Blunkett discussed above, in both domains the importance of economic growth was asserted in opposition to 'charity or handouts'. Benn (February 2007) provided the New Labour characterisation of the British welfare state having been changed from a passive to an active role: '*it helps people to help themselves - not a safety net but a springboard, with a commitment to inclusion, dignity, respect and the power to change lives at its heart*'. He argued that development has gone through a similar journey from charity to fairness and from addressing basic needs to promoting human development and greater country and local level decision making. He also assigned a similar supply-side role to developing and developed country governments: providing people with the means to make a better life by creating the right climate for private investment, stability and growth.

Whilst representing the social investment approach that New Labour advocated in both domains, this connection provided a negative framing of domestic welfare receipt. In the global domain there is a need to move beyond a framing of the issue of global poverty as one of charity to that of justice. As discussed above, campaigns such as Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History - as well the New Labour Government's discourse - attempted this reframing (Yanacopulos 2004). In this speech Benn used the word 'fairness', taken up by New Labour but also associated with pre-Thatcherite conservatism (Fairclough 2000). In setting up equivalence between this and changes to the domestic welfare system, out-of-work benefits are framed as 'charity' or 'handouts'. In fact, the move from basic needs to human development in the development discourse is associated with a move from a minimal to a more comprehensive welfare system (Deacon 2005), and at other times Benn provided a more progressive connection, with social security a right won through political struggle.

*'In the UK we now see public services and social security, as a right - we know from our history - a right that was built up over many years of struggle and effort and politics and public demand. In fact they should be a right everywhere, and developing countries are starting to think about what they can do to help the destitute and vulnerable.'*

(Benn, February 2006b)

Benn described the role of trade unionism in Britain and the role they could play in the developing countries, before going on to describe two domestic: international policy issues - asset building and political participation - in which Britain can learn from the developing world. Asset-based welfare - Child Trust Fund and basic bank accounts - were discussed as a new departure for British social policy and compared to long-established schemes in the developing countries, notably the Grameen Bank. Indeed, asset-based welfare is part of the social development approach (see for example, Midgley and Sherraden 2008) and has its origins in the field of international development. These policies, subsequently cancelled under the coalition government, had received a muted response from the poverty lobby and were considered by some to be a distraction from the child poverty agenda, whilst Ben-Galim (2011) saw them as an important policy tool, implicitly accepting the limits to traditional redistributive approaches. For others, these policies recognise wealth inequality and that holding assets contributes to poverty prevention (Ridge and Wright 2008).

Benn argued that Britain has most to learn from democratic innovation in developing countries, pointing to levels of voter turnout and gender representation in the new parliaments of Rwanda and Afghanistan, and to the lessons from Brazil on extending the vote to sixteen year olds and participatory budgeting.

*'As we see time and time again in the developing world - and in our world - when local people are involved in designing and setting up services - from bore holes in sub Saharan Africa to sanitation systems in Vietnam to SureStart programmes in Leeds - the services are better designed and people look after them better.'*

(Benn, February 2007)

Sure Start became a symbolic policy for New Labour politicians, frequently cited as an example of a Labour Government making a difference. The original Sure Start community development model introduced in 1998 was one in which parents were part of the local Sure Start partnerships' governance structure through involvement on management boards, parent forums and the evaluation processes to ensure that service provision reflected local needs and was 'owned' by the local community. However this model was abandoned in many locations as Sure Start was expanded beyond areas of deprivation to a universal service with greater local authority control (Glass 2005). This speech touched on themes of localism and co-production that New Labour sought to introduce in various forms and Gordon Brown too had evoked Sure Start as a transformative political space in which participation would lead to a demand for greater resources (July 2004). Perhaps what is lacking in this example is the involvement of people in poverty in national level decision making. Whilst the extent to which these are country-led and not donor-led documents is open to question, developing country governments are required to consult those in poverty in developing their 'poverty reduction strategy papers' needed to qualify for debt relief from international financial institutions (Brock et al., 2001). There has been academic cross-domain learning from the global South in this respect (Bennett and Roberts 2004) and advocacy for the involvement of those in poverty in the policy making process. This was developed latterly within the Department for Work and Pensions to some degree (Murphy, July 2006). Although as Lister (2007:442) argued, this amounted to responding to policy proposals rather than involvement in its development and that 'DWP may have started to listen but there is no long-term mechanism for enabling people with experience of poverty to feed their views into and have influence on ongoing policy development'.

The speech moved from learning from the developing world to learning from the Make Poverty History campaign. Like other New Labour actors, Benn called for a similar domestic campaign and frames the issues comparatively in terms of systemic injustice.

*'I think we need to redouble the fight. I think we need to have a campaign on poverty in Britain - a campaign against poverty of circumstance, poverty of opportunity, poverty of aspiration. Wasted lives, potential unfulfilled.'*

*Make Poverty History saw clearly that poverty and exclusion is fundamentally about injustice: unfair trade rules, a lack of opportunities,*

*a lack of resources and a lack of medicines. Lack of a chance to make your voice heard in communities. Not about people deserving to be poor because they happen to be born in the wrong place.*

*Yet in Britain, too often, too many accept the lottery of birth without question. And people look past systemic injustice - lack of educational opportunity in disadvantaged areas, pockets of unemployment concentrated in the most deprived communities, ill-health determined by where you happen to live - and talk about lots of other things. Our collective conscience should be stirred as a generation ago 'Cathy Come Home', that TV programme, helped to change attitudes to homelessness in this country.'*

(Benn, February 2007)

Finally, learning from developing countries and from the Make Poverty History campaign and the role of British politics were merged together in the assertion that '*politics can change things*'.

*'At the heart of the Make Poverty History campaign was the belief that politics can make a difference. That's why millions joined in. Because they were optimistic about the capacity of us all, working together, to change things.*

*They were right.*

*British politics now helps 5,000 people out of poverty every single day. The IFFm will save 10 million lives. A million more children will go to school in Kenya because of the abolition of school fees.*

*British politics introduced the minimum wage, the child trust fund and sure start.*

*So I think perhaps the biggest lesson we have to learn in Britain from the developing world is just this: that if we work together, and campaign, and push, and put our minds to it, and fight, politics can change things.'*

(Benn, February 2007)

### **3.4.5 Conclusion**

This section has discussed three types of conceptual connections made by the Secretaries of State for International Development, as well as discussing their particular role as Labour MPs from the left of the party with deprived constituency and an international development brief. First is described the spatial comparison to domestic reference points as a means of creating a discursive connection between the audience and the poor in developing countries. Second it discussed the historical connections made: poverty in the developing world compared to that of Britain in the nineteenth century; the 'historical shifts' of domestic industrialisation and of globalisation; and the politics of the British Labour Movement and other social reformists as forerunners of the Make Poverty History campaign. Third, it discussed at length a speech given by Hilary Benn in which he asserted a contemporary connection between domestic and global poverty and the potential for cross-domain policy-learning.

### **3.5 Chapter Conclusions**

This chapter has examined the connections New Labour actors made between global and domestic poverty. Section 3.2 considered a number of domestic to global connections. First both poverty agendas have symbolic importance within the Labour movement and were held up as exemplifying their enduring values. As part of New Labour's broader claim that their foreign policy was both value-led and integral to their Third Way programme, a more specific 'domestic to global' connection was also made; their global poverty agenda representing the same values at home and abroad. Second, this was articulated in terms of social justice and poverty was framed as the denial of potential in both domains. Connections made in terms of poverty predated Tony Blair's pledge to tackle child poverty, illustrating the early discursive work done by key New Labour actors, Robin Cook and Gordon Brown, in articulating a domestic anti-poverty agenda. Third, in keeping with Labour Party tradition a global leadership role was asserted and within this narrative, domestic universal public services were constructed as providing hope to the developing world. In this way their global poverty policy goals were discursively employed to support their domestic goals in relation to NHS.

Section 3.3 described the 'global to domestic' connections provided by the Make Poverty History campaign. First, for key New Labour politicians, affiliated organisations, and the domestic poverty lobby the Make Poverty History campaign provided a particular powerful example of a publicly supported progressive goal. They argued that lessons could be learnt from the campaign and from the cultural and institutional embedding of New Labour's global poverty agenda. Ed Balls, a close ally of Gordon Brown, has been associated with this argument and set out four lessons that can be applied in 'making child poverty history at home'. These lessons were discussed at length and are returned to later in the thesis when the public politics of the two poverty domains are compared. Second, the political salience of Make Poverty History resulted in a few 'global to domestic' connections in speeches by the Secretaries of State for Work and Pensions and was also drawn on by David Cameron in his reconstruction of the Conservative's position on domestic poverty. There is limited conceptual substance to these 'global to domestic' connections, and it is the Secretaries of State for International Development that attempted this.

Section 3.4 discussed the three types of connections made by Clare Short and Hilary Benn as well as their position as MPs from the left of the party with deprived constituency and an international development brief. The first connection was a spatial comparison to domestic references. Second, a historical connection was made: poverty in the developing world compared to that of Britain in the nineteenth century; the 'historical shifts' of domestic industrialisation and of globalisation; and the politics of the British Labour Movement and other social reformists as forerunners of the Make Poverty

History campaign today. The third connection was contemporary similarities between domestic and global poverty and the potential for policy-learning.

This chapter clearly demonstrates that discursive connections are made across the two poverty domains and comparative analysis discussed in subsequent chapters further highlights a relatively consistent discursive framing of poverty. These explicit connections are predominately made in political speeches to the Labour movement and also in speeches to civil society organisations involved in domestic and/or global poverty campaigns, and crucially, a study of official government speeches alone would not have captured them. They were employed by key New Labour actors - who were themselves transnational actors - in speeches to other members of the transnational discourse community - trades unions, non-governmental organisations, academics - many of whom had long sought to construct this discursive and ideological connection between the global and the domestic.

The discursive connections made between the two poverty domains were also part of the construction of a narrative of New Labour as guided by enduring and consistent values and as part of the historical and universal struggle for social justice in speaking to an audience of traditional supporters. They also need to be understood as part of a narrative that sought to construct the speaker and the Labour Party and should be viewed partly as individual interventions in intra-party politics. Party conference speeches are of course intended for a wider audience and are interventions in domestic, and to a lesser extent, international politics.

From this chapter, elements of New Labour's public politics of poverty can already begin to be sketched out. First, poverty is the denial of potential, lack of opportunities and an aspect of injustice. A social investment discourse is detected in which government can provide a supply-side function, empowering people to reach their potential primarily through education and work, and the building of assets. There was an associated narrative of (economic) inclusion within a community in which values and interests coincide. In this Third Way discourse 'we all want the same thing for our children' and there are few examples of opposing interests or problematic societal and global relations. Second, many of these discursive interventions sought to frame the political with reference to the events of Make Poverty History. This was portrayed as a model for generating a 'progressive consensus' on domestic issues and for the child poverty agenda in particular. In this construction it was a popular public campaign - of which the government was a part - that demonstrated how politics could make a difference. It was also constructed as part of the history of struggle for social progress associated with the Labour movement. These two aspects of New Labour's public politics of poverty are discussed further in subsequent chapters.

This chapter has also demonstrated how the conceptual connection between global and domestic poverty varied both between and amongst political actors and this has different implications for the public politics of poverty. In some cases the historical connection was stressed such that the conditions for the global poor are akin to those in nineteenth century Britain, and social progress must be fought for as it has been in developed countries. This discourse connected to current public conceptions of poverty, although at times the domestic child poverty agenda was presented as part of this ongoing fight for social progress. Contemporary conceptual connections were rare in New Labour discourse and are potentially more problematic in terms of connecting with public conceptions. Arguments for tackling global poverty made in terms of justice by New Labour and Make Poverty History provide the possibility of conceptual connectivity across domains. However, the extent to which the broad-based public support for Make Poverty History equated to a public understanding of justice claims or the nature of the justice claim subscribed to is not clear. Images of extreme poverty may evoke only a minimal concept of justice. Conversely though, the popular appeal of a campaign about poverty enables further rehabilitation of the term and opens the political space to talk of poverty and justice. It may not be necessary for the public to make a deep conceptual connection between global and domestic poverty for greater openness to discussion of domestic poverty.

Chapter Four goes on to discuss how New Labour appealed to the public in making the case for tackling poverty at home and abroad.

## **4 Reasons for tackling poverty: Morality and self-interest**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the rationale New Labour provided for their global and domestic anti-poverty agendas. Building public support was a crucial part of New Labour's public politics of poverty and as attempts are made to assess the level of public support it is important to first establish how they were being appealed to. Appeals to a variety of publics and across both domains were consistent in employing a dual rationale of morality and self-interest for tackling poverty. This dual rationale, as well as the interweaving and the privileging and subordinating, of the two claims is itself of interest and this chapter starts with a discussion of this (Section 4.2). However, detailed examination of the nature of the claims made for governmental action on poverty is required, particularly as the Conservatives under David Cameron have also used this dual rationale both in opposition and government. A number of different moral and self-interested claims have been identified and were used at different times and to a greater and lesser extent in the two domains. These different moral and self-interested claims are discussed in turn (Section 4.3 and Section 4.4 respectively) and the available evidence on public attitudes is then drawn on to assess their success in terms of public support (Section 4.5).

### **4.2 'Not only... but also'**

#### **4.2.1 Introduction**

This section discusses the dual moral and self-interested rationale in New Labour's global and domestic poverty discourses. Section 4.2.2 starts by illustrating how these were related to other New Labour reconciliations, used to explicitly criticise the Conservatives' understanding of society and conceptually interwoven but also deployed strategically with the moral and self-interested each privileged and subordinated at different times. Section 4.2.3 then discusses criticisms of this dual rationale in terms of what is left unsaid about the relationship inherent in the reconciliation and the dangers of a self-fulfilling prophecy in appealing to individual self-interest rather than presenting a moral argument.

#### **4.2.2 Conceptually interwoven, strategically deployed**

The dual moral and self-interested rationale was identified early in the New Labour Government's domestic and international discourses (see for example, Deacon 1998 on domestic and Burnell 1998 on global poverty discourses) and has been discussed by many commentators. Fairclough (2000) described it as 'characteristically New Labour', providing examples from Blair's speeches on social exclusion and the NATO intervention in Kosovo. In a speech establishing the Social Exclusion Unit, Blair argued that:

*'It offends against our values to see children with no prospect of work, families trapped in poverty, neighbourhoods blighted by crime. But this isn't just about compassion. It's also about self-interest. If we can shift resources from picking up the cost of problems to preventing them, there will be a dividend for everyone.'*

(Blair December 1997, quoted in Fairclough 2000).

Intervention in Kosovo was 'guided by a...subtle blend of mutual self-interest and moral purpose' (Blair April 1999). Similarly, in relation to global poverty, Blair stated that: 'The new millennium offers a real opportunity to eliminate world poverty. This is the greatest moral challenge facing our generation. It is also in the UK's national interest' (DfID 2000).

The moral and self-interested claims are themselves derived from a number of other Third Way configurations which 'draw attention to assumed incompatibilities, and den(y) them' (Fairclough 2001: 10). The reconciliation of economic prosperity and social justice within New Labour's political economy was perhaps the most important such configuration for both global and domestic poverty discourses. Another related reconciliation was the compatibility of an ethically-based foreign policy with the national interest. Both these were underpinned by narratives of global interdependence.

Early in New Labour's premiership the reconciliation of morality and self-interest was contrasted with a Thatcherite emphasis on self-interest in both domains. This reflects the importance of this Third Way discourse in the electoral repositioning of New Labour. It staked a moral claim to understand society, and therefore concepts of self-interest, in a different way to the Conservatives.

*'In political terms, the choice used to be posed throughout the 80s as: vote for yourself or vote for helping the disadvantaged. Today there is a possibility of an alliance between the haves and the have-nots...There is a case not just in moral terms but in enlightened self interest to act, to tackle what we all know exists - an underclass of people cut off from society's mainstream, without any sense of shared purpose.'*

(Blair, June 1997)

*'One of the most ugly aspects of the Thatcher era was the suggestion that the pursuit of our own interests and concern for the world's poor were incompatible. The Labour Party knows deeply that that is not so....It is morally right but it is also in the interest for our own country and the children of our country.'*

(Short, September 1998)

Reasons for tackling global poverty continued to be explicitly framed as both moral and self-interested. The moral claim was usually focused on the urgent imperative of extreme poverty and human suffering, although a justice model

is also presented. Self-interest was framed as 'our' interest as a nation, that of donor countries or a common interest shared by all countries in an interdependent world. The traditional division of international relations theory was therein reconciled in a Third Way configuration where 'values and interests merge' (Blair, April 1999).

Domestically, claims of self-interest or national interest often went unsaid in New Labour discourse. Rather, it was pairings such as 'morally and economically right', 'ensuring social justice and economic prosperity', 'a strong economy and a strong society' that characterised the domestic discourse. These pairings slide from ones in which there is a moral imperative to reduce poverty and also benefits for wider society, to ones that assert social and economic benefits for all. These social benefits combined intrinsically moral goods, such as living in a socially just country, and also instrumental concerns, such as the avoidance of social division. As such, compared with global poverty discourses, the moral claim more often emphasised achieving social justice rather than the moral imperative derived from the current condition of those in poverty.

In both poverty discourses the moral and self-interest claims were highly interwoven both in the rhetorical crafting of the speeches and in the conceptualisation presented and this makes their analytical separation a challenging exercise. At the same time though the moral and self-interest claims were strategically deployed and each privileged and subordinated at different times and for different audiences. For example, in a speech to business leaders there were few images of global poverty and the business case for tackling poverty predominates (Brown January 2003). In the run up to the Gleneagles Summit however, the moral case on global poverty was reasserted: Brown arguing that '*our moral sense should impel us to act out of duty not just self-interest*' and '*what is morally wrong cannot be economically right*' (Brown December 2004). Of course even in providing this emphasis the assumption of a self-interest case is stated, but in general the global discourse emphasised the moral imperative.

In both domains at various times the self-interested case was presented as an alternative way of gaining public support; appealing to a wider range of publics beyond those convinced by the moral argument and maximising the constituency for the policy. This approach was discussed in the DfID (1999) public communications strategy. In the year after Gleneagles Blair reasserted the self-interested case based on the possible spill-over effects of conflict in Africa as an alternative to the moral case.

*'Look and see what is happening in Africa today, look at how many of the disputes could spill over into issues like mass migration and terrorism and conflict that could be exported beyond the boundaries of Africa to our countries. Look there and if the moral cause does not inspire you, for reasons of self-interest understand why it is important to act.'*

(Blair, June 2006)

Gillian Merron, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (January to October 2008), described the continual need to make global poverty reduction relevant to her constituents who asked 'what does this mean for me?' and argued that the effects for them - described in terms of climate change, global stability, the drugs trade and diseases - will be the key motivating factor for many people.

*'But it is also crucial to show why reducing poverty in other countries matters to people in the UK; how is helping to create just, prosperous and secure societies in poor countries is of any relevance to the average British person? For most people in the UK, this will be the key factor in leading them to give their full consent to the UK government's international development.'*

(Merron, March 2008)

Turning to the domestic domain, in his Beveridge lecture Tony Blair had asserted the importance of the economic argument for a 'modern popular welfare state': 'By linking it to an economic vision, the welfare state, radically reformed, can be popular because everyone, haves and have nots, can see its *raison d'être*' (Blair, March 1999). In a speech to domestic anti-poverty advocates the dual claim was discussed in strategic terms, with Brown arguing that those not persuaded by reasons of social justice, could now support action for economic reasons.

*'(W)hat matters most in the new economy is not what a company has as assets in its balance sheet, it's physical capital, but what assets it has in its workforce. It's human capital.'*

*'So even if we could not persuade some to support action against, for example, child poverty for reasons of social justice, these people should now be driven to support action against child poverty for economic reasons.'*

(Brown, January 2000)

In the year following Make Poverty History though, the need to assert the moral case in the domestic discourse was raised. In a key speech entitled '*Eradicating Child Poverty*', Jim Murphy, then Minister of State in the Department for Work and Pensions, again separated the economic and social justice claims. Here there was acknowledgement that the case has to be

made in social justice terms to produce the level of support necessary for the Government's child poverty agenda. Many in the Labour Movement had been arguing this for some time and it was a key message from The Fabian Commission on Life Chances and Child Poverty (Fabian Society 2006). However, Murphy called on others to be the voice of the social justice case. As discussed above, what was lacking, especially when contrasted with the global discourse, was an empathetic discourse of the lived experiences of children in poverty as patent examples of injustice and it is this that he was referring to.

*'Government is well placed to make the economic case for ending child poverty. But young people's voices are essential to making the social justice case...'*

*'Achieving our target of eradicating child poverty by 2020 is the challenge and responsibility of Government. But our approach must be strengthened, not just by popular engagement but by popular refusal to tolerate child poverty in today's Britain. For this to happen, I believe we must extend awareness of what poverty means to children in Britain today. By helping young people's voices to be heard - we truly can "make poverty history at home".'*

(Murphy, July 2006, emphasis in original)

Under Brown's premiership Purnell made a claim privileging the moral case - although again, in doing so the economic case is restated:

*'The defining purpose of our politics, our cardinal value, is to remove everything that attenuates life chances, everything that stymies opportunity. Even if there were no economic consequences to wasted talent, which there are, it offends the most widely held moral intuition in this country: it's not fair.'*

(Purnell, February 2008)

As well as the strategic uses of the two elements of the dual claim, there have also been differences in the representation of their interaction. Whilst they 'go together' and are 'interdependent', at times it is claimed that social justice cannot be achieved without economic prosperity, whilst at other times social justice is a prerequisite for economic growth (e.g. Brown January 2000).

#### **4.2.3 Interpreting the dual claim**

The problematic nature of what Fairclough called the 'not only but also' formulation in New Labour's political discourse has been the subject of much discussion. As he (2001: viii) argued, this 'rhetoric of reconciliation' suggests that no choices have to be made between the two claims. What is left unsaid is the relationship between them. How much weight is attached to moral considerations and how much to self-interest? Similarly, with reference to issues of trade justice, Nash (2008: 178, emphasis in original) argued that the global discourse surrounding Make Poverty History 'mobilised support for

policies *beyond* national interests, but did not take up the difficulties of *conflicts* of interest between rich Northerners and poor Southerners'. These criticisms echo those of the neo-Gramscian critics of New Labour discussed in Chapter Two, such that the obscuration of these political choices is seen as foreclosing political debate (Mouffe 2000).

A related criticism also discussed in Chapter Two is the argument that New Labour appealed to self-interest as already formed (Hall 1998) and that, in keeping with neo-liberalism and public choice theory, they appealed to the electorate as self-interested individuals (Hay 2007). Hay (2007) has criticised contemporary politics in these terms, warning of the dangers of a Downsian politics constantly appealing to the electoral middle ground. He argued that this preference-accommodating strategy aimed at the 'voter as consumer' results in the convergence of party platforms and a less politically engaging contest. Drawing on this, Van Heerde and Hudson (2010) viewed the appeal to self-interest in tackling global poverty as essentially a preference-accommodating strategy and the moral claim as a preference-shaping strategy. They echoed the discussion of the domestic discourse in arguing for the need to make the case in moral terms, warning of the self-fulfilling prophecy of appealing to self-interested consequentialism and asking whether DfID is driven by strategic imperatives of securing political support for development or is genuinely morally-driven?

A number of points can be made in response to these criticisms of New Labour's dual claim, and in particular its appeal to self-interest. As a post-Thatcherite political project, New Labour took on the neo-liberal primacy of the individual on its own terms, contesting its understanding of self-interest (Driver and Martell 1998). As such elements of their poverty discourses provided both instrumental (self-interested) and essentialist (moral) reasons for policy action at a national and international level, often within a discourse of community, that appealed to, and sought to reframe, self-interest. Self-interest variously became enlightened self-interest, a shared interest and something intrinsically linked to the humanity of others. This chapter illustrates the discursive work done in these terms and understands this as a counter-hegemonic strategy. In this sense it cannot be seen as simply preference-accommodating discourse.

There are of course potential dangers in instrumental appeals for building long-term public support and for the future of politics and those made in terms of potential threats from poverty are particularly detrimental to inclusive narratives. Four such dangers are discussed in terms of New Labour's self-interest claims in this chapter: first, the social investment approach presents instrumental reasons for investing in future worker-citizen-consumers and, as a central claim of the domestic domain, subordinates appeals made about current experiences; second, the instrumental appeal to the 'electorate as consumer' or the electorate-taxpayer providing cost-benefits of preventative spending could negate more

inclusion notions of political citizenship; third, the threat of inaction in terms of crime and terrorism ‘others’ the poor in providing a narrative of decline and downplays more common everyday experiences of poverty; and fourth, there is a danger that the instrumental justification can take on a discursive life of its own and change the original policy focus. There is also a question about the depth of public support gained only in instrumental self-interested terms compared with those that make a moral or justice claims. Where self-interest is reshaped as a mutual interest though, it can discursively link to redistributive goals. These were made in terms of a new partnership between donor and recipient governments in New Labour’s discourse, but there is the possibility of making claims in terms of global public goods and global levies (Kaul et al., 1999).

Whilst commentators called in both domains for an appeal to the public based on moral grounds beyond a narrowly defined self-interest, discussion is needed about what the nature of this appeal should be and there is nothing virtuous about a moral argument *per se*. As discussed in Chapter Two, poverty implicitly describes an unacceptable state of affairs and is therefore an inherently moral concern. In both domains moral arguments have been used to advocate positions within the poverty debate, including those that oppose aid and welfare provision (Moyo 2009; Murray 1984). Indeed, Hay (2007) calls for moral appeals precisely because they expose different political alternatives. This chapter discusses the problematic nature of some moral claims. The Make Poverty History campaign attempted to replace one norm or moral frame with another, seeking to replace a transactional charity frame with a political justice frame. There is a danger that some of New Labour’s discourse - images of extreme poverty and declarations of our responsibility emanating from this - could perpetuate a charity frame. For some in development advocacy the notion of global interdependence provided a way of asserting a responsibility for those in poverty that moved away from the moral discourse of charity from the powerful rich (Edwards 1999). In both domains too, debate centred on the relative silence on, and reshaping of, inequality within New Labour’s moral (and self-interested) claims. There was also a lack of claims based on the injustice of the everyday experiences of life in poverty in the domestic domain.

This leaves the question of the totalising nature of the dual claim which seeks to silence progressive (and other) alternatives and obscures the conflict inherent in claims for redistribution and that at large in the global economy order. Some problematic aspects of this discursive closure are highlighted below, and this is returned to in the next Chapter. New Labour attempted to build broad coalitions of support for its poverty reduction goals through the recasting of social interest and necessarily downplayed conflicts of interests and our culpability for poverty to produce a counter-totalising discourse. This was a pragmatic strategy for reasserting social democracy in the context of neo-liberalism, particularly applicable to the incremental consensus-building

of global politics, but also limited their ability to bridge to more progressive discourses.

#### **4.2.4 Conclusion**

This section has discussed the nature of this dual rationale. It had been identified by commentators early on in New Labour's period in office and was related to other Third Way reconciliations, notably 'economic prosperity and social justice', 'an ethical foreign policy and national interests', and a meta-discourse of global interdependence. New Labour presented the reconciliation of morality and self-interest as a contrast with a Thatcherite understanding of individual self-interest but they also asserted its strategic value in enabling support based on either morality or self-interest. This section illustrated how the moral and self-interest claims were privileged and subordinated at different times and for different audiences. Criticisms of the use of this dual rationale were then discussed, namely the problem with the suggestion that no choices have to be made between the two claims and that appeals to self-interest are a form of preference accommodation that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Problems with appeals to self-interest were acknowledged and discussed in relation to the discourses outlined in this chapter. However, this chapter also highlights New Labour's discursive re-working of self-interest and this section argued that this represented an attempt to counter the concept of individual self-interest associated with neoliberalism.

### **4.3 Making the moral claim**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

This section discusses the various constructions of the moral claim for tackling global and domestic poverty. First, the two agendas were portrayed as emanating from the values and identity of the Labour Party and of the British people (Section 4.3.2). Second, the moral responsibility of our generation was asserted in both domains through emotive images of poverty as a scar on the soul and arguments about special responsibilities to children, and in the global domain through the claim that our generation is the first to know about global poverty and to have the means to eliminate it (Section 4.3.3). Third, in the global domain images of extreme poverty and suffering constituted a claim of patent injustice. These were linked to the Millennium Development Goals as achievable and time-limited and representing a promise of justice made by the developed country governments that must be kept. In the domestic domain, lists of reduced life chances provided a narrative of poverty as cumulative disadvantage, but images of poverty as current lived experience were rare and the child poverty target was portrayed as demonstrating the government's ambition (Section 4.3.4). Fourth, the global and domestic discourses were linked by a common narrative of social justice in which poverty was characterised as wasted potential and those in poverty 'left behind' whilst others prosper. It was a discourse of life chances associated with the social investment model and was the dominant discourse

in the domestic domain. It emphasised opportunities to the exclusion of resources and at times it presented a meritocratic goal that neglected the experiences of children of all abilities (Section 4.3.5). The fifth and finally construction of the moral claim discussed is Gordon Brown's cosmopolitan vision of a global community based on a shared moral sense. This construction, also found in the domestic domain, is a justice claim made in terms of a positive liberty (Section 4.3.6).

#### **4.3.2 Values and Identity**

Commitments on poverty have emblematic importance within the Labour Party and in conference and trade union speeches associations were made with the traditions of the Labour Movement. Both domestic and global action formed part of a list of '*great causes worthy of our party's ideals*' (Brown September 2001), '*causes worth fighting for*' (Brown September 2003) and represented '*Labour values in action*' (Brown September 1999). As Chapter Three has illustrated, the domestic and global agendas were explicitly linked in this way as an illustration of the Labour Party's commitment to the same values at home and abroad. New Labour actors also linked their own personal political narratives with the commitment to tackling poverty. New Labour's appeal to commitments on poverty provided an important discursive function in speaking to their core supporters and was part of the narrative of the Third Way approach delivering on Labour's traditional values.

*'....But to affirm to you that the values which brought our party into being in the first year of this century - are the values that will guide us in the next: justice, fairness and economic progress- the same values, yesterday, today and tomorrow. And there can be no better demonstration of Labour values than that yesterday in Washington, a historic meeting of world finance and development ministers, at which Clare Short and I were proud to represent you, agreed our party's policy, that in the year 2000 the world will be writing off \$100 billion, more than 2/3 of the debts of the world's poorest countries. Debt relief once a dream, then a promise, now becoming a reality. The richest countries, as they should have done long ago, honouring their obligations to the poorest countries.'*

(Brown, September 1999)

*'So every time, child tax credits lift a child out of poverty, every time a child who would have denied opportunities under the Tories enjoys early learning with Sure Start, every time a teenager who under the Tories would have left school without qualifications stays on because of educational maintenance allowances, let us celebrate this as a victory not just for these young people but a victory for our Labour values.'*

(Brown, September 2005)

*'The beliefs of the Labour Party of 2006 should be recognisable to the members of 1906. Full employment; strong public services; tackling poverty; international solidarity. The policies shouldn't.'*

(Blair, September 2006)

*'Because this issue embodies something beyond brand management, beyond electoral arithmetic, beyond salesmanship. There aren't many votes in child poverty. But that doesn't matter one bit. The child poverty target is a question of belief. Of justice. Of what is right. When Tony Blair and Gordon Brown committed us to the goal of eradicating child poverty they spoke for everyone in this party. They also hit its nerve centre. The child poverty target links Old and New Labour. The outrage we feel at the waste of lives lived in poverty is what links the Labour party of 2008 with the Labour party of 1908.'*

(Purnell, September 2009)

The particular 'values' or 'ideals' drawn on varied, and at times too they went unsaid. Similarly, tackling poverty was sometimes informed by these values and at other times was one of a list of values. As Fairclough (2000: 46) noted in discussing the values of the Third Way, 'there is a certain vagueness and inconsistency about whether the reference is to values or objectives or goals (and whether these are the same thing), what the traditional values are, and whose tradition they belong to'. Social justice, justice and fairness are the most common values said to inform New Labour's poverty commitments, but as Fairclough (2000) noted, the meanings of these values can change with social justice becoming more associated with fairness, traditionally seen as a Conservative value, and less with equality (of outcome). As discussed below, the values of community and liberty also underlined some of the claims. The ownership of these values also varied; they are the Labour Party's, as described above; both New Labour and British values; particularly British, and also those of the International Community and universally held.

In early speeches the assertion is that Labour's values - and not those of the Conservative's - are those of Britain. For example in Blair's first speech as Prime Minister he called for '*a new bargain between us all as members of society...grounded in the core of British values, the sense of fairness and a balance between rights and duties*', and he goes on to assert that one of the reasons '*the Tories were proven wrong was that the people of Britain found it morally unacceptable that so many should have no stake*' (Blair, June 1997). Indeed, as Fairclough (2000:48) argued, a direct equivalence between Labour and British values is set up: 'Our actions on exclusion reflect our values and those of the British people'. In early speeches to both global and domestic advocacy groups, Brown asserted that their values are now shared with the government, the implicit contrast being with the previous Conservative government.

*'And your values - to support the vulnerable and build a society in which everyone has a contribution to make - are now the values shared by this government.'*

(Brown, December 1997)

The representation of the commitment to tackling global poverty as particularly British, part of our values and our identity, was asserted in the global poverty discourse. It has long been a characteristic of Labour Governments to ascribe themselves a moral leadership role and this was evident throughout New Labour's global poverty discourse. The first Department for International Development White Paper described Britain's 'unique place in the world and our opportunity to adopt a new international role' based on 'our particular history' and membership of the G7, EU, UN Security Council and the Commonwealth and asserted that this role can be a source of pride for the British public (DfID 1997:20). This continues to be a theme in speeches to a domestic audience and by the fourth White Paper, this is taken further with the goal that 'meeting its international obligations' will become a key aspect of Britishness:

*'We want them [the British people] to be proud of our development programme, just as they are proud of the BBC and the National Health Service. Our ultimate objective is that Britain meeting its international obligations is seen as central to Britain's sense of identity and part of who we want to be as a nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.'*

(DfID 2009: 135)

The discursive construction of a 'progressive' Britishness was a particular preoccupation of Gordon Brown, as he attempted to combat Conservative narratives and provide a post-devolution British identity (Hassan 2007), and Gillian Merron (March 2007) Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, described concern for the world's poor as a core British value that could unite diverse communities here in the UK.

Brivati (2004: 232) argued that the social democratic tradition has a strong sense of patriotism in which the British are perceived as having special characteristics necessary for international leadership; 'at times this became chauvinism with a radical social agenda'. Nash (2008) identified this as one component of 'cosmopolitan nationalism' - a hybrid between globalism and nationalism - evident in New Labour discourse: Britain presented as the greatest nation because it leads the world in globalist values and policies. The second component is the assertion of enlightened self-interest: we do not have to give up our national interest to help non-national others. She criticised what she sees as the slide from globalism to cosmopolitan nationalism in the Make Poverty History campaign leading to a narcissistic sentimentalism. It is also noteworthy that at times, it is the generosity of the British people that was highlighted in New Labour discourse and here the globalist component was lost.

As discussed earlier, although moral and self-interested claims are considered in turn, this is to analytically separate claims that are closely interwoven in New Labour texts. It is left until Section 4.4.4 to discuss Blair's enlightened self-interested claim that tackling global poverty protects and spreads 'our' values throughout the world and, with particular focus on an American audience, that we need to be seen to be even-handed in the promotion of 'universal values'. Brown also made a universal claim about a shared moral sense, presenting a globalist discourse of moral interdependence, and this is discussed in Section 4.3.6.

#### **4.3.3 Our moral responsibility**

Moral responsibility for tackling poverty was asserted in both domains. First, emotive language was used in both domains in morally locating responsibility: poverty is a *scar* on the soul of Britain and conscience of the world; it *shames* Britain and the international community. The scar on the soul was a common phase used after September 11 to US audience, and, as discussed later (Section 4.4.7), combined this highly morally imbued imagery with threat.

*'Child poverty is a scar on Britain's soul and an affront to our sense of decency as a nation.'*

(Brown, December 2001a)

*'For it was an outrage that in the Tory years one child in every three born in our country was born into poverty, it was shameful that Britain had the worst record for child poverty of all the countries in Europe, it was an affront to human dignity that a poor child from a poor family was three times more likely to die before the age of one.'*

(Brown, September 2005)

*'The state of Africa is a scar on the conscience of the world. But if the world as a community focused on it, we could heal it. And if we don't, it will become deeper and angrier.'*

(Blair, September 2001)

*'Let it be our generation that takes up the challenge and discharges our duty to remove the scar of poverty and hopelessness from the world's soul.'*

(Brown, December 2001b)

*'Well the first thing is to say loud and clear that, as things stand, we are not going to achieve the MDGs. We are not moving fast enough. This is simply unacceptable. It cannot be tolerated. It should shame the world. And we have to do something about it.'*

(Benn, February 2004)

Second, culpability for poverty was assigned to the Tories domestically and goes unmentioned globally, but 'our' moral responsibility to take action is

stressed. Biccum (2005) highlighted the lack of reasons given for the existence of poverty and the elision of a historical narrative in New Labour's development discourse. Third, in both domains, this moral responsibility belongs to 'this generation'; indeed, it is 'the greatest moral challenge facing this generation'. Domestically, Blair's (March 1999) 'historic aim' was to end child poverty in a generation and '*action to eradicate child poverty is the obligation this generation owes to the next*' (Brown July 2004). On rare occasions the claim extended to ending pensioner poverty in a generation but, as in the global discourse, the focus remained predominately on children. The global discourse had a particular focus on children, with Brown (February 2001) arguing that '*the face of global poverty is the face of a young child*'.

In the global discourse the globalisation narrative of 'new times' was drawn on (McGrew 2004). Our moral responsibility stems from the particular situation in which we find ourselves today; that is, our knowledge of the existence of poverty and our ability to end it. These were portrayed as features of contemporary globalisation and we must 'ensure that globalisation works for the poor'. The choice is simply between a globalisation wisely managed and working for 'the people' or poorly managed and increasing poverty and inequality.

*'Globalisation can be for the people or against the people. Poorly managed, globalisation can create a vicious circle of poverty, widening inequality and increasing resentment. Managed wisely it can lift millions out of deprivation and become the high road to a more just and inclusive global economy.'*

(Brown, December 2001b)

The rhetorical device used here is that of having to answer for ourselves to future generations: '*The struggle against global poverty will define our moral standing in the eyes of the future*' (Blair September 2005). Thus, 'we can't say we didn't know' (Benn May 2005) and we have 'no excuse not to act' (Brown, December 2005b). This device has been used generation on generation and indeed Brown's speeches in particular drew on and make direct reference to JFK and Martin Luther-King, both of whom made appeals to their generation and its unique ability to end poverty.

*'Yet today we have the knowledge, the technology, the medicine, the science, the financial system - all gifts, a capacity for change that no other generation has enjoyed.*

*And now we have no excuse.*

*No excuse not to act. No excuse not to heed the words of an alumnus of this university, Jonas Salk, inventor of the polio vaccine, who said that 'our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors'.*

(Brown, December 2005b)

*'When we have in our hands the means to enable every child to be fed, the sophisticated medical know-how to cure many of their diseases, the means to abolish their poverty, when we well know the liberating power of education, and when the resources required to achieve all these ends are not beyond our means but within our means, how can we fail to act? For we have the power and obligation, never given to any other generation at any other time in human history, to banish ignorance and poverty from the earth.'*

(Brown, May 2002)

It is interesting to note here that a moral responsibility to future generations of British children is used throughout DfID's discourse as an enlightened self-interested claim, such that tackling global poverty is necessary for environmental sustainability.

*'We all have a moral duty to reach out to the poor and needy. But we also owe it to our children and our grandchildren to address these issues as a matter of urgency. If we do not do so there is a real danger that, by the middle of the next century, the world will simply not be sustainable.'*

(DfID 1997)

Both the global and domestic poverty discourses were set within a framework of rights and responsibilities in community, but the emphasis on the actors in this arrangement differed. In the domestic domain, the welfare state narrative has been focused on the rights and responsibilities of benefit receipts, with a strong emphasis on their responsibilities. In the global domain, the focus was on the relationship between donor and recipient countries, with the responsibilities of the donor countries most commonly asserted. Unlike the domestic poor then, the global poor themselves did not figure in this relationship as subjects that were required to change. Whilst the emphasis on the responsibilities of those in benefit receipt was less common in the child poverty discourse than the wider welfare discourse, and of course this is also once removed from the child as the subject for anti-poverty measures, it was nonetheless present and the two discourses necessarily interacted. Crucially, the assertion of our moral responsibility in the global domain was commonly made independently of a reciprocal responsibility from poor country governments. On the occasions this relationship was asserted, it was given a moral emphasis - a covenant rather than a contract - and the only reference to the poor themselves was the responsibility their governments have to them.

This extract from the domestic discourse below is unusual in the moral claim it made, such that the welfare state is the site of our obligations to each other beyond any self-interested justifications and without reference to any reciprocal responsibilities.

*'In my view the purpose of the welfare state is to spread power. It goes beyond self interest. We don't contribute to the welfare state just because we hope to benefit - we contribute because we have obligations to each other.'*

(Purnell, May 2009)

#### **4.3.4 Patent injustice and promises to be kept**

In New Labour's global poverty discourse the moral case was repeatedly asserted and emotive moral language and imagery drawn on heavily. A narrative of global justice was not explicated until a key speech made by Gordon Brown in December 2004 on the eve of the 'Year for Development' (considered in Section 4.3.6). Instead the moral case was presented as self-evident from images of abject poverty drawn on. Perhaps as Sen (1999: 283) argued, '*the greatest relevance of ideas of justice lies in the identification of patent injustice, on which reasoned argument is possible, rather than in the derivation of some extant formula for how the world should be precisely run*'.

In many representations what is at stake is life and death; millions of people die every year from the '*ravages of conflict, famine and disease*' (Blair, March 2006). The urgency of the situation was expressed and speeches provided personalised accounts of visits and encounters in Africa. These often expressed the emotion and power of this experience so removed from their everyday knowledge, such that 'if you see what I have seen you would act'.

*'And urgent because we know that for the 115 million children not going to school today, for the thirty thousand mothers facing the death today of their infant child, and for the two billion people living on less than \$2 a day for all their necessities, development can mean the difference between life and death.'*

(Brown, January 2003)

*'If you come with me on my travels and see what I and so many others have seen: young children in Asia, their lives lived out above open sewers and yet still their eyes bright and full of hope; young men in Southern Africa urgently waiting for their new political freedom to bring economic freedom from unemployment and poverty.'*

(Brown, December 2000a)

*'Here we are at the beginning of the 21st century. We know that in the developing world, pregnancy and childbirth claim the life of a woman every minute - women who die alone and afraid on the floor of a darkened hut with no midwife or doctor to help.'*

(Benn, June 2006b)

They also provided positive images of progress and of human agency such that '*every time, in no matter how small a way they are given the chance of a better future, they take it*' (Blair, October 2004) as they sought to counter the

idea that nothing has changed and the associated fatalism that is thought to be a barrier to public support.

*'Six weeks ago I was in Somalia at a refugee camp at a place called Wajid. Home to 11,000 people who fled the countryside when the drought killed their animals and shrivelled their crops - a sign of the world to come, perhaps, if we don't deal with climate change. Yet in this camp I saw rows of children - as many girls as boys - keen and enthusiastic as any pupils I have ever met, enjoying - for the very first time in their lives - the chance to go to school. Something good out of something terrible.'*

(Benn, June 2006b)

The Millennium Development Goals were held up, in contrast to the current situation of extreme poverty and suffering, as representing a moral obligation and (the start of) justice. A moral case has long been made by governments for aid, but the relationship signified by this aid giving has varied from one of charity to that of duty (Riddell 2008). Back in 1980 the Brandt Report made clear the duty of developed countries to share the world's resources more justly (Goodwin 1987) and the United Nations Human Development Report (1997:12), drawing on the Declaration and Programme of Action agreed at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, argued that: 'Eradicating poverty everywhere is more than a moral imperative and a commitment to human solidarity. It is a practical possibility.' The Millennium Development Goals can be seen as providing an institutional framework for furthering this approach and much of New Labour's global discourse seeks to gain and maintain support for them. (Although see Chapter Five for a brief discussion of the different frames within, and discursive uses of, the goals). It is worth pointing out here that not only was it necessary to secure funding commitments to meet the Goals, but America, as the key global actor, was not committed to them up to and beyond the G8 Summit of 2005 (Hulme 2007).

The MDGs - '*an extraordinary plan to definitively right some of the great wrongs of our time*' (Brown, February 2004) - provided a hook for moral and justice claims in a number of ways. First, the conditions of poverty often described are those addressed by the MDGs and were thus counterpoised - sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly - with specific costed and time-limited targets for their elimination. Second, the achievability of these Goals are stressed, countering feelings of fatalism and implying a moral obligation associated with having the power to act. Third, the Goals are framed as a promise made by developed country governments that much be kept. Fourth, a justice claim was made such that a lack of financial support from developed country government to fulfil this promise and achieve the Goals would mean that '*justice promised will forever be justice denied*' (Brown, March 2005). Fifth, the tracking of progress provided a powerful picture of the huge disparity between the goal end of 2015 and projections of when the

Goals will actually be met: '*too long to wait for justice*' (Brown, December 2004).

The framing of the issues of aid, debt and trade in justice terms was a central feature of the Make Poverty History coalition of charities and NGOs established in the run-up to the G8 Summit and drew on the lessons of its predecessor Jubilee 2000's debt relief campaign. In both cases campaigners have highlighted the 'borrowing' of language by the New Labour government, which for some represents a success and for others appropriation (Collins et al., 2001, Sireau 2009). The moral and justice framing had been a feature throughout New Labour's global poverty discourse but this was heightened in speeches from early 2004 onwards in anticipation of the G8 Summit.

This extract below from Gordon Brown's speech in early 2005 illustrates how some of the moral and justice claims associated with the MDGs were interwoven and how the justice claims mirrored the MPH campaign's call for justice on trade, aid and debt.

*'Our agenda for the G7 is founded on the realisation that despite the promise of every world leader, every government, every international authority that by 2015 we would achieve primary education for all, a two thirds fall in infant mortality and a halving of global poverty, at best on present progress in sub Saharan Africa:*

- *primary education for all will be delivered not as the Millennium Development Goals solemnly promised in 2015 but 2130 - that is 115 years late;*
- *the halving of poverty not as the richest countries promised by 2-0-1-5 but by 2-1-5-0 - that is 135 years late;*
- *and the elimination of avoidable infant deaths not as we the richest nations promised by 2015 but by 2165 - that is 150 years late.*

*Africans know that it is often necessary to be patient but the whole world should now know that 150 years is too long to ask peoples to wait for justice.*

*And I say to this audience: justice promised will forever be justice denied until we remove from this generation the burden of debts incurred by past generations.*

*Justice promised will forever be justice denied unless we remove trade barriers that undermined economic empowerment.*

*Justice promised will forever be justice denied unless there is a plan for Africa and all poorest countries as bold as the Marshall Plan of the 1940s, releasing the resources we need to match reform with finance to tackle illiteracy, disease and poverty.'*

(Brown, January 2005)

One criticism of framing progress on MDGs in justice terms though is that they only represent the start of move towards a just world at best. As Williams (2005: 147) argued, 'it is important to recall that although Blair

stressed that eliminating world poverty was the ‘greatest moral challenge facing our generation’, his government’s objective remained limited to halving the numbers of people living in absolute poverty by 2015. This means that even if the government achieved its objective, some 600 million people - or one person in ten - would still reside in absolute poverty while some 2.2 billion would still live on less than \$2 a day’. Even this criticism leaves aside the question of justice claims that address global inequality that authors such as Pogge (2008) point to. However, this ignores the complex history of the development of the MDGs and the amount of political energy needed to get support for even this time-specific goal from the international institutions and donor countries. The next sub-section discusses New Labour’s approach to questions of global inequality. First the lack of images of patent injustice in the domestic poverty domain is briefly discussed.

The images of extreme poverty conjured up by New Labour’s global discourse would have resonated with the public used to watching televised events such as Comic Relief and Live 8. Indeed, they are the kind of images described when participants in focus groups are asked about poverty (Fabian Society 2005). It must be acknowledged that the extreme nature of poverty in the developing world sets up a particular moral claim that cannot be made about poverty in the developed world. However, this does not negate the need for images of poverty in the domestic discourse. Despite the proximity of domestic poverty, there is scepticism amongst the public about its existence and perceived knowledge of the lives of benefit recipients. MPs have described this perception with reference to the figure of the skeptical constituent. He is a low-income working man with a family, who lives down the road from a family in receipt of out-of-work benefits that seemingly has access to consumer luxuries his family could not afford (personal interviews; Hansard 31 March 2011). This may explain the reluctance to provide images of domestic poverty that do not link with current public perceptions; that is to present domestic poverty as a current lived experience that is patent injustice. However, as discussed above, towards the end of the time in office there was recognition that this was necessary to achieve sufficient public support, with Murphy (July 2006) calling for *‘young people’s voices to be heard’* to *‘extend awareness of what poverty means to children in Britain’*, albeit seemingly still reluctant to be the voice of these claims themselves.

There are very few examples of this imagery in New Labour’s domestic poverty discourse. Brown presented one such image at the conference of the National Council of One Parent Families:

*‘Let us never again have parts of Britain where there are children without nutrition, living in homes without heat, attending schools without proper books, in inner cities without hope. Children endlessly watching TV adverts of possessions they can see but never afford to buy - spectators in the race of life rather than likely to be its success stories.’*  
(Brown, December 2000b)

The most thoughtful portrayal of the experience of poverty is that of Hilary Benn, then Secretary of State for International Development, in a speech connecting poverty in the developed and developing world, discussed in Chapter Two. He drew on consensual budget standards work to show how those in poverty lack items and opportunities that are considered essential and also illustrated how poverty and inequality can be a matter of life and death in Britain too.

*'Do you know, more than a quarter of the poorest families in Britain say they can't afford to have their friends or family round for a meal at least once a month? Do you know that nearly one in seven say they can't afford two pairs of all weather shoes for each of their children? Do you know that half say they can't afford a holiday away from home for just one week a year.'*

*And their exclusion goes beyond material things.*

*Because, if you live in poverty, you are much less likely to get involved in any form of activity aimed at influencing decisions.*

*And you're more likely to die earlier. Men in Kensington's Courtfield ward, not far from where we meet today, live on average 16 years longer than men in Bethnal Green. Do you know why? Because a lifetime of poverty and exclusion chips away at their health each and every day.'*

(Benn, February 2007)

Blair's speech to the Labour Party Conference in 1999 provided another rare example of the use of imagery in relation to their commitment to ending child poverty. However, the materiality of poverty was lost as the description of two babies born in the same maternity ward was imbued with a narrative of strong families, the centrality of employment and the linking of poverty and dysfunctionality. He compared one baby whose mother has no partner or extended family and no job living in unfit temporary accommodation and another baby from a prosperous home with two parents and grandparents, the father earning a decent income. He then moved on to images of negative childhood experiences: '*A child is a vulnerable witness on life. A child sees her father hit her mother. A child runs away from home. A child takes drugs. A child gives birth at 12.*' The goal that '*all children are given the best start in life*' was extended:

*'That every child can grow up with high hopes, certainty, love, security and the attention of their parents. Strong families cherished by a strong community. That is our national moral purpose. So when I pledge to end child poverty in 20 years, I do so not just as a politician, but as a father.'*

(Blair, September 1999)

Another image illustrates the tendency to emphasize the experience of poverty as one of decline and the route to criminality.

*'Child Poverty is characterised by people struggling with the challenges of low income. The families unable to afford proper heating or to eat fruit and vegetables. The single mother who worked six days a week to scrape together an income, struggling to deal with her son being excluded from school and gradually drawn into crime.'*

(Johnson, March 2005)

As discussed in the next sub-section, a list of life chances statistics was often presented in speeches on child poverty and this had an ambiguous role, providing many discursive functions. In some instances it was followed by the assertion that the moral case is self-evident. Associations between crime and poverty are often part of the life chances statistics drawn on in Department of Work and Pensions speeches and this is discussed in later sections (4.4.6 and 4.4.7). Whilst in the global poverty domain the patent injustice was continually reasserted free often from self-interested claims, in the domestic poverty domain the moral case was commonly asserted as self-evident and the self-interested claim then made.

There are also differences in the way the two poverty targets were framed in New Labour discourse. Ending child poverty by 2020 was not described as 'a promise that must be kept'; it was a pledge, commitment, a target and a goal. Unlike in the global domain, achieving it was not portrayed as simply a matter of political will, instead it was a target that demonstrated the scale of their '*ambition and aspiration for our country and its people*' (Hutton, May 2006) and a tangible expression of their moral and economic purpose (Brown, July 2004). However, they did encourage campaigning around the target, and the End Child Poverty coalition duly choose to adopt this framing, with their 'Keep the Promise' rally, creating a public spectacle of visibly holding the Government to account on their child poverty commitment prior to the 2009 budget. This highlights the differently situated nature of the two commitments. As discussed in Chapter Two accountability politics, the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies and principles, is a key tactic of transnational policy actors (Keck and Sikkink 1998:95). In the global domain there was a long history of international declarations drawn on in creating the Millennium Development Goals and these were used to discursively hold their fellow donor governments to account within a multilateral setting, whilst domestically as the party in Government they could be presumed to have the power to make the policy decisions necessary to achieve their target, so they needed to rely on others to generate this moral accountability frame.

#### **4.3.5 Left behind, potential denied**

The global and domestic poverty discourses were linked by a common narrative of social justice in which poverty was characterised as wasted human potential and those in poverty are 'left behind'. Chapter Two highlighted the explicit connection made between the domestic and global

poverty in these terms. What is important to focus on here is that this provided a moral case in positive terms, providing a vision of what Brown often called 'social justice on a global scale', and latterly 'global justice'. New Labour's social justice narrative was a life chances model in which everyone has the chance to fulfil their potential and, rather than being 'left behind', they are able to share in the opportunities of a globalised economy. Underlying this narrative is a '*belief in the equal worth, and inherent potential, of every human life*' (Brown, February 2001).

This quote from Blair's speech to the UN Economic Commission for Africa is a rare example of statistics illustrating abject poverty and suffering corresponding to the MDGs - often simply claims of patent injustice - linked into a life chances discourse.

*'This is wrong. It is wrong that more than 1 in 6 African children die before their fifth birthday, it is wrong that only half of the lucky ones that survive are able to complete their primary education before they have to go out to work to support their family, and it is wrong that 12 million children in Africa have been made orphans by Aids. It is wrong that somebody's chances in life depend so starkly, not on their talent, or ambitions, or how hard they work, but on where they are born. And those of us who believe that everyone, not just a few, everyone, should have the chance to fulfil their potential, cannot and must not stand by and watch Africa be left behind by the rest of the world.'*

(Blair, October 2004a)

In the domestic domain life chances statistics were commonly used to make the moral claim. At times this was presented in terms of inequality and disadvantage as in the examples below.

*'The moral case is evident: **children in the UK are not even born equal**. The child of a poor household is more likely to be premature and the infant mortality rate is twice as high for the poorest. By the age of 15, the 5% most disadvantaged are **100 times** more likely to experience multiple social problems... Through improving children's life chances, we're also working to prevent adult disadvantage - that life of obstacle rather than opportunity that is still the reality for too many families and communities in Britain today.'*

(Murphy, July 2006, original emphasis)

*'Our starting point - the same starting point as Rowntree - is a profound belief in the equal worth of every human being and our duty to help each and everyone - all children and all adults - develop their potential to the full ---- to help individuals bridge the gap between what they are and what they have it in themselves to become....'*

*'For we now also know from your research that an infant who then grows up in a poor family is less likely to stay on at school, or even*

*attend school regularly, less likely to get qualifications and go to college, more likely to be trapped in the worst job or no job at all, more likely to be trapped in a cycle of deprivation that is life long...less likely to reach his or her full potential, a young child's chances crippled even before their life's journey has barely begun....*

*Tackling child poverty is, for us, the critical first step in ensuring that each child has the chance to develop their potential to the full.'*

(Brown, July 2004)

At times there was a strong link to a social mobility discourse in which the aim was an Opportunity Society (Blair October 2004b) or Open Society (Purnell, May 2008), in which '*people can go as far as they have the talent to go*' (Blair September 2002). In similar language to that of his Africa speech, Blair outlined this meritocratic vision in the Beveridge Lecture:

*'Social justice is about merit. It demands that life chances should depend on talent and effort, not on the chances of birth; and that talent and effort should be handsomely rewarded. The child born on a rundown housing estate, should have the same chance to be healthy and well educated as the child born in the leafy suburbs. It is only when you put it like that you see the distance we have to go.'*

(Blair, March 1999)

This social mobility discourse took on a number of claims: first, it is the goal that the life chances statistics are held up against; second, it is the goal for society as a good in itself, as a fair situation, and third, as a necessity for a socially cohesive society. Thus it moves from moral claim focused on those in poverty to a moral claim based on a social good and then an associated social good with an implied threat of inaction. At other times, the emphasis was less on a hierarchy that could be climbed and more on notions of a '*flourishing life*' and '*a society of powerful people with the capabilities to be masters of their lives. And this requires power, wealth and opportunity to be more fairly and justly distributed*' (Purnell, May 2009). This speech drew heavily on the language of Sen's concept of quality of life as the capability to achieve the valuable functionings that are constitutive of flourishing lives. This concept emphasises the positive freedom of a life of one's choosing rather than more conventional accounts of success (Qizilbach 1998). Brown too, in both domestic and global speeches, presented a broader vision of talents unrealised (for example, December 2005a; May 2006). The Fabian Commission on Life Chances and Child Poverty (2005: 38) made the case for a discourse of life chances that goes beyond social mobility and meritocracy:

*'What concerns us...is not merely the fact that talented children from income-poor backgrounds are less likely to realise their potential than those from affluent families, but that all children from income-poor backgrounds are less likely to realise their potential and to live in meaningful and rewarding ways than children from affluent families.'*

*The goal is therefore to improve experiences and outcomes for all children and not merely to increase social mobility amongst the most able children, according to a meritocratic view of social justice.'*

In both the global and domestic discourses a dynamic situation was portrayed in which those in poverty are being 'left behind' whilst others prosper. In some global speeches it was the continent of Africa '*left behind by the rest of the world*' (Blair, October 2004a), more often though the focus was on the children in poverty. Whilst in the global domain the argument often remained at the contrast of abject poverty and suffering 'in a world of affluence', in both domains the social justice narrative was that of social investment with a particular focus on education. Here the government has a responsibility to equip its citizens with the skills necessary for the global economy. The key dual claim domestically was that in this context tackling poverty is both morally and economically right, and so the notion of developing children's potential took on a distinctively competitive and work-focused meaning (discussed further in Section 4.4.2). However in Brown's speeches on education in the global domain it was continually asserted as a basic human right. This human rights discourse does not appear to stretch to other aspects of their global poverty agenda, although he does call for a rights-based approach to social policy internationally (Deacon 2007), and it was absent from the domestic discourse. In contrast, Riddell's (2005) brief summary of donor government's discourses of aid suggests that this is a common moral claim for many other donor countries. It has also been suggested as a potential way of framing domestic poverty (Delvaux and Rinne 2009).

The goal explicated in domestic discourse then is what Brown called '*equality of opportunity and fairness of outcome*' (Brown, July 2004) or as Blair argued '*true equality - equal status and equal opportunity rather than equality of outcome*' (September 2002). Traditionalists within the Labour movement had long criticised the 'misguided division' between equality of outcome and equality of opportunity (see Lister 2005b). As Jackson and Segal (2004:5) argued, '*the promotion of equality of opportunity will in fact require greater material equality: for individuals to realise their potential they will have to enjoy roughly similar economic and social starting points*'.

In fact Gordon Brown in particular has strongly advocated for redistribution from developed to developing countries - calling for a Marshall Plan for Africa - in terms of enhanced debt relief, increased aid budgets of donor countries to the internationally agreed level of 0.7 per cent of GDP, and the front-loading of resources through the International Finance Facility (Brown, February 2004). He pursued the International Finance Facility with its traditional donor: recipient framework to the exclusion of ideas floated by other governments, in terms of a global levy such as taxes on air travel or currency transactions. He argued for this in terms of expediency, as the former could be implemented by willing governments and the latter requires

universal agreement. Domestically he has overseen redistribution to low-income families with children through the tax credit system though as Lister (2001) has argued this has been done largely by stealth and the moral claim continued to be made in terms of social justice as equality of opportunity or positive freedom. These claims were made in the context of a future-orientated discourse of perpetually greater national and global prosperity in which we can all share. What was lost in the domestic context where this was the central narrative is the urgency in tackling poverty as a lived experience today, both by children and their wider family, as well as the moral claim for a more equal society. As Jenson and Saint-Martin (2006:91) explained, the future orientation of the social investment state implies a move from social equality to social exclusion:

*'The post war focused on redistribution, on fostering greater equality in the here-and-now whereas a social investment state should emphasize life chances. This involves distribution and redistribution of opportunities and capabilities more than of resources.'*

#### **4.3.6 One moral universe**

As discussed above, duty, responsibility and obligation to the global poor were asserted throughout New Labour discourse and particularly in the speeches of Gordon Brown. The foundation and nature of these relationships changed subtly as different articulations of global interdependence were provided. Often responsibility was simply asserted with reference to images of patent injustice. However, in his speech to the Catholic development charity, CAFOD, in December 2004, Brown made explicit the moral argument that had been present in earlier speeches. Although arguably the nature of enlightened self-interest previously articulated cannot be separated from a moral claim, this speech sought to elevate the moral basis for tackling poverty. It presented a cosmopolitan vision of a global community based on shared moral sense, what he called 'one moral universe'.

Before examining how Brown arrived at this claim of 'one moral universe' it is argued here that this was part of a discursive communitarian project pursued in both domains to reconstruct understandings of the human condition and of liberty, such that they are realised through community. As Blair also put it:

*'...freedom, not only in the narrow sense of personal liberty but in the broader sense of each individual having the economic and social freedom to develop their potential to the full. That is what community means, founded on the equal worth of all.'*

(Blair, September 2001)

In a speech on child poverty Brown provided this vision of a sense of belonging 'beyond the front door or garden gate' that stretches outwards from family to friends and neighbourhood, to work, school and local community, and eventually to the nation as society.

*'At the centre of my vision of British society is a simple truth: not the individual glorying in isolation, sufficient unto himself, stranded or striving on his own, but the individual and family as part of a caring neighbourhood, a supportive community and a social network.'*

(Brown, May 2000)

This was universalised in the global domain, such that 'we have obligations to others beyond our front doors and garden gates, responsibilities to others beyond the city wall, duties to others beyond our national borders as part of one moral universe.'

(Brown, December 2004)

These ideas were developed in Brown's speeches on Britishness, in which he asserted a 'democratic view of liberty' as empowerment and necessitating an enabling role for government.

*'...a consensus is also emerging that our liberties, equal and compatible with the liberties of all, should be tested against the extent to which they enable each individual not just to have protection against arbitrary power or the right to political participation, but to realise their potential...*

*...at the heart of our British heritage, alongside the idea of liberty are the equally powerful ideas of responsibility and duty. So that people are not just individual islands entire of themselves, but citizens where identity, loyalty and indeed a moral sense determine the sense of responsibility we all feel to each other...*

*...But it is because my underlying philosophy is that every child is special, every child precious and therefore that no child should be left behind - in other words to ensure we empower every child and not just some with opportunity - that we need to recognise the enabling role of government.'*

(Brown, December 2005a)

As discussed in Section 4.3.2, values - liberty, responsibility, fairness and internationalism - were constructed as both universal yet distinctively British:

*'Ideas that are not unique to the British culture - indeed all cultures value liberty responsibility and fairness - but when taken together, charted through our history, are at the heart of a modern Britishness'*

(Brown, December 2005a)

He drew on writers as diverse as Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, J A Hobson and T H Green to explain why '*our passion of liberty...do not lead, at least for most*

*of our history, to a cult of self interested individualism or to a British libertarianism*’ (Brown, December 2005).

This recasting of liberty as achieved through community was an important part of the New Labour project. It was a response to neo-liberalism in both the domestic and global domain. As discussed in Chapter Two, Driver and Martell (1998) argued that as a post-Thatcherite party, it sought to respond to the neo-liberal primacy of the individual and silence on social responsibility. The discourse of community provides a sociological response that the individual is created by society and an ethical response that the individual has value and meaning only through community. There were many articulations of community in New Labour discourse in which self-interest and moral arguments are interwoven. In some instances the instrumental benefits of community and association were made, whilst in other instances there was a moral argument based on claims about the essence of human nature. It is the latter articulation, influenced by Christian socialism and associated particularly with Gordon Brown (Hale 2004), that is discussed here. This cosmopolitan communitarianism provided a continuation of Labour’s liberal internationalism in which foreign policy should be based on universal moral norms (Vickers 2000).

Implicit essentialist claims can be found in early speeches made by Gordon Brown in relation to global interdependence. Indeed, his first speech in the global poverty domain asserting our dependence on each other drew on arguments made by others in term of human nature that he returned to in many subsequent speeches. He argued that '*Martin Luther King's central insight was that we are each strands in an inescapable network of mutuality, together woven into a single garment of destiny*' (Brown, January 2000), quoting from a speech which continues:

*'...And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.'*

(Martin Luther King, March 1968)

Similarly, he often quoted James Stockinger’s articulation of mutual dependence from his doctoral thesis critiquing Locke’s ideas about the self-sufficient individual in the state of nature:

*'It is the hands of others that grow the food we eat, sew the clothes we wear, build the homes we inhabit. It is the hands of others who tend us when we are sick and lift us up when we fall. It is the hands of others who bring us into this world and lower us into the grave.'*

(Brown, January 2000)

However, in his CAFOD speech, as the Make Poverty History campaign for the narrative of the forthcoming 2005 G8 Summit got under way, Gordon Brown (December 2004) presented these as articulations of global interdependence before arguing that we need to '*take our case for a war against poverty to the next stage - from economics to morality, from enlightened self interest that emphasises our dependence each upon the other to the true justice that summons us to do our duty*'. He quoted political thinkers and religions in making an explicit essentialist claim; arguing that '*there is moral sense common to us all*'; '*we cannot be fully human unless we care about the dignity of every human being*'; and '*there is such a thing as a moral universe*'. This then led to a justice claim made in terms of a positive liberty and a recasting of the relationship between rich and poor from that of a contract to a covenant.

*'It is because the dignity of the individual is at the heart of our concerns about human beings, that those claims of justice are not - as many once argued - at odds with the requirement for liberty but are essential for the realisation of liberty in the modern world...*

*Enlightened self interest may lead us to propose a contract between rich and poor founded upon our mutual responsibilities because of our interdependence. But it is our strong sense of what is just that demands a covenant between rich and poor founded on our moral responsibility to each other - that even if it was not in our narrow self interest to do so it would still be right for every citizen to do ones duty and meet the needs, and enhance the dignity, of strangers.'*

(Brown, December 2004)

#### 4.3.7 Conclusion

As this section has illustrated, there are many articulations of the moral claim for tackling domestic and global poverty. First, it is a value-driven pursuit 'both at home and abroad' and there are various constructions of the ownership of these values. Second, moral responsibility was asserted in both domains, and was located through emotive language such as 'a scar on the soul'. Culpability went unsaid globally and was assigned to the Conservatives domestically, but it is the responsibility of 'our generation' to tackle poverty and globally this is linked to a New Times discourse such that 'we can't say we didn't know' and 'we now have the knowledge and means to act'. In the global domain, our moral obligations were often asserted independently of any corresponding obligations and when these are mentioned they are those of developing country governments and not poor people themselves. In contrast, the domestic child poverty discourse sat within a broader welfare discourse that stressed the reciprocal obligations of welfare recipients and characterised their behaviour as problematic.

Third, global poverty was presented as patently unjust with powerful imagery of extreme poverty and suffering and these corresponded with the key

Millennium Development Goals on child and maternal mortality, education and health. The time-specific MDGs provided a hook for moral, justice-based claims and were 'promises made to the poorest'. While acknowledging the extreme and widespread nature of global poverty, the second difference identified in this chapter is the lack of imagery of poverty as a current lived experience and as patently unjust in the domestic domain and the different representation of the child poverty target.

Fourth, both poverty domains shared a common discourse of social investment in which the goal is to ensure that everyone can reach their potential, though the global poverty argument often rested at claims of patent injustice. This was situated within a reconciliation of economic prosperity and social justice. The realisation of this goal requires redistribution, strongly advocated for in the global domain but not in the domestic domain. However, the extent of the redistribution needed was not acknowledged in either domain. Indeed in advocating for an enabling state and an active multilateralism, in the wake of the preceding neo-liberalism of the 1980s and early 1990s, New Labour reconstituted government's role as ensuring that everyone can successfully participate in the global economy. This social investment role is part of a future-orientated development strategy. Whilst all countries can be understood as developing, they have different discursive histories and institutional settlements. As such in the domestic poverty domain a social investment discourse had to interact with a traditional social democratic discourse and the existing institutional arrangements, as well as the predominant neo-liberal discourse. In defining their Third Way within the domestic debate then, New Labour created a number of false divisions, such that they explicitly rejected the traditional social democratic goal of equality of outcome although greater equality of resources is necessary to achieve equality of opportunity, and the child-orientated discourse emphasised their future life chances somewhat to the exclusion of current well-being.

The fifth and final dimension of the moral claim identified in New Labour's discourse is Gordon Brown's cosmopolitan articulation of 'one moral universe' based on a common moral sense from which our obligations to others stem. These obligations are described as ensuring that 'human beings of equal worth have the freedom and opportunity to fulfil their potential and live in dignity'. Whilst this was a distinctly global poverty discourse making an explicit global justice claim, it closely corresponded to domestic discourses in which liberty was reclaimed from neo-liberalism with reference to a British tradition of positive liberty necessitating social justice and incorporating a role for the state. The next section now turns to claims made in terms of self-interest.

## **4.4 Self-interest, enlightened self-interest and common interest**

### **4.4.1 Introduction**

This section examines the self-interested claims made for tackling poverty in both domains. In both poverty domains there was a meta-discourse of mutual interdependence in which it is necessary to recognise mutual interests and work together to achieve social goods and to invest to prevent social problems. In the global domain, and in some - but not all - domestic claims, this mutual interdependence is constituted through the process of globalisation. This produced enlightened self-interested arguments made in instrumental or consequential terms but which were at times imbued with implicit moral claims. In both domains, these self-interested claims were made in terms of prosperity and security. In both domains, tackling poverty produces the social goods of 'prosperity for all' (discussed in Section 4.4.2) and global stability and social cohesion. In the global domain, security concerns were made in terms of terrorism - linked in Tony Blair's discourse to the defence of our values - and issues of climate change, migration, the drugs trade and disease. Section 4.4.3 describes the way in which these global social problems were presented in terms of claims of enlightened self-interest or the more inclusive pursuit of common interests, Section 4.4.4 depicts how tackling poverty became part of Tony's Blair's narrative of International Community and linked to the global security agenda, and Section 4.4.5 describes the less common appeals made in terms of climate change and migration. In the domestic domain, the economic and social benefits of investing in preventing social problems including crime and societal breakdown were asserted and this is discussed in Section 4.4.6. Both these discourses provided an explicit threat of inaction and it is here that a moral argument is reasserted in that 'you reap what you sow'. The problems of these self-interested discourses in terms of othering the poor and possible policy drift are considered in Section 4.4.7.

### **4.4.2 Prosperity for all**

In both domestic and global domains addressing poverty was presented as enlightened self-interest in the face of a globalised economy and enabling the social good of 'prosperity for all'. Domestically, this involves investing in all young people to ensure the future workforce is able to compete in a globalised marketplace. A similar social investment model was advocated for developing countries and here it was argued that it is in the interests of donor countries to ensure that all countries are integrated in the global economy, providing the workers and consumers of the future for the next stage of global economic development. The domestic and then the global discourses are discussed in turn.

#### ***The threat of global competition***

The key dual claim in the domestic poverty discourse was that of New Labour's political economy: action on poverty is 'both morally and economically right'; 'what is good on ethical grounds is good for the economy'

too'; or 'social justice and economic prosperity go together'. A globalisation discourse mixing new times, threat and opportunity was provided in a number of Brown's speeches on domestic poverty. Here poverty has always been a moral cause but is only now '*in the new economy, which depends on knowledge, ingenuity and innovation, on mobilising the talents of all - getting the best out of everyone - it is essential to develop the potential of all children*' (Brown May 2000). The threat of global competition makes it in the national interest to tackle child poverty. As Timms (April 2008) put it: *'The scale of the economic challenge from globalisation means we can't afford to miss out on any potential economic contribution. So abolishing child poverty is not only a social goal it is an economic goal.'*

Whilst this is presented as a national concern, a heightened and individualised account of the impact of globalisation was also presented. This was part of the recasting of the State as enabler rather than provider. Thus globalisation presents challenges for individuals but is also 'an opportunity from which all must benefit' (Murphy, July 2006). An image of a single global economy was presented such that today's young people are the first generation for whom 'their competitors in the job market are the citizens of China and India, not just their peers from their community, country or continent' (Murphy, July 2006). This requires the Government to 'equip individuals to compete' (Murphy, July 2006); 'to ensure that no-one is left behind; that all have the opportunity to acquire the right skills necessary to prosper in the new economies' (Hutton, March 2007).

The domestic poverty discourse was part of a broader agenda of welfare reform. Indeed, the speech in which Blair (March 1999) famously pledged to end child poverty starts with the challenge of 'how to make the welfare state popular again', providing a vision of a 'modern popular welfare state' for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The need to tackle child poverty sat within this:

*'If the knowledge economy is an aim, then work, skills and above all, investing in children, become essential aims of welfare...The talent we waste through social exclusion, we waste not just for the individual but for the nation. Let us liberate it and use it for the nation'.*

(Blair, March 1999)

Aligning the welfare state and the tackling child poverty agenda to the needs of the economy was discussed in strategic terms as providing a clear rationale for public support based on enlightened self-interest. Lister (2003) traced this model to the Commission on Social Justice's (1994:95) emphasis on redistributing 'opportunities rather than... income', through to Giddens' (1998:117) articulation of a 'social investment state' which invests in 'human capital wherever possible, rather than the direct provision of economic maintenance'. Connell (2011) found many of the themes of this approach even earlier in the writing of Gordon Brown, notably in his 1989 critique of Thatcherism 'Where There is Greed'. Whilst Brown provided a broad vision of

equal opportunities as lifelong (see for example, Brown July 2004), the model is future-orientated and firmly focused on children as the extracts below illustrate.

*'We have made children our top priority because as the Chancellor memorably said in his Budget 'they are 20% of the population but they are 100% of the future.'*

(Blair, March 1999)

*'It is essential that we address the causes of poverty and provide support where and when it is most needed. For when some are poor our whole society is impoverished. Today's 5 year olds who will finish school in 2010 and graduate from college by 2015 will be our teachers, our doctors and our scientists, our employers and our workforce. So we must give them the opportunity to achieve their ambitions and make their contribution. By investing in our children we are investing in our future. Instead of, as in the past, investing in some of the potential of some of our children, it is time to develop all the potential of all of our children.'*

(Brown, July 1999)

Here the self-interested - or as they term it, economic - claim was that it is necessary to invest in all children for the country's future economic prosperity in a globalised economy. As Lister (2003) noted, this child-centred social investment strategy has been adopted by Canada and the UK, and is advocated more broadly as the foundation stone of a 'new welfare architecture' (Esping Anderson et al., 2002:6, 26 quoted in Lister 2003). A number of commentators have therefore explored the implications of this articulation of the child. Lister (2003) argued that this instrumental claim can be persuasive in a discursive environment that is unsympathetic to children and the idea of cash benefits. It is an argument that has long been advanced by academics and campaigners on child poverty. However, there is a concern that this model of children as 'citizen-workers of the future' overshadows the child as child-citizen. Lister (2006:329) for example, cited a study of national voluntary organisations (Williams and Roseneil 2004) which suggested 'a degree of consensus around the need to temper the futurist and instrumentalist social investment approach, in the interests of children's well-being and recognition of their status as child-citizen members of our society as well as a broader social justice agenda'.

The cross-departmental publication, 'Ending child poverty: everybody's business' again made an explicit claim in terms of self-interest. Here the appeal was to others beyond central government to contribute rather than in explaining government policy and again, the benefits of this policy were presented as a universal good to all groups in society.

*'Child poverty is not only a moral issue but is a key component of economic and social prosperity in the UK. This is why child poverty is everybody's business and why it is in everybody's interest to do all they can to make a difference.'*

(DCSF, DWP and HM Treasury, 2008)

### ***The next stage of the global economy***

New Labour were keen to expound their Third Way political economy in international arena, both in Europe (Blair and Schröder 1999) and the wider world (Blair, January 1999, quoted in Fairclough 2000). As discussed in Chapter Two, they discursively linked their domestic and international agendas in presenting Britain as '*a beacon for the world*' and '*leading by example*' with economic prosperity and justice advancing together. Gordon Brown (January 2000) called for a new paradigm to replace the Washington Consensus that recognised that 'sustainable economic growth and social justice are totally interdependent'. Here social justice is a prerequisite of economic growth and the role of social investment and education is stressed. In an extract that could equally be taken from Brown's domestic discourse, the primacy of children and the need to invest in their future was asserted and indeed, the domestic was universalised in wanting for all children what we want for our children.

*'(E)ducation the single most powerful weapon against poverty. Children - as I have said before - are 20 per cent of the population 100 per cent of our future. And instead of developing some of the potential of some of the people, future economic growth depends upon developing all of the potential of all. What we want for our own children we want for all our children.'*

*Universal primary education across the world is a basic human right for all children. But equally significantly it is the absolute precondition for progress in development and reduction of poverty. Countries cannot develop properly if only elites are educated.'*

(Brown, January 2000)

There was a difference in emphasis in the meta-discourse of globalisation in the domestic and global poverty discourses. Whilst the citizens of the newly emerging economies were presented as competing for the same jobs as UK citizens with implications for domestic prosperity without adaption to these new conditions, a more benign view of this competition was presented in the global domain. Here the global economy was presented as a non-zero sum game, and indeed, its further development requires the citizen-workers and citizen-consumers of the developing world. This was made explicit in a speech on the role of business in poverty reduction:

*'So just as East Asia and China have become over the last two decades engines of growth for the world economy, and just as when poverty decreases and income per capita increases these countries have become*

*a source of demand both in their immediate region and in the wider global economy --- China for example is now the sixth largest economy and the number one destination for foreign direct investment among developing countries --- so too today's developing countries can and must become tomorrow's developed countries: releasing the productive potential of their people, then their purchasing power, as sources of demand and growth for the next stage of the global economy's development.'*

(Brown, January 2003)

The next paragraph in this speech illustrates the extent to which New Labour, just as in the domestic domain, sought to present a mutual interest across a range of diverse international actors.

*'The issue for us then is that of course it is a good idea and morally right that developing countries move from poverty to prosperity. But it is also that for the development of the world it is an economic necessity that this should happen -- showing us that church and faith groups, NGOs, business and governments in developed and developing countries all have a similar interest in the economic and social development of the poorest countries.'*

(Brown, January 2003)

In general a softer and more morally infused argument was usually made for poverty reduction that ensures 'prosperity for all'. A central narrative in Gordon Brown's global poverty politics was the need for a Marshall Plan for Africa. This analogy was well developed over a number of speeches and pamphlets and contains many strands. Of relevance here is the retelling to an American audience of a generous and interventionist post-war policy aimed at the reconstruction of Europe, combining 'historic American compassion with enlightened self-interest' in ensuring the functioning of global markets and stemming the threat of communism (Brown December 2001b). This enlightened self-interest, Brown argued, stemmed from the 'frank recognition that, like peace, prosperity was indivisible; that to be sustained it had to be shared; and that to achieve this goal would require a new public purpose and international action on a massive scale' (Brown December 2001b).

As discussed in Chapter Two, whilst different articulations of globalisation were presented as justification for anti-poverty policy in both domains, this does not imply incoherence or even duplicity. In both domains the globalised economy was constructed as both constraint and opportunity for domestic governments. Payne's (2005) argument that all countries should be seen as having to pursue development as so called 'developed countries' also have to 'engage with the world order and chart domestic strategies for doing so' (Payne 2005: 234) seem most illuminating here as in both domestic and global poverty domains New Labour constructed a 'development' narrative in which all countries need to adopt a social investment approach in response to the

globalised economy. Midgley and Sherraden (2008) identified the social investment model as another name for the social development approach of the late 1960s. This has largely been viewed as an approach for developing countries, although they traced its antecedents back to US New Deal of the 1930s and the post-war ‘productionist’ welfare state of Scandinavia, and have long argued for the application of the social development approach in developed countries (see for example, Midgley 1995).

#### **4.4.3 Social problems and social goods**

This section now turns to the nature and interaction of enlightened self-interest claims in the global domain. In addition to prosperity, security and environmental concerns were most frequently cited as examples of shared or common interests and the threat from diseases, migration, international drug trade and latterly financial instability are also mentioned. Often security and prosperity were paired together and the concept of security broadened to include a wide variety of threats. At times these formed part of a list of global problems along with poverty but they were also described as consequences of poverty.

Globalisation as global interdependence was the meta-discourse, such that domestic and foreign policy merge. In some cases global interdependence produced the threat that events elsewhere have a negative impact ‘at home’ and implied an enlightened self-interested case for preventive action. In other cases there was a more inclusive representation of an interest shared or in common with all countries - both developed and developing - and an associated multidirectional interdependence.

The former was articulated in Blair’s famous speech setting out his ‘Doctrine of International Community’ in Chicago, April 1999. In the wake of international failure to prevent genocide in the Balkan conflict, he attempted to outline the impact of globalisation on international security and this was the start of his discursive project of elaborating an active multilateralism. Thus he argued that ‘many of our domestic problems are caused on the other side of the world’ and ‘can only be addressed by international co-operation’, one such example being ‘poverty in the Caribbean means more drugs on the streets in Washington and London’ alongside financial instability in Asia and the Balkan conflict affecting domestic jobs and increasing refugees respectively. A similar articulation with a more domestic focus was given in his 2002 Labour Party Conference speech with the examples reflecting the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September and the subsequent military invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001.

*Interdependence is obliterating the distinction between foreign and domestic policy. It was the British economy that felt the aftermath of 11 September. Our cities who take in refugees from the 13 million now streaming across the world from famine, disease or conflict. Our young people who die from heroin imported from Afghanistan. It is our climate*

*that is changing. Today, a nation's chances are measured not just by its own efforts but by its place in the world.*

(Blair, September 2002)

In Brown's global poverty discourse there was the oft repeated statement that '*our interdependence means that what happens to the poorest citizen in the poorest country can directly affect the richest citizen in the richest country*'. This statement was sometimes linked to the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September, at other times goes unsaid and in another instance was refashioned and linked to the Asian tsunami and articulations of mutual dependence.

*And does not already the response to the massive tidal wave in south east Asia show just how closely and irrevocably bound together today and in our generation are the fortunes of the richest persons in the richest country to the fate of the poorest persons in the poorest country of the world even when they are strangers and have never met? People who now see that they have the same shared concerns, the same mutual interests, the same common needs and the same linked destinies.*

(Brown, January 2005)

This is illustrative of the fluidity of Brown's discourse of interdependence and the interweaving of its application to both moral and self-interested claim. Further, being located in political economy and international development domains, though they contain references to the threat of terrorism, Brown and DfID's discourse provided a lighter treatment than that in Blair's global security discourse.

The Department for International Development's White Papers all emphasised the latter articulation of interest, as 'shared', 'common' or 'mutual global' interest. Indeed, this was the central theme in the last White Paper sub-titled '*Building our Common Future*', with a focus on common prosperity, security and climate (DfID 2009). Here the assertion of interdependence included a culture dimension and crucially, in relation to the recent financial crisis and to climate change, it highlighted the negative global effects of rich countries' actions.

*'The evidence of interdependence is all around us in the products we consume, the holidays we take and the events and issues that have come to dominate our lives. A financial crisis caused by US sub-prime lending - itself fuelled by global financial imbalances - has destabilised our banks. A flu outbreak in Mexico has led to a pandemic around the world. State failure and radicalisation such as in Afghanistan and Pakistan has brought terror to New York and London as well as Mumbai and Islamabad. Decades of rapid industrialisation in the USA and Europe'*

*has accelerated climate change: unsustainable growth in Asia could add to the problem.'*

(DfID, 2009)

All New Labour actors stressed the indivisibility of global social goods. These claims were about enlightened self-interest in the sense that they described the non-zero sum nature of these social goods, but this indivisibility also produced a claim in which the moral and the self-interest are as one in that social goods are not fully realisable if they are not shared by all.

*'But in the 21st Century, development is not merely a moral cause, it is also a common cause. The success and security of other countries profoundly affect our own success and security. Justice, security and prosperity are indivisible: none of us can fully enjoy them unless we all do. Building Britain's future and building our common future go hand in hand.'*

(DfID, 2009)

Indeed, in arguing for the need to go beyond the self-interested argument in his speech of December 2004 (discussed in Section 4.3.6), Brown attempted - somewhat confusingly - to separate the two claims by drawing a distinction between the condition of poverty and the moral value of justice. This separation was not successful because the notion of our society being impoverished when some are poor was in itself a moral claim in much of Brown's discourse, extending beyond a measure of prosperity to something more intrinsic.

*'So our interdependence leads us to conclude that when some are poor, our whole society is impoverished. And our moral sense leads us to conclude, as we have been told, that when there is an injustice anywhere, it is a threat to justice everywhere.'*

Similar discursive interweaving can be found in Blair's speeches advocating an active multilateralism such that our interests lay in the global and even-handed application of values that are both 'ours' and 'universal'. The construction of an enlightened self-interested claim for tackling poverty within this global security narrative is discussed in detail in the following section.

#### **4.4.4 Defending our values through active multilateralism**

In putting forward his doctrine of international community, Blair (April 1999) provided an instrumental view of community in which partnership and cooperation are necessary to pursue self-interest. As discussed in Chapter Three, he argued that this notion of community links domestic and global politics. This was elaborated on in a later speech in which community is expressed in more value-laden terms based on the equal worth of all (Blair, June 2000).

*'Today the impulse towards interdependence is immeasurably greater. We are witnessing the beginnings of a new doctrine of international community....Just as within domestic politics, the notion of community - the belief that partnership and co-operation are essential to advance self-interest - is coming into its own; so it needs to find its own international echo. Global financial markets, the global environment, global security and disarmament issues: none of these can be solved without intense international co-operation.'*

(Blair, April 1999)

*'What are the values? For me, they are best expressed in a modern idea of community. At the heart of it is the belief in the equal worth of all the central belief that drives my politics - and in our mutual responsibility in creating a society that advances such equal worth...The idea of community resolves the paradox of the modern world: it acknowledges our interdependence; it recognises our individual worth.....'*

(Blair, June 2000)

In his Doctrine of International Community speech he described a new post-Cold War settlement which links morality and self-interest through the pursuit of 'our values' and here the indivisibility of freedom is asserted.

*'Now our actions are guided by a more subtle blend of mutual self interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish. In the end values and interests merge. If we can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society then that is in our national interests too. The spread of our values makes us safer. As John Kennedy put it "Freedom is indivisible and when one man is enslaved who is free?"'*

(Blair, April 1999)

In the continual discursive making and remaking of his doctrine of international community in the context of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the criticism that these are Western values was taken on and contested. He asserted that these are '*universal values of the human spirit everywhere*' but that our commitment to the principle of their universality needs to be demonstrated. There is a constant shift between our values and universal values, in that despite their universal appeal - '*anywhere, anytime, ordinary people are given the chance to choose, the choice is the same*' - they are not yet universally held. Justice claims were made in terms of the even-handed application of the value of liberty. This challenge was set out in the

second in a series of three foreign policy speeches made on the eve of his time in office:

*'To win, we have to win the battle of values, as much as arms. We have to show these are not western still less American or Anglo-Saxon values but values in the common ownership of humanity, universal values that should be the right of the global citizen. This is the challenge. Ranged against us are the people who hate us; but beyond them are many more who don't hate us but question our motives, our good faith, our even-handedness, who could support our values but believe we support them selectively. These are the people we have to persuade. They have to know this is about justice and fairness as well as security and prosperity. And in truth there is no prosperity without security; and no security without justice. That is the consequence of an inter-connected world. That is why we cannot say we are an open society and close our markets to the trade justice the poorest of the world demand. Why we cannot easily bring peace to the Middle East unless we resolve the question of Israel and Palestine. Why we cannot say we favour freedom but sit by whilst millions in Africa die and millions more are denied the very basics of life.'*

(Blair, March 2006)

Tackling global poverty is situated in this discourse as an issue - like climate change and the Middle East conflict - that requires the 'demonstration of an even-handed approach to our values'. Conversely there is a threat from 'a sense of alienation and discord' if these issues are not addressed. Indeed, global poverty is part of a powerful discourse of threat emanating from part of the world that is not free:

*'The threat comes because, in another part of the globe, there is shadow and darkness where not all the world is free, where many millions suffer under brutal dictatorship; where a third of our planet lives in a poverty beyond anything even the poorest in our societies can imagine; and where a fanatical strain of religious extremism has arisen, that is a mutation of the true and peaceful faith of Islam and because in the combination of these afflictions, a new and deadly virus has emerged. The virus is terrorism, whose intent to inflict destruction is unconstrained by human feeling; and whose capacity to inflict it is enlarged by technology.'*

(Blair, July 2003)

As such Blair (May 2006) emphatically linked the security and global poverty agendas, such that '*tackling poverty is one of the ways we can together tackle extremism which it helps to breed*'; '*defeating the causes of terrorism alongside defeating the terrorists*'. He asserted that: '*The answer to terrorism is the universal application of global values. The answer to poverty is the same*'. The emphasis was on the value of freedom both as '*a good in itself*'

and 'also the best ultimate guarantee that human beings will live in sympathy with each other'.

*'There can be no freedom for Africa without justice; and no justice without declaring war on Africa's poverty, disease and famine with as much vehemence as we remove the tyrant and the terrorist.'*

(Blair, July 2003)

This complex merging of moral and self-interest produced a discourse of poverty as threat that is also imbued with moral argument:

*'Calculate not just the human misery of the poor themselves. Calculate our loss: the aid, the lost opportunity to trade, the short-term consequences of the multiple conflicts; the long-term consequences on the attitude to the wealthy world of injustice and abject deprivation amongst the poor. We will reap what we sow; live with what we do not act to change.'*

(Blair, November 2005)

Within this narrative there is another threat in which values and interests merge, such that reaching agreement at the G8 Summit and in the Doha Development Round is necessary to maintain the legitimacy of multilateralism. Indeed, all three New Labour actors made the case for progress on the global poverty agenda in these terms. This was part of a thread throughout a number of Benn's speeches about the recognition of the power of politics to make a difference such that '2005 is a decisive year for multilateralism' and 'a test for our political system, both nationally and internationally' (Benn, March 2004).

*'What I would emphasise is that if we fail, this is a blow not simply for the poor of the world, it will be a blow for the whole of the multilateral institutions of the international community. It is why this Doha Development Round is of crucial significance for every single major country in the world at the present time.'*

(Blair, June 2006)

*'If talks collapse next week, the main losers will be those the DDA [Doha Development Agreement] was designed to assist - developing countries and their citizens. We risk undermining developing countries' faith in the rules-based multilateral system if we don't reach agreement. We risk withdrawing into bilateralism and weakening the rules-based multilateral system - from which all stand to gain: rich and poor.'*

(Benn, July 2004)

#### **4.4.5 Climate change and migration**

The Department for International Development has continually linked environmental concerns with their global poverty agenda. Issues of environmental sustainability, including climate change, were global social goods threatened by poverty. Environmental degradation, climate change and population growth were presented as security threats in themselves and also as pressures on scarce resources leading to conflict. In the first White Paper (1997) the issue of sustainable development was particularly prominent and was held up as the clearest example of mutual global interest: 'It reminds us that development is not a rich country/poor country issue, and that it matters to us all'. The greater culpability of rich countries and the greater impact on poor countries was acknowledged but the effect on all of us as 'we live, a large number of human beings, on a very small and a very fragile planet' was asserted (Benn, March 2004). At the 2005 G8 Summit hosted by the British government global poverty and climate change were the two joint agenda items, although poverty clearly predominated. After the G8 climate change was given greater prominence and portrayed as central to poverty elimination such that 'all our efforts to fight poverty will come to nothing if we cannot slow climate change' (Benn, April 2007). It also shifted from a future threat for our children and grandchildren to something we are experiencing now in terms of flooding and extreme weather (DfID 2009).

The inclusion of migration in lists of global social problems was rarely elaborated on in New Labour's discourse. The construction of migration as a global social problem resulting from poverty and conflict (which is itself attributed to poverty) is particularly interesting though because the poor migrant is the embodied intersection between poverty at home and abroad. Policies for asylum seekers and their children have already been identified as the missing link in New Labour's domestic child poverty agenda (Lister 2003) and they appear starker when held up against discursive commitments to children when situated in their poor countries. Hilary Benn presented a personalised account of asylum seekers at his constituency surgery in seeking to demonstrate that distant suffering can have an effect in the UK.

*'...we've learnt in this country that the consequences of what happens in other parts of the world inevitably comes and affects us. I see that every time I do a surgery as a constituency Member of Parliament. Why? Because 30-35% of the people that come to see me have had to flee, from another part of the world, to seek shelter in Leeds because of conflict in their home country. And that's just one example of how what happens in other countries affects those of us in the United Kingdom.'*

(Benn, March 2004)

Similarly, whilst Blair acknowledged the reality of the burden of migration from conflict largely falling on poor neighbouring countries, he described what happens in Africa affecting the rest of the world with many refugees 'finding their way to Europe and elsewhere' (Blair October 2004a). Whilst it

may go with the grain of public opinion, the articulation of a self-interest in preventing migration is potentially problematic for global poverty policy and British society in 'othering' the poor, both as distant others and as members of ethnic minority communities here.

#### 4.4.6 Investing in prevention

Turning now to the domestic poverty domain, the discourse of mutual dependence also had a domestic counterpart in Gordon Brown's appeal to 'a Britain where - because we recognise our shared needs, mutual obligations and linked destinies - it is not every man for himself not them against us, but we the people working together for a better life future for all' (Brown, September 2004) but enlightened self-interested claims that implicitly appeal to the non-poor predominated. Indeed, they often appeared to appeal to the public as consumer or as taxpayer.

In addition to the key claim that social investment will produce economic prosperity discussed above, New Labour made a related claim that investment will prevent social problems and ameliorative spending in the future. This was part of a wider reconstitution of the welfare state in which ameliorative spending such as out-of-work benefits is 'bad' spending and receipt of these benefits a form of dependency and spending on 'investments' in education and health and work is 'good spending' enabling independence. In Blair's (June 1997) first speech after coming to power, he argued that '*early action can save money later on - as well as being morally right*'. This was contrasted with a characterisation of the Conservatives belief that '*we could afford to forget about a workless minority*' such that '*while they were talking of cutting crime and social security costs, their policies were in fact fuelling them - and loading extra costs onto everyone*'. Specifically in relation to child poverty then:

*'children are not only our single biggest investment in the future - but measures to tackle child poverty are the best anti-vandalism, anti-crime, anti-delinquency policies we can pursue'*

(Brown, December 2001a).

As mentioned in Section 4.3.5, the list of poorer life chances drawn on in many domestic child poverty speeches had an ambiguity that enabled both moral and self-interested claims. At times the self-interested claim was made in terms of the financial costs of social inventions. Murphy (July 2006) for example, cited the millions spent on homeless families with children, free school dinners, primary health care and residential provision, and the further tens of thousands on crime or drug dependency, such that '*tackling child poverty is ultimate prevention*'. At other times the life chances list represented an enlightened self-interested argument that combined economic and social claims. This dual claim was that tackling child poverty will ensure '*not just a strong economy but a strong society*' or '*is key to a strong economy as well as a fair society*' and conversely child poverty '*stores*

*up long term problems which will ultimately undermine social cohesion and social progress' and 'threatens the very fabric of our society'. The problem of child poverty fuelling an endless cycle of disadvantage and those in poverty growing with each generation was presented. The problem is not simply one of the economic cost in terms of social problems or the loss to the workforce but that of social division.*

The achievement of social justice - synonymous here with social mobility - was presented as necessary to ensure social cohesion. In a few instances the goal of a cohesive society took on an ethnic dimension in the wake of concerns following the London bombings of July 2005 and Harker's (2006) independent report on child poverty for the DWP highlighting higher rates amongst some ethnic minority groups. Hutton (May 2006) argued that '*at a time when the integration of communities has perhaps never been more important - our social cohesion will depend on our social mobility*', and that '*we cannot have a socially cohesive society with such gross unfairness... We must look to tackle the poverty of race in Britain today*' (Hutton, December 2006).

Much of New Labour's domestic poverty policy was part of their broader agenda of welfare reform. New Labour's first Green Paper on Welfare Reform (DSS 1998) and Blair's (March 1999) subsequent speech committing the Government to ending child poverty were both framed as about '*making the welfare state popular again*'. The need for modernisation - primarily through welfare-to-work measures - and a public consensus on welfare policy were constant themes throughout New Labour's time in office. This saw a shift in the conception of individual motivation from a Titmussian welfare state based on altruism to an emphasis on enlightened self-interest (Oppenheim 2001). Indeed, Deacon (1998) identified enlightened self-interest as the key idea of the first Department of Social Security Green Paper and traced the language to that of Blair's speeches before and after the election. For example, in January 1997 Blair argued that a modern welfare state must '*combine opportunity and responsibility as the foundation of community*' and that:

*'...we will only rebuild support for welfare in the twenty-first century on the basis of mutual duties: society to give to those without it the opportunity to come back into society's mainstream. The recipients of help, the duty to make the best of that opportunity.'*

This notion of mutual duties continued to be a theme in Blair's speeches on welfare reform and poverty, and this extract focusing on child poverty mirrors that of five years earlier:

*'Tackling child poverty is morally right. But it also makes for a better society if everyone has a stake in it. If we give our young people a decent start - hope and an education - then we are in a position to turn round and ask for responsibility in return. It is a simple equation - we give*

*opportunity, we demand responsibility, and that's how we build strong communities.'*

(Blair, June 2002)

The argument that public support requires an active but conditional welfare state continued to be made throughout New Labour's period in office. According to New Labour then, the public rejected the social division of the Thatcher years but did not support the passive redistribution of the old welfare state; rather they wanted a welfare state for the twenty first century based on rights and responsibilities of a '*one nation society*' or '*nation as community*'. Concomitant to this was an emphasis on what Deacon (1998) called '*welfare as self-interest*'; the assumption that the overwhelming majority of people will act rationally to better their own conditions and those of their dependents, and as such the conditions of welfare entitlement should promote positive behaviour and penalise behaviour that would 'lead people to behave in ways which damage themselves and the communities they live in' (Deacon 1998: 308). This is exemplified in Purnell's speech made towards the end of Labour's period in office in which he called for further conditionality:

*'I want to see a welfare state where in return for opportunities that are meaningful and power that is real, people have the duty to take advantage of those opportunities. If they choose not to, society's obligations to them should reduce.'*

*Social justice requires such an explicitly conditional welfare state. Firstly because we know that conditionality works, in helping people to turn around their lives. And secondly because it is the foundation for the public support on which the welfare state is based.'*

(Purnell, May 2008)

Whilst the enlightened self-interest arguments are clear, they were embedded within a communitarian inspired discourse. So the threat to social cohesion of not providing opportunity has with it an associated moral component; from Blair's (June 1997) notion that '*you reap what you sow*', to Brown's argument specifically in relation to child poverty:

*'We need to understand that these children are not just someone else's children and someone else's problem - they are the children of our country, the children of us all. And if we do not find it within ourselves to pay attention to them as young children today, they may force us to pay attention to them as troubled adults tomorrow.'*

(Brown, May 2000)

#### **4.4.7 Dangers of inaction**

As is clear from the discussion above, in both domains narratives of self-interest were at times privileged over those of mutual interest in the construction of poverty as a social problem. In particular, the dangers of

inaction were highlighted in a discourse of threat. This was seen in Brown's continual reworking of global interdependence and the securitisation of poverty in Blair's articulation of active multilateralism. These discourses sought to persuade American audiences as the world superpower and, drawing on Lakoff (2004) as discussed in Chapter Two, illustrates the danger of making appeals through others' frames. Linking to America's securitized development agenda provides an immediate justification for action on poverty, but Abrahamsen (2005) argued that the securitisation of Africa is likely to do more harm than good, justifying authoritarian practices for those who do not conform and subordinating poverty goals to security goals with associated resource implications.

This is not to claim that this appeal was simply for an American audience. As illustrated above, the terrorist threat in the preventative global discourse had a domestic equivalent in the threat of crime and social division. Migration from unstable and impoverished countries was another way in which the effect of global poverty was made real and immediate. This preventive rationale was part of the broader investment discourse that sought to counter the notion of individual self-interest. Indeed, moral and self-interested claims were interwoven in this articulation of interdependence, such that threat is combined with emotive claims of moral responsibility, most obvious in Blair's (September 2001) construction of Africa as 'the scar on the conscience of the world'...that will become deeper and angrier'. There is evidence for the economic costs of poverty and for the associations between poverty and crime (Hirsch 2008; Shah and Rutherford 2006) and it is plausible that a sense of global injustice leads in some cases to radicalisation, and these concerns may well provide a hook for public support. However, these particular examples of threat of inaction that tend to 'other' the poor (Lister 2004), can drift into an underclass discourse and negate the everyday experience of poverty.

#### **4.4.8 Conclusion**

This section has discussed the ways in which New Labour articulate a self-interested claim for tackling global and domestic poverty. The twin goals of prosperity and security were central to their narrative. In both domains tackling poverty produces the social good of prosperity for all within a globalised economy. In the domestic domain the discourse of globalisation as new times was deployed in arguing that the threat of global competition requires the mobilisation of all talent. While this futurist, instrumental appeal can be persuasive there is a danger that this discourse of the child as future citizen-worker overshadows the current child- citizen. A similar appeal is also made in the global domain. Here a positive sum view of globalisation is presented in that the next stage of the global economy requires future citizen-workers and citizen-consumers. In both domains New Labour presented their poverty goals as a common interest for a diverse range of political actors. Indeed, this section demonstrated the range of claims in the global domain from global interdependence producing unwanted

consequences at home and an associated enlightened self-interest to a more inclusive representation of mutual global interests.

Tony Blair presented an instrumental view of community in his doctrine of International Community in which partnership is necessary to pursue self-interest, although this was later expressed in more value laden terms based on the equal worth of all. As he built a greater role for tackling poverty within this narrative he argued that our interests are served through the even-handed application of our values. In a similar articulation to Gordon Brown's moral universe, these values are both ours and universally held and an appeal is made in terms of positive liberty such that 'there is no freedom for Africa without justice'. This had a strong link to an American security agenda and tackling poverty is to tackle the causes of terrorism. Other self-interested security claims are made in terms of climate change and migration.

A discourse of mutual dependence is also found in the domestic domain but enlightened self-interested claims predominant and these implicitly appealed to the public as taxpayer. In addition to the claim that social investment will produce economic prosperity, a related claim was made in terms of preventing social problems and associated expenditure. This was part of a false division in the reframing of the welfare state, such that ameliorate spending is 'bad' spending and associated with dependency compared with 'good' preventive spending that creates independence. Thus, this adds to the de-legitimisation of this part of the welfare state and calls for benefit adequacy, and to negative perceptions of benefit recipients. Poverty was also portrayed as a barrier to social mobility with a resultant threat to social cohesion and in the wake of 7/7 was thus related to poverty amongst certain ethnic minorities. In both domains then, self-interest was recast as enlightened self-interest or mutual interests but in some constructions there was an implied threat - terrorism, migration, crime, social dislocation - and the poor 'othered' and everyday experiences of poverty subordinated.

## **4.5 Public support**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

Given New Labour's representation of its poverty agenda as a matter of morality and self-interest and its apparent hope that self-interested motivations will attract more supporters to the cause, it is important to ask whether there is any evidence that the public share their framing of the issue. Attempting to understand public discourses of social problems - or, as more commonly operationalised, public attitudes - is notoriously complex and relatively under-researched in this area. However, there is a small but growing body of research exploring attitudes to poverty and inequality and the 'drivers' of these attitudes. The focus here is limited to the available evidence on whether the issue of poverty is conceptualised in moral and/or self-interest terms and how this relates to support for government action on poverty. Reviewing the literature on attitudes to global and domestic poverty

reveals the lack of evidence on the public framing of poverty. It also highlights the problem with asking such a simple question. The public's framing of poverty is affected by, for example, its lack of salience as an issue and a lack of knowledge; scepticism about the extent of domestic poverty and its importance and of the effectiveness of aid in tackling global poverty; individualisation of the causes of domestic poverty; negativity towards government; and fatalism (see Darnton 2007, Fabian Society 2006, van Heerde and Hudson 2010 amongst others). Finally, it is only recently that analysis has considered a segmented model of the UK public beyond simple socioeconomic differentiation so that different 'publics' can be identified. Public attitudes to global poverty and then domestic poverty are considered (Sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 respectively).

#### **4.5.2 Global poverty**

Public support for development has long been thought to derive from moral/humanitarian motives and self-interest (Riddell 2007). DfID's (1999) strategy paper reported a 'more recent recognition of self-interest' in public support for development. However, there is no reference to this finding and it may simply reflect a descriptive reading of survey data rather than the establishment of a link between recognition of self-interest and support. The annual DfID surveys (1999-2010) attempted to measure how the public view global poverty as a policy issue<sup>3</sup> and the questions mirror the key messages DfID sought to disseminate. Respondents are asked to agree or disagree with the statement 'Poverty in developing countries is a moral issue'; in 2005 over two thirds (70 per cent) said they agreed or agreed strongly (DfID 2006). This proportion has remained consistent throughout the life of the survey (TNS 2008, TNS 2010) and is common amongst donor countries. In a later survey, 79 per cent of respondents agreed that 'it is our obligation as fellow human beings to help people in poorer countries' (Henson et al., 2010's analysis of DfID's April 2008 survey). The nature of this moral claim or obligation was not explored.

In operationalising self-interest, respondents in the DfID survey were asked to agree or disagree with the statements 'Poverty in developing countries could have consequences that may affect me personally' and 'Poverty in developing countries could have effects which damage the interests of this country'. A quarter of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they could be personally affected, with the rest evenly divided - 36 per cent agreed and 36 per cent disagreed, whilst about three-fifths (60 per cent) thought the interests of the UK could be affected (DfID 2006). Respondents were also all asked 'What ways, if any, do you think we in the United Kingdom can be affected by poverty in developing countries?' Relatively few respondents offered an example suggesting a lack of association with New Labour's self-interested claims for support. The most common response, given by 30 per

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<sup>3</sup> Changes in the survey questions and reporting mean that data from 2005 will be quoted, although reference is made to its consistency with earlier and later surveys where appropriate.

cent of respondents, was that the United Kingdom could be affected by immigration, followed by the financial cost of providing aid/cancelling debt (20 per cent), conflict and war (16 per cent), trade (15 per cent), UK jobs and inputs (12 per cent) and cheap imports (10 per cent). Other possible consequences mentioned by New Labour - risk of tropical and other diseases and damaging the earth's environment - were cited by less than 10 per cent of respondents (DfID 2006). It is possible that responses about terrorism have been categorised under conflict and war or it could be that this association does not resonate with the public.

A recently established tracking survey taps into the moral imperative for aid to developing countries, though not any self-interested reasoning. A significant majority of respondents (60 per cent) agreed that 'it is our obligation as human beings to help the poor in the world', and half thought that 'the UK should be prepared to share at least some of its wealth with the poor in developing countries' (Henson and Lindstrom 2010). This shows a similar trend to the DfID survey although with slightly lower levels of agreement. Of importance for New Labour's attempt to appeal to or construct a national identity based on the UK as a global leader in poverty reduction, views differed significantly on whether the UK should have this leadership role: 30 per cent of respondents supported this, 33 per cent did not, and 37 per cent were ambiguous or did not know (Henson and Lindstrom 2010). Henson and Lindstrom's (2010:12) modelling of support for cuts in aid spending 'suggest that the moral imperative to provide assistance to developing countries and seeing the UK as having a global leadership role are key drivers of support for at least maintaining the aid budget', reducing support for cuts in aid spending by 16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. It is a shame that the survey design prevents any modelling of self-interest as a driver of support.

Results of a qualitative enquiry using the Mass Observation Project find respondents refer to developed countries' moral duty, given their wealth and global inequalities, to assist developing countries in alleviating poverty, as well as possible benefits in terms of reducing conflict and migration. Interestingly, they also ascribe a moral duty based on historical ties between countries, predominately linked to colonialism (Henson et al 2010). Whilst Gordon Brown calls for support for Africa akin to the Marshall Plan, New Labour global poverty discourse is largely ahistorical and does not engage in moral claims based on Britain's colonial past. This perhaps reflects its commitment to directing aid to the poorest rather than based on historic links, and the complexity and sensitivity involved in describing the past and claims of retributive justice, and the possibility this further perpetuates old narratives of imperialism (Goodwin 1987). It is also thought that successful messaging does not make audience feel personally responsible or guilty (Delvaux and Rinne 2009). Of note in relation to the subsequent discussion of public attitudes to domestic poverty below is the finding that although respondents attribute the causes of poverty in part to developing country

governments, few blame the poor themselves (Henson et al., 2010). Similarly Darnton (2007) found that there was support for aid based on need despite scepticism about its effectiveness.

In terms of the Make Poverty History message of a justice rather than a charity frame for tackling global poverty, Darnton's (2007) review of the qualitative research undertaken around the event found that this transformation had not taken place. He argues that:

*'The transformative potential offered by the rallying cry of 'justice not charity' went unheard, in part because it was unfamiliar and hard to comprehend, and also because it was drowned out by the noise of celebrities, white wristbands and pop concerts.'*

(Darnton with Kirk, 2011)

In seeking to find new frames beyond the transactional charity model, he identifies the dilemma for the development sector, in that the frames 'will need to enable NGOs to keep raising the revenue they need now, but without jeopardising public engagement over the longer term' (Darnton 2011). There are parallels here in terms of the tensions in gaining support for immediate policy opportunities and generating longer term public engagement within the Make Poverty History campaign and New Labour's discourse in both domains.

Van Heere and Hudson's (2010) analysis of individual-level attitudes towards concern for poverty using data from DfID's 2005 annual survey provides complimentary analysis to that of New Labour's discourse discussed above in its focus on moral and self-interest claims. Their modelling of concern for poverty in developing countries found a strong positive relationship for those agreeing with the statement: 'Poverty in developing countries is a moral issue'. They found a strong relationship too between self-interest<sup>4</sup> and concern for poverty but this was negative. They explored this further using the two questions that differentiate between effects on respondents personally and those at the country level. This does not affect the direction of the relationship or its statistical significance, but respondents are more likely to be concerned about global poverty if it will affect them ( $p < .001$ ) than if it affects the UK ( $p < .06$ ). In discussing what their findings mean for DfID's strategy of building public support for development, they equate appeals to 'self-interested consequentialism' as preference-accommodating and appeals to 'morally driven appropriateness' as preference-shaping and ask whether DfID is driven by strategic imperatives of securing political support for development or is it genuinely morally-driven? Following Hay (2007), they warn that assuming the fixed nature of people's preferences, in particular

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<sup>4</sup> Operationalised using the question 'In what ways, if any, do you think we in the United Kingdom can be affected by poverty in developing countries?'

assumptions of self-interest and consequentialist reasoning, runs the risk of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is worth considering three elements of Hudson and van Heerde's (2009) critique of the existing data on public opinion and development, some of which have been addressed in changes to the DfID survey. First, the DfID survey measures 'concern for poverty' and this is different from - and may not correlate with - support for development assistance and/or particular policy options. Second, the public's political knowledge is low but this is particularly so for development aid. For instance, despite the centrality of the Millennium Development Goals to New Labour's global poverty discourse, they point out that just six per cent of respondents in the 2008 DfID survey know more than a little about them. This lack of knowledge was not reflected in survey design or analysis. Third, and related to the detailed examination of New Labour's moral and self-interested claims presented here, they argue that:

*'This research agenda needs to move beyond the traditional self-interest vs moral imperative framework and better demarcate self-interest as direct benefits (eg view of the world as a zero sum game) or enlightened self-interest (eg indirect benefits, positive sum game) in addition to other explanations such as altruism (satisfaction gained by others' utility (ie their utility included in your preference set), justice, cosmopolitanism (transnational identity or as global citizens), religious beliefs, humanitarian or moral sympathies, emotional responses, etc.'*

(House of Commons, 2009a)

Finally, in comparing New Labour and the public's framing of the issue of poverty, it is noted that a review of public perceptions of global poverty highlighted qualitative findings of cynicism about government's motivations for supporting development in poor countries, with participants adopting 'a 'what's in it for them?' view of policy making' (Darnton 2007:34). It appears then that the public may consider that their government is motivated by a narrow self-interest and this goes to the heart of the discussion about the nature of politics engendered by contemporary political discourse.

#### **4.5.3 Domestic poverty**

Tracking attitudes to domestic poverty against 'key messages' has not been considered part of the role of government in the way it has for global poverty. Indeed, few initiatives have aimed to build public support for the domestic poverty agenda (Delvaux and Rinne 2009). Whilst the government commissioned a survey on attitudes to child poverty in 2007 (Kelly 2008), it did not seek to explore drivers of support for their child poverty agenda. This is perhaps because, unlike for global poverty, it is thought that there is not a constituency of support as yet. More generally, whilst the British Social Attitudes Survey regularly measure public attitudes to poverty and inequality, Orton and Rowlingson (2007: 42) found that there is very limited research to explain attitudes, how they change and what motivates them, and they call

for more focus on ‘people’s underlying values and the discourses they draw on and how they understand concepts such as inequality and redistribution’.

Recent work under the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Public Interest in Poverty Issues Programme has attempted to fill this gap (Castell and Thompson 2007; Bamfield and Horton 2009), and this provides a more nuanced account to that available for global poverty. Crucially though, it is well established that the term ‘poverty’ meets with resistance when applied in the domestic context. It is associated with abject or mass poverty in the developing world and there is ‘reluctance to extend the same kind of sympathy to the poor in the UK’ (Castell and Thompson 2007: 10). Furthermore, there is a widespread belief that - unlike countries with mass poverty - there is readily available opportunity in the UK, resulting in individualised explanations of poverty (Bamfield and Horton 2009). The discursive starting point for many members of the public is therefore at odds with New Labour’s proposition that they need to tackle (child) poverty in the UK and the framing of this within a discourse of lack of opportunity and ‘potential denied’.

Focus group research by the Fabian Society (2005) on child poverty and life chances found that resistance to the idea of income poverty was reduced by the presentation of stark facts about severe deprivation and hardship. The reasons for tackling poverty that they subsequently advocated were based on the idea that ‘everyone should start off with the same level of basic needs met and with the same set of basic tools to carve out a place for themselves in life’ (Fabian Society 2005:23). This approach shows the possibilities of an approach that goes with the grain of public opinion in producing a stark image of poverty to counter arguments that ‘poverty no longer exists here’. This then evokes a reaction similar to that in the global context of patent injustice. For the researchers though, this ‘suggests that the public arguments about what poverty is have not been won. If people only care about the most deprived - about one in fifty children without the more basic necessities rather than the one in four currently below the technical poverty line - then the government’s poverty target become all the more difficult to meet...It will be impossible to do so if the majority of people *do not know what poverty means or why it matters*’ (Fabian Society 2005: 23, emphasis in original). Perhaps this is precisely because the public seriously underestimate the resources necessary to ‘carve out a place for themselves in life’ or, in New Labour language, to ‘fulfil their potential’ and this is exacerbated by their lack of moral argument for a greater equality of resources.

There are many competing public discourses of welfare that defy a simple moral vs. self-interested positioning. Unlike studies of public attitudes in the global poverty domain, the public includes previous, current and potential subjects of anti-poverty interventions. Here then, attitudes to welfare provision are differently situated as they are embedded in a welfare state to which they contribute and they may have recourse to themselves, although

the extent to which members of the public see themselves as potential beneficiaries of poverty policies is not clear. Dean (2001:58, describing Dean with Melrose 1999), found an 'apparently contradictory mixture of guarded altruism and pragmatic instrumentalism'. He found that fear of poverty extended up the income scale to medium and even high incomes and was a greater consideration than the possibility of wealth. As people were unable to locate themselves in the income distribution, with those on middle and high incomes liable to grossly underestimate their position, he argues that 'ontological insecurity might incline people just as much as calculative rationality to subscribe to certain principle of social justice'. As noted above, other qualitative work has shown much less public connection with elements of the welfare state targeted at the poor and associated negative views of those in poverty. For Horton and Gregory (2009) this highlights the neo-institutional insight that the current institutional settlement can influence public attitudes and they argue for more universal forms of provision. Added to this could be a political discourse that associates public support with taxpayer support and emphasises the need to produce a more responsible benefit recipient.

Under New Labour redistributive policy measures have appealed to self-interest by ensuring they reach up the income scale under Gordon Brown's principle of 'progressive universalism'. Interestingly, Bamfield and Horton (2009) found support for these measures that extends beyond self-interest, with participants whose income would make them ineligible still arguing for this wide coverage on grounds of fairness. In particular there was a concern about fairness to those on middle incomes. Horton and Gregory (2009) argue that attitudes to welfare are rarely formed by self-interest, with very few people exhibiting the characteristics of the classical economist's rational self-regarding actor, but neither are they based on simple altruism. Instead attitudes are driven by a sense of strong reciprocity combining a non-self-interested generosity with a fear of being taken advantage of, such that support for redistribution is conditional on people feeling that those benefiting will make some future reciprocal contribution. Sefton's (2005) cluster analysis using the British Social Attitudes data found 45 per cent of the population fell into this 'Club Members' group. As Horton and Gregory (2009:130) discuss, what is difficult for a progressive welfare system 'is where insistence on reciprocity in welfare seems to give rise to opposition to needs-based allocation or results in negative view of welfare recipients'.

Bamfield and Horton (2009) did find support for instrumental reasons for reducing inequality, some of which correspond with New Labour's appeal to enlightened self-interest. They presented participants evidence on the potential consequences of inequality, based on Wilkinson and Pickett's (2009) work on the correlation between inequality and social problems. They report that 'most of the participants (at least, of those who accepted the hypothesis that income inequality could generate social problems) seemed to think that such broader social effects of inequality would be an important reason for

constraining it - including those who had been less moved by appeals to intrinsic fairness at the level of the individual' (Bamfield and Horton 2009: 44-5). Given the discussion of New Labour's discourse of threat above, it is interesting to note that of the arguments for and against tackling income inequality, 'the idea that income inequality might generate higher levels of crime was always judged the most powerful of a range of instrumental arguments' (Bamfield and Horton 2009: 45). Similarly, the Fabian Society (2005) found support for the 'business case' for tackling poverty and disadvantage: waste of individual potential; resultant problems of crime and ill health; and the pressure this has on palliative public spending. This suggests that it may be possible to win further support based on self-interest beyond that based on moral claims as New Labour asserted. However, questions remain about the strength and durability of these claims as well as the conceptual barriers they may create to building support based on an understanding of the lived experience of relative poverty. Finally the lack of knowledge of the target to eliminate child poverty by 2020 amongst focus group participants in the Fabian Society's (2006) study suggests that this is has not permeated into the public consciousness.

#### **4.5.4 Conclusion**

Some tentative conclusions are now drawn about the public attitudes to both global and domestic poverty, bearing in mind the limitations of the data discussed above and the need for comparative research. The public express a high level of concern for global poverty. Whilst it is not known how this translates into support for government policy, it contrasts with attitudes to domestic poverty in which the public express scepticism. These attitudes appear to tap into the same conceptual framing in which poverty is associated with developing countries, images of extreme poverty and helplessness and aid is associated with emergency disaster relief. Research around the Make Poverty History campaign suggests that it has not succeeded in creating a broader concept of poverty in the global domain; the public framing of poverty had not moved from a transactional charity to a justice model, suggesting a shallow basis for more redistributive goals. Similarly, whilst resistance to the idea of domestic poverty was reduced when research participants were presented with stark facts about severe deprivation and hardship, this suggests that public arguments about relative poverty have not been won. In both domains there is scepticism about aid and benefits, and poor country governments and those on benefits are blamed for their circumstances. However, in the global domain the poor themselves are not blamed and there is support for aid despite these concerns.

Qualitative research reveals claims of developed countries' moral duty to assist developing countries in alleviating poverty, as well as possible benefits in terms of reducing conflict and migration. It is not clear whether this moral duty derives from relational frames of charity or justice. Public discourses of domestic welfare provision are also framed by concepts of fairness rather than simple rational self-interest. However, this is based on a strong

reciprocity that combined with scepticism about structural causes of poverty, appears to negate needs-based claims and produce negative views of welfare recipients. The current institutional settlement as well as New Labour's political discourse will have influenced these public discourses and a stronger moral claim is needed in the domestic domain.

There was little public connection with the consequential self-interested idea that poverty in the developing countries would affect Britain or respondents directly, and when this view was expressed it was negatively associated with support for poverty reduction. However, in the domestic domain focus group work suggests that these arguments can encourage support even amongst those less convinced by appeals to fairness. It may be that the public do not share New Labour's global interdependence framing, at least in terms of the argument that poverty in developing countries affects them. This may reflect the conceptual and spatial distance of global poverty or the real inequalities of its impact, such that the perception of the magnitude of the problem in the developing countries obscures any more limited effect on developed countries. Whatever the case, it seems that those who perceive an immediate effect are not inclined to concern about poverty, perhaps reflecting a sense of threat from an 'other' with migration being the most common effect cited. Consequential self-interest appears to be a successful argument in the domestic domain, where investment and preventative rationales and detrimental effects of inaction are necessarily more conceptually immediate. However, as discussed above, the strength or depth of support on these terms is not known and there is a danger, particularly when they focus on crime, that they 'other' the poor and create conceptual barriers to understandings of the everyday lived experience of relative poverty.

#### **4.6 Chapter Conclusions**

This chapter discussed the rationale that New Labour provided for their global and domestic anti-poverty agendas. It demonstrated how the dual rationale of morality and self-interest was consistently made for tackling poverty in both domains and throughout their period in office. These were conceptually interwoven but it was also argued that support could be secured on either basis and each was privileged and subordinated at different times. The moral claims identified were: those based on our values and our identity, in which those of the Labour Party and the nation are projected as one; assertions of the moral responsibility of our generation, based on the particular circumstances of our time and a special responsibility to children; images of extreme suffering in the global domain producing a claim of patent injustice, with the Millennium Development Goals addressing this as promises that must be kept; those based on poverty as lack of life chances and potential denied; and finally, Gordon Brown's cosmopolitan vision of a global community based on shared moral sense and equivalent domestic argument.

In both domains, liberty was recast as a positive freedom achievable through social justice.

The self-interested claims were made in terms of enlightened self-interest and a more inclusive mutual interest and often had an implicit moral claim. In both domains these were made in terms of prosperity and security.

Domestically the threat of global competition make it necessary to mobilise the talent of all and globally the next stage of the global economy requires future citizen-workers and citizen-consumers in a positive-sum globalisation. In the global domain, security claims were made in terms of terrorism, migration, climate change, the drugs trade and diseases. Global poverty was linked to the global security agenda through Tony Blair's articulation of the active multilateralism in which 'values and interests merge', with action on poverty the other side of the coin of military intervention and representing the even-handed application of the value of liberty. Domestically, poverty reduction is necessary for social cohesion and the cost-benefits of investing to prevent future social problems and economic inactivity and their associated economic and social costs were advanced, with crime a recurring example.

Looking across the two domains, evidence on ethnic minority poverty, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7, appeals to values and identity in seeking support for development, and Gordon Brown's construction of an inclusive 'Britishness', all contribute to the construction of poverty reduction in both domains as key to national cohesion and the integration of ethnic minority communities. Moral and self-interest interacted such that a strong moral claim for poverty reduction in the global domain, and to a lesser extent in the domestic domain, combines with the threat of terrorism, social dislocation and migration, possibly reinforcing negative attitudes about 'the other over here'. As discussed above, the poor migrant is the embodied intersection between poverty at home and abroad and policies for asylum seekers and their children were missing in New Labour's child poverty agenda.

Much academic investigation of public opinion makes the moral: self-interested distinction and the adoption of a self-interest narrative seen as a preference-accommodating strategy with which New Labour was associated. This chapter has paid particular attention to the different constructions of self-interest in New Labour discourse and argues that they have sought to take on the neo-liberal primacy of individual self-interest and realist views of international relations on their own terms and did discursive work in the reshaping of self-interest in both domains. However, it is acknowledged that aspects of their narrative could be problematic with the poor discussed in instrumental terms, as future workers and consumers, or as a potential threat, particularly in terms of crime and terrorism, and therefore may not sufficiently reshape self-interest. Self-interested appeals can often seem to be exclusionary in addressing the public as consumer/taxpayer. This is about emphasis and highlights the dilemma of trying to make both the global and domestic immediate and consequential to the public, and these discourses do

make important claims about the mutual benefits of a fairer society and contributed to the opening up of public political space for poverty and, to a lesser extent, inequality. Aspects of their narrative, when claims are made in terms of mutual goods, most notably in the global domain, can connect to more redistributive discourses.

One of the key differences across the two domains is the greater emphasis on moral claims for tackling global poverty as currently experienced. This no doubt reflects the severity of global poverty but also goes with the grain of public opinion in both domains. In this respect this chapter concurs with those who sought a greater emphasis on these particular moral claims in the domestic domain, thus providing a more positive narrative of the welfare subject and building a public imagination of domestic poverty drawing on the everyday struggle and deprivations. Here, though the debate centres on *which* moral claims are made and the nature of the relationships constituted. Images of extreme poverty that predominated in the global domain both mobilised support but also feed into the problematic framing of the global poor as helpless and requiring the benevolence of donor governments and individuals. Some of New Labour's global discourse feeds in the former construction, but they also attempt to move from a charity to a justice frame. First, they seek to dispel feelings of fatalism and hopelessness about the situation. They emphasise that progress has been made and construct the poor as virtuous and resourceful, taking any opportunity offered them, and thus aid is an investment rather than charity. Second, poverty is described in terms of justice denied and, in the build-up to the G8 Summit, a positive articulation of a justice claim is made. Third, they present a new relationship of partnership based on aid as investment rather than that of donor: recipient. However, public attitudes work suggests that the problematic charity frame remains and that emotive claims of our moral responsibility based on extreme poverty provided a conceptual short-cut to these dominant frames.

As the chapter illustrates, the interaction of different claims for poverty policy is necessarily complex. This also feeds into a wider debate about the use of the dual claims and the closure of alternative narratives and of conflicting interests. As this thesis demonstrates, New Labour's discourse and political strategy uses bridging language to gain support from other governments and the domestic public, and this is part of a totalising discourse aimed at countering the dominant neo-liberal discourse and achieving policy change through broad coalition-building. Incremental but real achievements can be made this way in terms of discursive framing and the public-political space for political agreements and policy change. Whilst there will always be conflicts of interest and different articulations of justice, New Labour's 'rhetoric of reconciliation' provided an important corrective to the neo-liberal articulation of individual self-interest and presents a social democratic mutuality. However, there a danger that some arguments take on a policy life of their own and this totalising discourse does sit in tension with some of the more

long-term and educative policy goals they pursued in the global poverty domain and with the goal of a political discursive environment in which alternative progressive visions of society are debated. The nature of the public politics of poverty constructed by New Labour in each domain and the difference in the public profile of the two poverty discourses are discussed in the next chapters.

## **5      Making Poverty History: The public politics of global poverty**

### **5.1    Introduction**

This chapter examines New Labour's public politics of global poverty. Section 5.2 provides a contextual account of post-war global poverty politics through the use of three literatures on: the history of international development policy, British development policy, and development non-governmental organisations. Section 5.3 discusses the way public political space for global poverty was created. First, it considers how the Department for International Development actively promoted their development agenda at home and abroad, drawing attention to the use of institutional devices - a separate government department with Cabinet responsibility, a single focus of global poverty elimination operationalized by the Millennium Development Goals, promotional White Papers and legislation - as well as the activist role of Clare Short. Second, the political leadership of New Labour's key actors, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, in New Labour's second term in office, the orchestration of the events leading up to the British hosting of the G8 Summit in 2005, and then third, its outcomes are discussed in terms of policy achievement and public mobilisation as well as the party politics of global poverty. Section 5.5 then examines related dimensions of New Labour's public politics of global poverty in more detail. First, their relationship with the global poverty campaigns is considered. Second, their strategy for building support for development, including the introduction of global citizenship education, is examined. Third, their discursive construction of the public politics of global poverty and the global citizen is discussed. This chapter highlights New Labour's leadership role and key party differences in terms of development advocacy. It also draws attention to the tension in various aspects of the public politics of global poverty in terms of gaining visible support for their articulation of the problem of global poverty and a particular policy opportunity, and a longer-term democratic and informed discourse. This chapter also provides a context for the discussion of the public politics of domestic poverty (Chapter Six).

### **5.2    Poverty in the age of development**

This section provides a contextual background for the examination of New Labour's public politics of global poverty. There is no specific literature of what could be called a British post-war public politics of global poverty. The study of British foreign policy has rarely included consideration of development policy and it features only marginally as a policy issue as is also reflected in the lack of discussion of public opinion. There are three relevant sources of literature from which the story can be viewed. The first is through historical accounts of post-war development policy paradigms that demonstrate how development discourses have mirrored the dominant US and UK domestic discourses in their construction of poverty and policy prescriptions, and provides a context for studying New Labour's as one of a

number of actors, albeit a relatively influential one, within a global policy environment (Section 5.2.1). The second source of literature provides a party political perspective, highlighting the different emphasis and institutional arrangements traditionally adopted by the Labour and Conservative parties, as well as the public politics of global poverty during the Thatcher era (Section 5.2.2). The third source of literature documents the post-war development of British Humanitarian, Aid and Development NGOs, describing phases of activity in which the focus moves from humanitarian relief work to political campaigning, the challenges of charity law constraints and tension between charity and justice framings of poverty (Section 5.2.3).

### **5.2.1 Post-war development policy**

There is not the space here to discuss the different interpretations of post-war development policy in detail, but an overview is provided, focusing on the changing fortunes of the ‘keyword’ (global) poverty, illustrating the links between domestic and global discourses and contextualising its use by the New Labour Government. In the post-war ‘age of development’, different paradigm shifts have seen poverty reduction privileged and subordinated as a policy goal and different conceptualisations of poverty have been drawn on.

Development and global poverty are post-war constructs. The ‘age of development’ was ushered in by President Truman’s use of the ‘developed’/‘underdeveloped’ dichotomy in his 1949 Inaugural Address. This replaced the coloniser/colonised dichotomy justifying decolonisation and establishing a new hegemonic ‘way of conceiving of international relations...in keeping with the new Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the progressive globalisation of the system of States’ (Rist 1997:72-79). Following this speech, the World Bank defined as poor those countries with annual per capita income below \$100, leading to the construction of two-thirds of the world’s people as poor (Rahnema 1991). The dominant development thinking of the 1950s and 1960s was a modernist ‘trickle down’ thesis (George 2004), such that development was considered a universal process and a large injection of capital investment was thought to be sufficient to ensure ‘take off into sustained growth’, benefiting poor and non-poor alike (Thorbecke 2000).

By the 1970s the emphasis solely on economic growth was questioned as poverty, unemployment and inequality grew and the external position of much of the developing world worsened (Thorbecke 2000:28). This reassessment followed the ‘rediscovery’ and subsequent ‘war on poverty’ in the United States and Britain in the 1960s (George 2004) and saw the emergence of NGO political mobilisation on aid and development issues. There was a greater focus on poverty amongst the international institutions and donor governments (Hjertholm and White 2000) and a basic needs approach gained prominence for a brief period in the late 1970s encompassing dual goals of growth and poverty reduction and expanding the concept of poverty to include entitlement to social provisions of an elementary kind.

Thérien (2002:239) characterises the 1960s and 1970s as a period of consensus on the need to grant ‘special treatment’ to developing countries and that ‘public institutions, national and international, had a duty to fight against the negative effects of the market’. This was a ‘golden age of development planning’ and a projection of ‘Keynesian liberalism from the domestic to the international arena’. In contrast the 1980s saw a dramatic change in poverty politics and is often described as ‘the lost decade of development’. A neoclassical revival in development economics based on perceived failures in development planning (Noël 2006) corresponded with a change in the political climate as parties of the right were elected in the developed world. The US and UK Governments in particular pursued neo-liberal policies domestically and exerted their influence in the international arena (George 2004). Developing countries’ substantial foreign debt and recession in the developed world led to the 1982 debt crisis, affecting much of the developing world and threatening to destabilise the international financial system.

This ushered in a policy paradigm dominated by the Bretton Woods institutions often referred to as the Washington Consensus (see Gore 2000). Development and poverty alleviation were secondary issues as aid became conditional on the implementation of stabilisation and structural adjustment policies (Thorbecke 2000; George 2004; Noël 2006). Neo-liberal trickle-down theory held that adaptation to the existing economic system through ‘market-friendly’ policies would ensure poverty reduction, a position supported by the success of the East Asian countries with so-called outward-facing economies. Internal causes of poverty were emphasised - ‘country-specific imbalances, policy errors, or political difficulties’ and ‘the primary responsibility for fighting poverty [lay] with the governments and people of developing countries themselves’ (Thérien 1999: 729-730 quoting World Bank 1996). There was a reduction in aid spending and that received was used in debt servicing (Thorbecke 2000).

Thérien (2002: 239) describes the 1980s to mid-1990s as a period in which two oppositional analyses of poverty and development emerged within the international institutions and ‘for fifteen years the ‘United Nations paradigm’ tried to counter the ‘Bretton Woods paradigm’ (Thérien 2002: 239). The UN agencies, along with many NGOs and academics, presented evidence of a reduction in developing countries’ GDP (with the exception of East Asia) and rising international inequality, arguing that ‘fiscal discipline and the policy reforms imposed through structural adjustment programmes were leading to a deterioration in living conditions in developing countries, particularly for the poor’ (Thérien 2002: 241). A highly influential alternative was presented in the UNICEF publication ‘Adjustment with a Human Face’ (Cornia et al., 1987).

In differentiating between developing countries, with reference to the growth of the East Asian economies, the old dichotomies were replaced in UN

discourse with the concept of ‘global poverty’, and as discussed in Chapter Two, their analysis was extended to the global North, with poverty and inequality constructed as ‘global in character and affect(ing) all countries’ (UN 1995). The UN paradigm moved away from understanding poverty and security as national categories to a focus on poverty as a problem affecting individuals and also emphasised sociological and ethical dimensions of poverty influenced by European debates about social exclusion, and thinkers such as Sen, Dasgupta and Townsend (Thérien 1999). The UNDP in particular has focused on poverty and inequality and St Clair (2004) documents its move from the ‘economic view of poverty and development’ of the 1960s to an ‘ethically formulated perspective that conceptualises and evaluates the role of development in terms of securing the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people, and framing these goals in terms of social justice’ (St Clair 2004: 178), and their Human Development Reports draw on Sen’s capability approach, conceptualising poverty in human development terms.

By the late 1980s, the World Bank started to respond to arguments that adjustment needed redesigning to protect the poor, as well as evidence that the public service provision contributed to the success of the Asian economies, and was designing a poverty policy. The 1990 World Development Report on poverty is often given as the starting point for the reappearance of poverty on the donor institutions’ agenda (Hemerijck and Schludi 2000). This, and subsequent World Development Reports throughout the 1990s, set out a three pillared strategy for poverty reduction: broad-based economic growth; development of human capital; and social safety nets for vulnerable groups (Townsend 2002). As such, George (2004: 75) identifies a fourth poverty policy paradigm emerging in the mid-1990s; a consensus around ‘adjustment with a human face’. Indeed, poverty reduction has become the key issue on the development agenda (Sindzingre 2004). For Thérien (2002: 241), the mid-1990s onwards saw the emergence of a third way in global poverty politics: ‘a new convergence of the analyses of Left and Right with respect to the problems of poverty and inequality’.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD played an important role in the story of development policy in the mid-1990s, notably in developing the seven International Development Targets to be met by 2015. These were later adopted as the Millennium Development Goals, and became the key development narrative. Hulme (2007) describes how these Targets were developed through a series of meetings of OECD Overseas Development Ministers focused around a list of targets from UN Summit Declarations and drawing on Results Based Management practises adopted by many of their national governments. Whilst the UK and Japan argued for a single target of income poverty reduction (based on economic growth), ‘human development ideas strengthened the argument that a broad set of goals was needed for any serious assault on poverty’ (Hulme 2007: 6). A compromise position saw poverty reduction as the headline indicator and when adopted in the UN Millennium Declaration, in contrast to the other goals, an indicator - living on

less than a dollar a day - was specified in the text. For Vandemoortel (2011) this amounted to a misappropriation of the goals to reinforce a donor-centric, econometric view of development, with this indicator perpetuating the idea of slow economic growth rather than within-country inequalities as the explanation for lack of progress. However, Deacon (2007) provided a positive assessment of their discursive trajectory, arguing that, despite his initial fears that they focused only the poorest of the poor, the international institutions have discussed their achievement in terms of universal services that will benefit the poor.

Chapter Two has discussed the new 'global politics of poverty' in which poverty has been rediscovered within global, European and domestic discourses, and the factors contributing to its emergence - the East Asian financial crisis of 1997, the anti-globalisation protests, the election of centre-left donor governments (Noël 2006). It is here that the New Labour Government becomes part of the story as a political actor in all three discursive arenas. Just as with the domestic debate about Third Way politics, commentators disagree on the extent to which the current global poverty 'consensus' represents a significant change and there are many articulations of this Third Way or Post-Washington Consensus as political actors seek to claim this new policy environment (see Bello 2008). Some argue that the World Bank has simply co-opted the language of poverty without fundamentally altering its neo-liberal policy direction (Porter and Craig 2004, Cammack 2004). Indeed, Sindzingre's (2004:176) argues that despite the World Bank's acquiescence to a discourse of multi-dimensional poverty, a single income-based concept still prevails and concludes that poverty has succeeded because of the plurality of meanings attached to it and 'to speak of poverty is to postpone speaking of development'. For Deacon (2005) despite his initial fears, there are signs of a move back to earlier discourses of equity and universality. Drawing on UN and World Bank publications, he argued that:

*'the intellectual tide is turning against the neoliberal social policy prescriptions arguing everywhere at a national level for targeted benefits only for the poor. The restoration of the case for good quality public services universally available with additional measures to ensure they are accessed by the poor is once again being made.'*

(Deacon, 2005:25)

In this reading, the success of poverty as a term around which many actors can coalesce has facilitated discursive and policy change.

A number of commentators have highlighted the complexity of contemporary global alliance building. Whilst 'powerful states (notably USA), powerful organisations (such as the IMF) and even powerful disciplines (economics) exercise their power through 'framing'; which serves to limit the power of potentially radical ideas' (Boas and McNeill 2004:1), 'they contend with other

powerful states (the EU, China, Brazil), organisations (such as the ILO) and disciplines (such as social and political science) to engage in a war of position' (Deacon 2007:16). As discussed in Chapter Two, Payne (2005:924) conceptualises a global politics in which all states are 'developing' and he points to the 'complexity of the patterns of interstate conflict that emerge from the intrinsically competing development strategies of the whole range of states', arguing that these relations do not fall neatly into the old development dichotomies, rather 'they spread across the full spectrum of material capabilities, they are located in different regions of the world, they have experienced different histories and they are characterized by different state-society relationships'. Indeed, he documents the interplay of various state interest configurations in the Doha Development Round negotiations.

This brief overview has provided a history of the fortunes of poverty as an organising concept in development and the different meanings attached to it. In particular, the linkages with domestic poverty politics are clear although in recent years these appear particularly complex and multi-directional. In this context, when New Labour emerged as a player on the international development scene in 1997 at a time of great soul-searching (Porteous 2005) and poverty had already been 'rediscovered', no discursive work was needed to get 'poverty' onto the agenda. As the next chapter makes clear, this contrasts with the domestic political environment they entered. However, as shown below, New Labour played an important role in shaping this period of global poverty politics and worked to ensure a continued focus on poverty reduction within a complex multi-actor policy environment.

### **5.2.2 British development policy and party differences**

The second source of literature now provides the British Politics perspective on aid and development policy. As a colonial power Britain provided overseas aid from the 1920s but it was not until the immediate post-war period under the Attlee Government - when Britain was itself a recipient of aid through the American Marshall Plan for reconstruction - that legislation enacted overseas aid programmes that operated 'not mainly in the interests of the donor' (Barder 2005:4). And it was not until 1964 - after the majority of colonised people had gained independence - that the first unified organisation was set up in central government to concentrate responsibility for overseas aid, following the Labour Party's election manifesto promise to 'give a dynamic lead' in the field of aid (Burnell 1991).

Overseas aid policy has traditionally had low salience and in the post-war period was not a focus of party political debate. However, the Labour Party has strong self-identification with the issue and there was a difference in governmental activity and the institutional standing of overseas aid between the two main parties. The Labour Governments of 1964-70 and 1974-79 instituted separate ministries for overseas aid that produced White Papers on aid and development whilst the Conservative Governments of 1970-74 and 1979-83 incorporated it within the Foreign Office and had no legislative

agenda (Barder 2005). The New Labour Government establishment of the Department for International Development has followed in this party tradition and has perhaps learnt from the institutional politics of previous Labour administrations.

Barder (2005) reports the limited success of the two Labour Governments' development ambitions, such that the institutional arrangements were not as influential as they could have been (Young 2001, Killick 2005). Echoing the lack of progress on the domestic poverty, the 1964-1970 Labour Government's agenda was curtailed by budget constraints and there was little increase in aid spending. Despite producing two White Papers on the future of aid, the Ministry of Overseas Aid also lacked political clout, losing its Cabinet position and having little say on broader development issues. Barder (2005:8) describes a generous rise in the aid budget under the 1974-1979 Labour Government, a significant change in policy direction from the 1975 White Paper with a 'genuinely new focus on poverty' informed by the basic needs approach, and a Cabinet-level position and high-level political support. Again however, the Ministry was not able to establish a supportive Whitehall environment and, in the face of the balance of payments considerations, was neither able to separate aid from the promotion of British exports, nor was it able to influence policies affecting development.

Despite the lack of White Papers or significant policy announcements on development, there was a significant change in policy under the Conservative Government. Indeed, Mitchell (1991:146) argued that 'few things so quickly symbolised Mrs Thatcher's victory in the 1979 general election as the changes that were soon made to government overseas development policy and spending'. As well as incorporating development back within the Foreign Office, the aid budget, which had been steadily rising, was immediately substantially reduced. In keeping with the Thatcherite domestic welfare discourse, these cuts were justified by claims of aid ineffectiveness and its characterisation as 'hand-outs' (Bose 1991, Killick 2005). This continued with successive rounds of public spending cuts until 1984, when, following public campaigning, there were no subsequent cuts to the budget (Mitchell 1991) and small increases followed from 1987 (Burnell 1991). By 1996 though the aid budget was still only 0.26 per cent of GDP, roughly half the level inherited in 1979 (Young 2001). The commercial emphases of the aid programme were also increased with the 'aid to the poorest' orientations of the 1975 White Paper redefined to include large infrastructure projects (Bose 1991) and the announcement of greater consideration given to Britain's political, industrial and commercial interests when allocating aid (Toye 1991). This became a public issue in 1995 when the World Development Movement won a court case challenging the use of aid to gain the contract to build the Pergau Dam in Malaysia.

Finally, of particular significance to the story of the public politics of global poverty, the Development Education Fund budget was cut to a negligible

amount (Mitchell 1991). As Burnell (1998) explains, this Fund established by the 1974-79 Labour government, was a soft target when pursuing financial retrenchment and the funding of organisations that campaign for what could be seen as a left-wing agenda was unacceptable to Conservative backbenchers.

Despite the real shift in policy under the Thatcher government, Killick (2005) describes the relative autonomy of aid policy from domestic politics, and notes that Conservative aid ministers were held in good regard internationally and were advocating debt forgiveness within the IMF. At home though, they 'shied away from giving prominence of the goal of poverty reduction for fear of adverse reaction within party' (Killick 2005:674). Furthermore, there were few parliamentary opportunities; without their own parliamentary questions or Select Committee to account to, aid policy was not generally a matter for legislation, and debates on the floor of the House of Commons were infrequent (Burnell 1991).

It is clear from a British Politics perspective that despite a post-war consensus, aid and development policy has traditionally been given greater priority and institutional autonomy by the Labour Party and they have ascribed themselves a leadership role. The Thatcher era saw a period of retrenchment in keeping with their broader ideology and governmental agenda, although, as the next section details, they were not immune to public pressure, and aid policy and its ministers were relatively removed from domestic politics considerations. In formulating New Labour's development policy then there were Labour Party traditions and prevailing international currents to draw on and learn from, as well as points of departure from the Thatcherite approach.

### **5.2.3 British NGO development and public engagement**

The third and final contextual literature examined is that of British NGO development and this highlights the emergence of poverty as a public political issue. As Saunders (2011) shows, British humanitarian, aid and development (HAD) NGOs have become more politicised over time. In the first phases of their development they were largely concerned with humanitarian relief. It was not until the 1960s that NGO began to campaign on the political nature of poverty. A coalition of NGOs - including the Labour Party - produced a large-scale public awareness campaign, 'Freedom from Hunger', highlighting the plight of those suffering from poverty and famine and demanded an increase in national aid budgets and political action on aid and trade. As the literature above describes, it was also a time in which the dominant development discourse was being challenged by evidence of a lack of progress for the poorest.

However, charity law prevented registered charities engaging in overt political campaigning and following interventions by the Charity Commission it was necessary to establish a separate non-charitable organization, World Development Movement, to pursue this political work (Saunders 2011).

Saunders (2011) argues that charity law constraints prevented a broad social movement developing but that there was also a lack of public enthusiasm for this new political focus. Black's (1991, quoted in Saunders 2011) recollection of this illustrates the difficulties in moving the public imagination from a humanitarian to a political agenda:

*'The launch of the Manifesto was something of an anticlimax. There was no echoing roar as there had been for Hunger£Million, for Biafra, and for other emergencies...no-one could pretend that '1 per cent of GNP' and 'fair trade' evoked in the public mind the passionate concern that a Biafran child could conjure.'*

Mitchell (1991:147) documents a number of public campaigning successes in the 1980s in which development rose 'from its backwater status', notably around the Brandt Commission Report and the Ethiopian famine of 1984-5. The Brandt Report, entitled '*North-South: Programme for Survival*' and written within the basic needs paradigm, received a complacent Government response (Mitchell 1991) but generated an unexpected public interest resulting in 'the first ever large scale mobilisation on aid and development issues' (Saunders 2011). Indeed, the WDM's lobby of Parliament was the largest on any issue for more than a decade (Mitchell 1991). This 'had a marked effect on MPs' and the Brandt Commission's second report 'described the lobby as having changed government attitudes in Britain' (Mitchell 1991:148). Despite the public and political interest around the Brandt report issues, development did not feature in national political debates (Saunders 2005, Mitchell 1991), although a letter writing campaign is thought to have influenced the lack of further aid cuts in the 1983 Budget (Mitchell 1991).

The next event to raise the profile of development issues was the Ethiopian famine of 1984-85. Television coverage of mass starvation in the refugee camps led to the size of the aid budget becoming an issue of national public and political concern for the first time. There was an influx of charitable donations and WDM and other NGOs highlighted the political action needed if famine was to be avoided again, generating thousands of letters to MPs and a petition attracting three-quarters of a million signatures (Burnell 1991). Arguably though, the event that raised the plight of Africa in the public consciousness was not an NGO initiative but was the start of what Porteous (2005) calls 'celebrity humanitarianism' in the shape of the Band Aid Christmas record and the Live Aid Concert in 1985. There is a concern that these public spectacles perpetuated detrimental images of Africa as helpless, and constructed the British public as the powerful givers and the African public as grateful recipients (VSO 2002). Indeed, this can be linked to a dependency school critique of the framing of poverty implicit in NGO fundraising campaigns dating back to the mid-seventies (Cohen 2000). Notwithstanding this, the British public participated in a mass lobby of Parliament in October 1985 in unprecedented numbers, attracting widespread publicity and reportedly crucial in the reversal of an aid budget

cut to a £47 million increase (Burnell 1991). Again though, aid received little national attention again in the General Election of 1987.

NGOs played a key role in documenting the suffering caused by structural adjustment in 1980s (Mitlin et al., 2007) and campaigning against ‘the rules of the emergent international economic order’ (Saunders 2011: 48). In 1989 the first campaign on debt, coordinated by War on Want, Third World First and Friends of the Earth, began. In the next few years other NGOs, including previously non-radical organisations, joined the debt campaign and many actively campaigned against the 1986-1994 Uruguay Trade Round. Again, this political activity led to Charity Commission rulings against Oxfam, resulting in a more low-key approach in the early 1990s (Saunders 2011). Whilst the Charity Commission is an independent body, this was an issue that the Conservative Government was concerned about and produced a White Paper in 1989 ‘which drew attention to the need to curb the abuse of charitable status’ (Robinson 1991:176).

Crucially, charity law was relaxed in 1995 following a campaign by War on Want (Saunders 2011) and by the late 1990s the Charity Commission was encouraging political campaigning (provided it helped them reach their charitable aims). The 1990s also saw the emergence of new social movements critical of global capitalism and often setting themselves outside of the conventional political process, as well as more environment-focused campaigning and Saunders (2011) describes a growing participatory political culture in Britain such that *HAD* NGOs were no longer fearful that their supporters would be offended by political action. British *HAD* NGOs have been part of the rise of a broader global justice movement, and operate both within and beyond the confines of traditional policy making (Saunders 2011). There were also calls by NGOs and academics to highlight the politics of poverty and to focus on building constituencies for development. For example Edwards et al., (1999:1) called for a ‘move from development-as-delivery to development-as-leverage’. This new environment led to the current phase of NGO activity from the mid-1990s; that of high profile mass mobilising coalition campaigns, such as Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History (Saunders 2011).

As well as campaigning work, there was a renewed focus on development education (Davies et al., 2005), despite the Conservative’s refusal to reinstate government funding - at variance to their fellow DAC governments (Robinson 1991). By the late 1990s and early 2000s there was a growing consensus amongst international institutions and donor governments on the need for greater global education and their own advocacy role (O’Loughlin and Wegimont 2007). In particular, it is argued that greater public knowledge and support is crucial in securing donor governments’ commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the UNDP has recommended that donor countries spend two per cent of their Overseas Development Aid budget on public education (Stern 1998). This represents a significant change from the

historical position of aid and development as a marginal public political issue and the distance of foreign policy from the realm of everyday politics. Informed public support is now constructed as central to the international politics of poverty and governments in office take on a ‘political’ role in selling their policies to a domestic and a global civil society.

This overview of emergence of the British *HAD* NGOs as important political actors highlights their crucial and growing role in mobilising public support and lobbying governments around global poverty issues. It also illustrates how, despite the paucity of public attitudes data, the incoming New Labour Government could feel confident that their poverty agenda would go with the grain of public opinion and that much public political space for global poverty had been created by NGO activity. As shown below, pressure from Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History coalitions were crucial in the public politics of global poverty of the New Labour years. As construction of this politics is discussed below, this overview has also highlighted the longstanding difficulty in moving public engagement from a humanitarian to a political focus and the history of these two frames running in parallel. Finally, this literature also highlights party differences, as well as changes in terms of national laws and international norms, on the nature of a public politics of global poverty, notably the role of NGOs in political campaigning and the role of government in development education and advocacy.

#### 5.2.4 Conclusion

The examination of the post-war public politics of global poverty from three different perspectives has provided an important context through which to understand development during New Labour’s period in office. The international development literature established the interconnection between domestic and global poverty discourses and that poverty had already been ‘rediscovered’ when New Labour entered the global policy arena. The British politics literature draws attention to Labour Governments’ greater propensity to leadership and advocacy, and associated institutional arrangements, and Thatcher’s legacy of a low development profile, low levels of tied aid and a lack of development education, but a relatively autonomous aid office engaged with changing international discourse. The non-governmental organisation literature highlighted their changing role from delivery to advocacy, the challenge of negotiating this ‘political’ role, and the difficulties of engaging the public in a political framing, as well as their success in mobilising the public in numbers unprecedented in any policy area. This mobilisation laid the groundwork for the Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History campaigns during New Labour’s time in office and provided public political space for New Labour poverty agenda, but also foreshadowed the subjugation of justice arguments to celebrity appeals.

## **5.3 Creating public political space: from DfID to the G8 Summit**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

Having examined the context for New Labour's public politics of global poverty, this section discusses the leadership role they assigned themselves in creating the public political space for their global agenda, from the establishment of the Department for International Development on entering office, to the political spectacle of the 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles. It first describes the institutional mechanisms through which the Department for International Development actively raised the profile of global poverty in domestic and international arenas, as well as the activist role adopted by Clare Short. It then details the growing leadership and advocacy displayed by New Labour's key players, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, in the second term and beyond. It seeks to illustrate the contingent nature of global poverty's high profile in 2005 as well as the means by which public political space was created. Finally, it discusses the outcome of the G8 Summit, in terms of policy achievements, public mobilisation and party politics.

### **5.3.2 The first term - The power of DfID**

New Labour's 1997 Election Manifesto addressed the issue of global poverty head on, stating that 'we have a clear moral responsibility to help combat global poverty' and promising to 'attach much higher priority' to this objective. In opposition, the Labour Party's major policy review of the mid 1990s had recommended that a separate government department be created with responsibility for development issues across government, a focus on the poorest countries, giving less weight to commercial and strategic consideration in allocating aid, and reasserted their longstanding commitment to reaching the UN aid target of 0.7 per cent of GDP (Labour Party 1996). With little internal discussion, these recommendations became part of their foreign policy statement for the General Election (Barber 2005).

The manifesto made commitments on aid - focusing on the poorest and reversing the decline in spending to meet the UN target - and on debt and trade - support measures to reduce the poorest countries' debt burden and ensure they get a fair deal in international trade. Most significant though, were the institutional changes and the priority accorded to development:

*'In government we will strengthen and restructure the British aid programme and bring development issues back into the mainstream of government decision-making. A Cabinet minister will lead a new department of international development.'*

(Labour Party 1997)

Despite Blair's last minute hesitation, this pledge was implemented (Short 2005). It has been suggested that the presence of the highly active, expert British HAD NGOs was an influence (Porteous 2005) and there was also the change in the global policy environment discussed above. So in keeping with

Labour Party tradition, a separate department was created but crucially, unlike its predecessors, it succeeded in being a department of development rather than simply dealing with aid. Indeed, Clare Short only accepted her role as Secretary of State for International Development on that basis (Kampfner 2004 cited in Barder 2005). She argues in her memoirs that, 'Britain became a leading player in development because we created a department with authority over the developmental aspects of all UK policy' (Short 2005:77). The Labour Party traditionally assigns itself an international leadership role in government and under Clare Short the DfID quickly sought to define their development agenda and actively promote it within Whitehall and Westminster, to developed and developing country governments and the international institutions and crucially, to domestic and global publics.

Whilst DfID was established with this cross-departmental role, its success in actually gaining authority over developmental policy can be attributed to a number of factors. Clare Short's strong leadership and the public support of the key New Labour players, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, were crucial. More specifically, the DfID was proactive in initiating joint committees on development issues and seeking out partnerships with other departments (Barder 2005) and this function was in keeping with New Labour's thinking on 'joined-up government' in tackling issues that crossed departmental boundaries (Bogdanor 2005). Perhaps more importantly in the real world of institutional politics, despite some early hostility, other departments saw DfID as an ally in gaining international support for their policies with an international element and perceived a benefit in a cross-government consensual approach to globalisation (Barder 2005).

A crucial factor in the political space created for poverty was Clare Short's decision to make 'the reduction, and eventual elimination of world poverty' DfID's central mission. Her Permanent Secretary discusses the move from the traditional input target on aid to a single outcome target, arguing that it provided clarity of purpose and policy coherence for the department (Vereker 2002). Short (2005:85) goes further arguing that the re-examination of all policy in order to focus on the sustainable reduction in poverty created 'a buzz of excitement and enthusiasm throughout the department which spread across the international system as we brought our poverty focus to the UN and all other international agencies'.

This poverty reduction mission was operationalised through the parallel decision to work towards, and gain international support for, the International Development Targets published by the DAC in 1996 (OECD 1996). The focus on pledges and targets is an important aspect of New Labour's Treasury-driven, New Public Management-influenced organisational culture of government. The International Development Targets, created within a similar organisational culture, provided Clare Short with a set of departmental targets that DfID was required to agree with the Treasury as part of their Public Service Agreement (Hulme 2007). There has been

criticism that they are too removed from direct DfID influence to act as departmental targets (Williams 2005) but that is perhaps an inherent feature of an outcome target set within a multilateral international development policy domain.

Their more important function has perhaps been in galvanising domestic and international support around a multi-dimensional and time-bound poverty reduction goal. Indeed, Clare Short performed an activist leadership role ‘hawking them around the world...doing more than any other individual in 1997 and 1998 to promote the IDTs’ as the policy narrative for the international community (Hulme 2007:8). She also made numerous speeches selling them to the development NGOs in Britain as ‘affordable and achievable’ and charged them with ‘spreading the news that poverty reduction is possible’ and lobbying at an international level to increase the will of the international community (see for example, Short January 1999). DfID also gained a ‘vigorous advocacy profile’ on debt relief, reform of European Union aid and ending tied aid (Young 2000: 251).

Within six months of its establishment, DfID’s first White Paper, *‘Eliminating world poverty: a challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’*, laid out an ambitious policy agenda centred on poverty reduction and the International Development Targets, and promised to enshrine this in legislation. This was the result of a highly consultative process with the development community and Vereker (2002:137) proudly describes it as ‘still the international reference point on the need for rich countries to formulate internally consistent policies for the elimination of poverty’. Crucially for the public politics of global poverty, the final chapter was dedicated to building support for development and a strategy to actively engage the public was developed (DfID 1999). DfID’s role in education and awareness-raising is discussed below (Section 5.4.3).

In the wake of anti-globalisation protests at the WTO Summit in Seattle, a second White Paper was published, *‘Eliminating world poverty: making globalisation work for the poor’*, on the relationship between development and globalisation (DfID 2000). This wide-ranging policy document was the result of a working group including Gordon Brown (Honeyman 2009). It promoted an international framework for the global economy heavily influenced by the World Bank’s World Development Reports of the 1990s (Cammack 2001). If managed wisely, the White Paper argues, ‘globalisation creates the opportunity to lift millions of the world’s poorest people out of their poverty’ (DfID 2000). As Hewitt (2001: 294) notes though it ‘does not succinctly differentiate the internationalisation of the world economy (which is inexorable) from liberalisation (which is a political choice)’. Indeed, this conflation is common in New Labour’s discourse and its deployment in dismissing the arguments of the anti-globalisation protestors is discussed below (Section 5.4.2).

DfID's output continued apace in the following parliaments. As well as the many technical papers, two further White Papers were published in 2006 and 2009. In 2002 the International Development Act finally ensured a legal basis for the purpose of aid spending as poverty reduction. Annual reports documented progress against their departmental targets and these were later given a statutory basis with the passing of the second International Development Act in 2006. Whilst not strictly necessary for policy development, this legislation embedded New Labour's agenda and the 2002 Act proved a useful resource in departmental battles over aid allocation (Short 2005).

The creation of DfID itself had provided the institutional means to raise the profile of poverty reduction. The creation of a separate department brought with it parliamentary opportunities in terms of regular International Department questions in the House of Commons and a dedicated Select Committee. The production of White Papers, annual reports and legislation were also opportunities for parliamentary debate as well as articulating a poverty reduction agenda to a wider audience. DfID itself is explicit about this profile-raising objective, the website stating that 'two acts of parliament have since helped to put development higher on the national agenda.'

Furthermore, Hewitt (2001) notes that the two White Papers did not serve the traditional purpose of setting out a legislative agenda and he outlines the changes pursued by the previous Conservative Government without recourse to White Papers. As well as setting out an agenda that influenced other governments these White Papers were designed for public consumption. DfID was particularly proactive and innovative in this regard: 'both White Papers were accompanied by a well-organised publicity and communications effort to explain the new policies, both within the UK and abroad' (Barber 2005:16) and were translated into British ethnic minority languages. The first White Paper had 'colour coded sections and glossy advertising brochures, and an attractive website dedicated to selling the message that the elimination of poverty is the central goal of UK development policy' (Cammack 2001: 389). Through its website and various publications, DfID sought to develop an accessible public face. At one point its homepage was a development game aimed at schoolchildren. It produced a quarterly magazine, *Developments*, posted free-of-charge to subscribers, and published mini-pamphlets distributed in newspapers and in supermarkets, the most high-profile of these being a joint venture with the Rough Guide publications '*Rough Guide to a Better World*' in April 2004 (Wroe and Doney, 2004).

This overview has highlighted DfID's effective use of institutional tools to define and actively promote their development agenda at home and abroad, and the crucial role Clare Short played in this. As Porteous (2005:282) puts it, 'Even without DfID, the UK government would have had to respond to these intellectual currents in the late 1990s at the World Bank, UN, OECD and elsewhere. But DfID quickly engaged and started to play a major role in

steering them'. With their policy success dependent on international policy agendas, the role of international development departments is similar in many ways to that of 'insider' pressure groups. This role also includes policy profile-raising amongst the British public to build support for development as well as a specific awareness-raising programme discussed below. In its first few years of existence DfID had laid the groundwork for extending the public political space for global poverty.

### **5.3.3 The second term and beyond - global poverty takes centre stage**

#### ***Enter Blair and Brown***

In understanding New Labour's broader public politics of global poverty it is important to consider its evolution over its period in office and the influence of different actors and their changing political interests and agendas. Given the traditionally short-term nature of ministerial portfolios, Clare Short (1997-2003) and later Hilary Benn (2003-2007) each headed DFID for a considerable time and were able to establish their departmental authority and international reputation. Clare Short in particular was an extremely powerful figure strengthened, Hulme (2007:7) argues, by her position 'as a left winger determined to make New Labour successful'. Outside the tight central control of domestic politics, she also had a relative amount of autonomy in the first term. She claims that Blair showed little interest in development before 2001, and that she told her special advisers 'we could be as radical as we liked because Alistair Campbell has no interest in what we are doing!' (2005:77). By the second term in office though, both Gordon Brown and Tony Blair became highly proactive players in international development.

Tony Blair became 'more involved in African politics than any other British leader since decolonisation', making Africa 'the explicit focus of his second term foreign policy' (Porteous 2005:281). There were a few signs of this forthcoming involvement. Whilst it does not address development or Africa, Blair's arguments in his famous 'doctrine of international community' speech of 1999 portend to intervention in Africa. Around the same time, he also invested considerable energy in promoting a mechanism of enhanced partnership for African governments who performed well in terms of donor-approved visions of economic development and poverty reduction (Porteous 2008). A number of contributory factors have also been suggested for Blair's second term interest. Short (2005) highlights the praise DfID's work received at international meetings, and certainly, Blair told Parliament that DfID was one of his government's greatest achievements. Porteous (2008: 40) cites pressure from HAD NGOs, but particularly the activism of rock stars, Bono and Bob Geldof, 'whose success in raising awareness of poverty in Africa appealed to Blair's populist instincts and his belief in leveraging celebrity as a means of promoting policy'. Other possible factors for his interest are counsel from Nelson Mandela and Bill Clinton as well as a moral response derived from his Christian faith (Porteous 2008). Finally, perceived self-interest in terms of global prosperity and security was heightened by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, such that days later Blair used his Labour Party Conference

speech to describe Africa as ‘a scar on the conscience of the world’. As discussed in Chapter Four, Blair would later portray the ‘soft politics’ of poverty reduction in Africa as part of the same internationalist philosophy that drove the ‘hard politics’ of military intervention in Iraq.

Clare Short had a good relationship with Gordon Brown and describes him as supportive of the development agenda (Short 2005). His 2001/02 budget committed the Treasury to increasing DfID’s budget from the 2.2billion inherited in 1997, to £4.6billion by 2005/6, later increased to £6.5billion or 0.47 per cent of GDP by 2007/8 in the 2004 Comprehensive Spending Review (Short 2005). However, Brown was reluctant to set a timetable for reaching their 0.7 per cent of GDP commitment and this was not set until 2005 during the Make Poverty History campaign. In terms of his own political interventions, the first available speech on poverty is the Oxfam Gilbert Murray Memorial Lecture in January 2000, although his involvement in policy development pre-dates this. Immediately on entering office, the Treasury was the target of the highly organised public campaigning of Jubilee 2000 aimed at debt cancellation, and despite initial disagreements about conditionality, the Treasury and DfID worked closely on this and many other issues (Short 2005, Williams 2005). Indeed, Brown quickly claimed connections between New Labour’s global and domestic poverty agendas (see Chapter Two).

The New Labour Government actively promoted their model of political economy abroad and as its key architect, Gordon Brown’s domestic and global poverty speeches continued to reveal a high degree of discursive and policy consistency. As Chancellor, he was heavily involved in questions of global governance through international summity and, from September 1999, his Chairmanship of the influential International Monetary and Financial Committee of the IMF. In this context, it was through the lens of global governance that Gordon Brown addressed the issue of global poverty (Lee 2009). Indeed, he advocated a new international financial architecture based on regulatory codes, including a code of good practice on social policy based on provision of active welfare states (Brown, September 1998).

In his first speech on poverty Brown articulated a vision of global interdependence based on our common humanity and the understanding of global prosperity as infinite and non-zero sum. He then set out his strategy for ‘sustainable economic development’, necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals. First, further debt relief tied to poverty reduction strategies owned by developing country governments and developed in consultation with civil society. Second, his version of a post-Washington Consensus, the ‘2000 paradigm’: recognition of the critical role of the public sector as well as the private; the importance of macro- economic stability and clear policy codes and principles to ensure it; poorest countries’ participation in the global economy but in a manner that benefits them; and recognition that sustainable economic growth and social justice are totally

interdependent. Third, social investment in education to develop individual and country-level economic and democratic capacity (Brown January 2000).

He continued to develop and actively campaign for his vision of global governance, as well as for specific policy instruments, in numerous speeches infused with references to post-war American internationalism and often speaking directly to an American audience. In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 he made two prominent speeches in New York and Washington. In language reminiscent of his domestic welfare to work strategy - itself influenced by US social policy and discourse - he proposed a Global New Deal based on the mutual 'obligations and opportunities' of developed and developing countries (Brown, November 2001). As in the domestic domain, in subsequent speeches this partnership model was expanded to include business, the world community via international institutions and civil society (Brown, December 2001b onwards). This was discursively constructed as a 'Marshall Plan for the developing world', based on the recognition in the post-war Marshall Plan that for reasons of security and economic prosperity America needed to fund European reconstruction (Brown, December 2001b). The four building blocks for 'advancing social justice on a global scale' were: improving the terms on which the poorest countries participate in the global economy and actively increasing their capacity to do so; engaging business as partners in the development process, through corporate standards and investment forums; adoption of an improved trade regime essential for developing countries' participation on fair terms in the world economy; and substantial transfer of additional resources from the richest to the poorest countries in the form of investment for development (HM Treasury, 2002).

In June 2001 the Zedillo Report, commissioned by Kofi Annan in preparation for the Financing for Development Conference in March 2002, estimated that an additional \$50 billion would be needed each year to meet the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2001). The Treasury and DfID proposed a mechanism to front-load this investment, again with parallels to the domestic funding of public services through the Public Finance Initiative. The International Finance Facility, also advocated by the French government, would issue bonds in global capital markets against the security of government guarantees to maintain future aid flows, which would be used to buy back the bonds over a longer period (HM Treasury and DfID 2003). Gordon Brown actively promoted this mechanism in numerous speeches as central to his Global New Deal and Marshall Plan for Africa.

In the years preceding the UK's hosting of the EU and G8 Summits in 2005, DfID under Claire Short, and latterly Tony Blair and Gordon Brown had all developed a high-profile commitment to tackling global poverty. For some commentators, it was important enough issue for Blair and Brown to put aside their differences (Honeyman 2009), whilst others detected attempts to trump each other in showing how much they cared (Franks 2005). All three

actors addressed the issue from different policy perspectives - development, foreign policy and political economy - but shared the same discourse of globalisation as an inexorable process that could create global prosperity if managed well or could lead to greater poverty and inequality if managed badly, and they sought to construct a Third Way beyond the positions of the Washington Consensus and the anti-globalisation protestors but essentially supportive of trade liberalisation. Whilst they advocated a 'same direction, different speed approach' (Maxwell 2004, quoting DTI 2004) and would later explicitly oppose forced privatisation and liberalisation (DfID 2006), this was the ultimate logic of their vision of the global economy. They all framed the debate around the Millennium Development Goals to be met in 2015.

Making globalisation work for the poor and meeting the Millennium Development Goals were constructed as a political issue in that it required the political will of the international community to come together and agree, and in a sense it was depoliticised in that the choice was between reaching an agreement or not, just as in the domestic political economy, there was no choice but to embrace (their construction of) globalisation (Lee 2009, Watson and Hay 2003). However, as discussed in Chapter Four, it also represented a totalising discourse aimed at coalition building within the complex multi-actor environment of global politics.

The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> were a strong discursive reference point for the global interdependence narrative in Blair's global poverty discourse and the impetus for the strong appeal to American internationalism in both Blair and Brown's discourse. They also set in train a series of events that led to Blair's decision to support the American invasion in Iraq and Clare Short's subsequent resignation from the Government (Short 2005). Thus Blair, Brown and DfID's new Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, entered 2004 committed to making global poverty and climate change the focus of their forthcoming leadership of the EU and G8 and set about creating the conditions for policy success.

### ***2005 - the year for development***

The establishment of the public-political space for global poverty in the run up to the G8 Summit in July 2005 appears highly orchestrated, with the Make Poverty History campaign and the Commission for Africa setting the agenda of the Summit. For some involved in the campaign 'moving in broadly the same direction' was important in building a stronger, more influential campaign, whilst for others the report represented a misappropriation of Make Poverty History (Martin et al., 2006:23, Cammack 2006). Influenced by the high-profile Jubilee 2000 campaign, Clare Short and Gordon Brown had long called for the NGO community to campaign around global poverty and meeting the Millennium Development Goals (e.g. Short November 1998) and there was a close if ambiguous relationship between the New Labour Government and the Make Poverty History coalition initiated by Oxfam in late 2003 and launched in October 2004 with the aim of effecting change at the G8 Summit (discussed in Section 5.4.2). The coalition eventually built to more than five

hundred trade unions, NGOs and faith groups, calling for a new approach to global poverty based on justice rather than charity and making three key demands on more aid, trade and debt.

In March 2004 Tony Blair convened and chaired the seventeen-member Commission for Africa to 'take a fresh look at Africa's past and present, and the international community's role, in order to agree clear recommendations for the future'. It was presented as a response to a global popular demand to tackle poverty and given a high profile through the appointment of Bob Geldof as one of the commissioners and the publication of the report on Comic Relief Day in March 2005 (Cammack 2006). Meetings were held in a number of international locations and the Commission was heavily promoted to the international community. Tony Blair presented it as a definitive account of the way forward:

*'So armed with the evidence from the Commission for Africa about what Africa needs and what has held back progress in the past, the purpose of next year has got to be to turn international attention on Africa into international action to support Africa. With the publication of this report early next year, the time for excuses will be over, the world inside Africa and outside Africa will know not just what the problems are, but also the solutions.'*

(Blair, October 2004a)

The report acted as a 'call for action'. It was imbued with moral language and highlighted the three demands of the Make Poverty History coalition - aid, trade and debt - (though with differences in recommendations on trade) and the importance of good governance and capacity building, as well as education and healthcare, technology and infrastructure, and a greater say for African countries in multilateral institutions (Commission for Africa 2005). In the same month a similar narrative was also presented on aid, trade and debt in UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan's report '*In Larger Freedom*' (UN 2005). However, the Commission's Report was not particularly well received and failed to generate the political consensus hoped for. The G8, notably the American Government, gave a lukewarm response and Britain's position on trade liberalisation was opposed by development NGOs involved in Make Poverty History and European and North America agriculture interests alike (Lee 2009, Williams 2005).

The New Labour Government continually billed 2005 as the critical year for Africa and for development, as this quote from Gordon Brown's key speech on the eve of 2005 to CAFOD illustrates:

*'So with next year - 2005 - the year of the UK's G8 Presidency, the push for G8 progress starts now. You have set a challenge for 2005, with 2005 a make or break year for development, a moment of opportunity for development and debt relief, a challenge Tony Blair, Hilary Benn and*

*I know we must, for the sake of the world's poorest, not squander but must seize. An opportunity to make a breakthrough on debt relief and development, on tackling disease and on delivering the Doha development round on trade.'*

(Brown December 2004)

The year was imbued with further significance as it would see: the first five year evaluation of progress on the Millennium Development Goals and was ten years from the deadline; the 6th WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong; and the 20th anniversary of Live Aid; and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN.

The MPH campaign mobilised millions of people, with a wide variation in the levels of engagement, from lobbying MPs to wearing a white wristband. This culminated in a march in Edinburgh days before the G8 Summit attended by a quarter of a million people. Although it was somewhat overshadowed by Bob Geldof's Live8 concerts organised on the same day and hastily packaged as part of the Make Poverty History campaign (Hilary 2010). Even before Live8, this was a sustained celebrity-led campaign that took place not just *through* the media but *in* the media from the start of 2005 (Nash 2008). There was considerable broadcast and print media buy-in, particularly from the BBC's Africa Season - to the extent that their coverage of Make Poverty History and Live8, in particular a specially-written episode of the Vicar of Dibley, was discussed in an internal report as a breach of impartiality (BBC Trust 2007). There was also a provocative celebrity MPH advert that all but one media channels aired simultaneously which was later banned by Ofcom because of its 'political' nature (Nash 2008). This ensured that many people participated in - or consumed - the MPH campaign in one of its many forms. As discussed below (Section 5.4.2), New Labour presented themselves as both part of and influenced by Make Poverty History. The Commission for Africa Report provided the template for the G8 agenda and world leaders were called upon to respond to the demand of the global public calling for action against poverty.

### **5.3.4 After the G8 - policy achievements, public mobilisation and party politics**

#### ***Policy achievements***

The communique at the end of the G8 Summit promised the doubling of aid by the richest European countries by 2010 and increase from all donor countries providing an extra \$50bn per year, the immediate cancellation of debts of the eighteen of the poorest countries who had completed the HIPC process at a cost of \$40bn with another nine countries' debts to be cancelled in the following few years, and the end of export subsidies (The Foreign Office 2005). This was the most important legacy of the New Labour Government in terms of global governance and global poverty (Lee 2009).

Response to the Summit was mixed. The New Labour Government heralded it as a momentous achievement in which 'the world came together', Kofi

Annan called it 'the greatest summit for Africa ever' and Bob Geldof was vocally supportive. Despite the pressure from the New Labour government for a positive civil society response though, members of the Make Poverty History campaign gave a more critical response, recognising some progress on aid and debt but noted that much of this was money already announced and was only promised by 2010 and the continued tying of debt relief to trade liberalisation. They argued that a lack of progress on the more fundamental question of trade justice and on climate change would cost developing countries more than they gained through aid and debt cancellation (Lee 2009, Hodkinson 2005). Furthermore, there has been a lack of progress in realising the promises made by the G8 countries on aid and debt relief, highlighting the lack of a real global consensus on global poverty (Lee 2009).

The American Government in particular was far removed from Gordon Brown's agenda of a Marshall Plan for Africa and would not commit to doubling aid or the International Finance Facility. Indeed, even after Gleneagles, the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the international institutions and most donor countries as the basis of their development policy, still needed selling to the US. They differentiated between the development goals of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, which they argued had not been ratified, and at the UN Millennium plus 5 World Summit in September 2005 they sought to have them removed from the agreement text, albeit possibly as a negotiating tactic (Hulme 2007, Deacon 2007). As Prime Minister, Brown continued to appeal for 'emergency action' to meet the Millennium Development Goals, framing them as a promise this generation must keep, in characteristic emotional and idealist language (July 2007).

Payne (2006: 926-927) describes the aid policy positions of a number of the G8 states and argues they only 'moved cautiously and hesitantly beyond their own selfish interests' and that 'it took a lot of political pressure to secure even the commitments made'. He highlights the continuation of realist politics and characterises these negotiations as dominated by the policy agenda of the powerful countries that are 'rarely driven for long by notions of generosity'. In this context, he praises the public pressure and Gordon Brown's 'sterling efforts to open up some room for social democratic manoeuvre' in achieving the limited agreements on aid and debt that were secured. Despite attempts to get a deal on trade, this was deferred to the WTO meeting in December 2005, and here, Payne (2006) argues, it was not a 'development round' in that all the major players including those 'newly emerging' countries in the G20 pressed for their own development interests. He argues that this illustrates the growing complexity of the global policy environment within which it is not possible for the donor governments to 'make poverty history'.

Deacon's (2007) discussion of the success of the G8 Summit also includes movement in the New Labour Government's policy positions - agreement to

consider the French-German proposal on air traffic and the decision to stop making aid conditional on privatisation and market opening - and the launch of the International Finance Facility for Immunisation following the G8 Summit. Despite the lack of US support for the International Finance Facility, the smaller scale International Finance Facility for Immunisation was launched by six European countries after the G8 Summit and now has nine member countries. As discussed above, in trying to capture how we live in and against a neo-liberal global order he conceives of a war of positions in which the International Finance Facility is just one example (Deacon 2007). Away from the discussion of the policy achievements set against the Make Poverty History demands, it is possible to see the events of 2005 in the context of this war of positions within a highly complex policy environment embedded in a neo-liberal order. In this reading, the achievements of the G8 Summit were hard fought and evidence New Labour's leadership in attempting to build coalitions around a social democratic inflection albeit within the context of neo-liberalism.

### ***Public mobilisation***

Another important potential outcome from the events of 2005 is the opening up of public political space for issues of global (and maybe even domestic) poverty in Britain. The levels of active engagement in the Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History campaigns - particularly amongst those who had not previously engaged in campaigning activity - is said to have impressed politicians and suggests a growing constituency for global poverty issues. Levels of awareness of development issues may also be expected to have increased through the ubiquity of the Make Poverty History campaign in the media in the build-up to the G8 Summit. As discussed above, this was an issue that the New Labour Government had shown leadership on and the Department for International Development had actively promoted. The numbers who participated in the Make Poverty History march indicates a continuation of the trajectory of growing political activism around development issues discussed in Section 5.2.3.

However, other more popular activities, such as wearing a white band, attending the Live8 Concert or sending a text to their MP, were those that required little issue engagement and probably did little to raise the salience of development amongst the public (Darnton 2007). Survey data suggests that 87 per cent of the public interviewed in 2005 had heard of MPH and 15 per cent had participated in some way, although recollection of the campaign and having participated had dropped within a year (Darnton 2006). There is also the related issue of the framing of poverty and whether a global citizenry was emerging, and, as discussed in Section 4.5.2, there does not appear to have been a move from a charity to a political or justice framing of the issue amongst the public (Darnton 2007).

Darnton's (2007, 2009) review of the evidence suggests that public concern about global poverty appears to be static or falling. Those concerned about

the levels of poverty in poor countries remain fairly consistent over time and between donor country publics at around three-quarters of the public. As discussed in Chapter Four, ‘concern’ may not correlate with ‘support’ for development (Hudson and van Heerde 2009). The Department for International Development (2009) describe ‘concern’ as an important measure of ‘emotional commitment to global poverty’ and a precursor to support for development. Furthermore, support for aid is commonly characterised as ‘a mile wide and an inch deep’ (Smillie 1999), based as it is on an understanding of aid as humanitarian relief with low levels of awareness of long-term development aid (Darnton 2009). Qualitative research confirms that salience remains low with poverty ‘not an issue for most people’ (Darnton 2009) and when asked more specifically whether the government should be doing more to reduce poverty in poor countries, only 35 per cent agreed in February 2010 (TNS 2010), and this is based on very low levels of awareness of what the government is currently doing or of the Department for International Development (calculated at around four per cent) (Darnton 2009, drawing on DfID surveys). Darnton (2009) argues that those who identify themselves as ‘very’ concerned may be a more meaningful indicator of engagement, and he showed how this varied over time, first measured at 17 per cent in 1999 and rising to a high of 33 per cent in 2006 and then dropping again in subsequent years. The latest figure from February 2010 stood at 24 per cent continuing this downward trend (TNS 2010), suggesting a short-term but no long-term Make Poverty History effect.

Based on tracking surveys in the months before and after the G8 Summit, awareness of the Make Poverty History issues of aid, debt, and trade, and of the G8 appeared to have risen (Darnton 2006). However, a later review of the quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that this awareness had dropped in the following year and the MPH objective of getting the public to think in terms of global factors contributing to poverty and a resultant global justice framing of the issue did not materialise. Indeed, only a minority of those involved in the campaign started to think in these political terms (Darnton 2009). The public attributes poverty in poor countries to internal causes: war, famine, natural disasters, over-population, and most commonly corruption (Darnton 2011, drawing on DfID surveys). Indeed, qualitative work reveals the extent to which corruption dominates debates on aid amongst MPH campaigners and whilst many people support aid in spite of these beliefs, it is also thought to be a barrier to further support (Darnton 2009).

This understanding of poverty and perceptions of aid as humanitarian relief can be traced back to the Live Aid legacy and beyond, with the West as ‘powerful giver’ and Africa as ‘grateful receiver’ discussed in Section 5.2.3, and arguably this was perpetuated by the Live8 concert (Darnton 2009, Nash 2009). In terms of debt, the picture is slightly more positive with those involved in MPH able to engage in discussion about it, no doubt reflecting the longevity of this as a campaign issue and the simple message of debt forgiveness (Darnton 2009). Again, there was no reported discussion of the

more political question of the *original* legitimacy of these loans and a lack of knowledge of, and cynicism towards, the motives for government action (Darnton 2009). There is very little understanding of ‘trade justice’ even amongst those involved in the MPH campaign, and in focus group discussions it was confused with ‘fair trade’ which had near universal recognition (Darnton 2009).

Darnton’s (2009) review suggests that the public had a very limited understanding of what the campaign was aiming to achieve, what actions it required, and which organisations were behind it. Even amongst the MPH participants, there was a difficulty in thinking beyond the charity frame and in terms of ‘campaigning’ and how their actions could make a difference. As discussed above, many participants were new to campaigning or took part in activities that involved little issue engagement, and additionally, the campaigning activities focused mainly on the British government and as discussed below (Section 5.4.2), there was an ambiguous relationship between the two. The rallying call to make poverty history in June 2005 led to the inevitable response by some that it did just had not happened and perpetuated fatalism about the developing world. Coupled with the lack of knowledge of, and cynicism towards, government activity, it presents a somewhat bleak picture for a public politics of global poverty (and for potential benefits for the public politics of domestic poverty).

However, there are some possible exceptions to this. Within the diverse group that made up MPH there were of course seasoned local campaigners for whom Make Poverty History had been an opportunity to come together around a central message and energised them to continue campaigning (Martin et al., 2006). Furthermore, the extent of issue-engagement and lack of public reframing notwithstanding, campaigners reported a public more receptive than in previous campaigns (Martin et al., 2006) and concern for the global poor is reflected in international aid and development charities’ highest share of donor income (Shifrin 2006). The lack of legacy-planning and the decision to continue working mainly through original charity structures has been criticised (Martin et al., 2006), but it is not known whether this did prove a route into further engagement for new campaigners. There is also the possibility that awareness of these issues could be ‘reactivated’ and reframed through subsequent campaigning or development education, and there may be a feedback effect from the higher profile of development issues amongst the political parties.

### ***Party politics***

Until 2005 the opposition parties had a low profile in terms of international development reflecting its distances from mainstream political debate and a lack of strong party political policy differences. The General Election in May 2005 coincided with the build-up to the G8 Summit and the parties were persuaded by the Make Poverty History coalition to dedicate a day of the campaign to international development issues. There was a high level of

consensus with all three political parties pledging their support for Make Poverty History (BBC, April 2005), so whilst it was a political campaign in demanding changes to international policy, it remained a non-party political issue.

However, under David Cameron the Conservatives have recognised international development and global poverty as issues that bring them closer to the political mainstream and have given them a high profile (Martin et al., 2006). Soon after becoming leader in December 2005, Cameron initiated a policy review that included a Globalisation and Global Poverty Group advised by Bob Geldof. Whilst there may be no votes in international development in the sense that it is unlikely to be a key electoral issue, it has gained a higher profile over the past few years and could perhaps be described as a 'mood' or 'norm' issue. As Section 3.3.4 indicated, the Conservatives also used the language of Make Poverty History to intervene in the domestic poverty debate, and reposition themselves as concerned about relative poverty. Indeed, Busby (2007:251) discusses the insight from social movement literature that:

*'framing, the strategic use of rhetoric, by advocates is a particularly potent strategy by which weak actors are able to exercise influence and induce states to embrace new policy commitments inspired by norms...Advocacy movements for these new international issues rarely have sufficient political power to alter elections. However, advocates can shape the general image and reputation of decision-makers through praise and shame, making them "look good" or "look bad.'"*

In many ways they have moved towards New Labour's policy position although with an emphasis on greater efficiency and retaining more national control over, and public visibility of, DfID's spending (Conservative Party 2007). In his first speech as leader, David Cameron committed the Conservatives to the Labour Government's timetable of increasing the International Development budget to 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2013 (December 2005). In the wake of the financial crisis they dropped the commitment they had made to match Labour's spending across the board, reaffirming this commitment only for health and international development (BBC, March 2009). The aid commitment is small in national budgetary terms and proportional to economic performance, but has symbolic value in demonstrating a commitment to an issue that has received broad - if not deep - public support; what Hulme and Chhotray (2007) call a low cost: high return issue. The Conservative Party also pledged to retain the Department for International Development. Traditional party differences in the priority attached to development may be detected, most notably in terms of DfID's work to raise the public profile of global poverty and build support for development (see Section 5.4.3), but further analysis beyond the scope of this thesis is necessary to establish the extent of their discursive and policy differences.

In a continuation of New Labour's use of legislation to enshrine time-limited policy commitments, a further International Development Act providing for aid spending of 0.7 per cent of GDP by 2013 was promised in Gordon Brown's first speech as Prime Minister and was drafted, but did not appear on the packed legislative agenda (Townsend 2010). This time it seems they wanted to be seen as leaders on this issue and to emphasise party differences. Arguably cross-party support for the Bill was perceived to present more opportunities for the Conservative Party as they entered the 2010 Election.

### 5.3.5 Conclusion

This section has illustrated the leadership role that New Labour assigned itself in the global domain and its role in creating public political space for global poverty. There was precedence for some aspects of this in Labour Party history – creating a separate ministry and supporting development education – and a manifesto commitment to give higher priority to tackling global poverty, but it also developed in office, through the activist role of Clare Short, the institutional mechanisms employed to promote the issue of development, and the support of Gordon Brown and Tony Blair. In many ways DfID acted as a highly effective insider pressure group. Brown and Blair later became key players in this agenda and all three political actors sought to drive the political narrative and policy agenda, and all employed a totalising discourse centred on 'making globalisation work for the poor' and meeting the Millennium Development Goals through agreement on aid, debt and trade.

This politics was about building a coalition within a complex global multi-actor environment. It was constructed, not as a policy choice, but as the need for sufficient political will to come together and make the financial and policy commitments necessary to keep their promises on the Millennium Development Goals. In this, New Labour employed key framing tactics associated with transnational policy communities (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998): acting as 'norm leaders' seeking to achieve 'broad norm acceptance', they used accountability politics, deploying moral leverage in the form which asserts that 'promises made to the poorest must be kept' and material leverage in the form of demonstrative public support (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Their framing of this issue shared many common features with other members of this transnational policy community, including the United Nations Millennium campaign and the Make Poverty History coalition, and was geared towards the 2005 G8 Summit as a political opportunity (Sireau 2009). As hosts of the G8 Summit, Blair and Brown expended a great deal of energy in orchestrating the narrative and the political spectacle through the Commission for Africa and celebrity endorsements. It is clear though that Labour Party's leadership on global poverty was contingent on many factors, notably the sophisticated, participatory political campaigning of the development NGOs; a global narrative shared, and publicly advocated for, by

the international donor institutions and governments; the political opportunities of international summity; its own internal logic, as DfID gained an international reputation, and it found resonance with Blair's evolving international agenda; and its distance from allocative party politics.

This section also discussed the outcome of this public politics in terms of policy achievements, public mobilisation and party politics. Viewed from a discourse of the potential for the G8 leaders to 'make poverty history', and against the demands of the Make Poverty History coalition, particularly in respect of trade and in terms of the intransigence of the US as the global leader, the outcome of the G8 Summit is disappointing. Viewed as part of war of positions taking place in a complex global multi-actor environment, it can be judged in more favourable terms. What it appears to have failed to do is to move on the public perceptions of poverty. In terms of domestic party politics, it has achieved cross-party support for a time-specific target of increased aid spending. More detailed comparisons of party differences are beyond the scope of this thesis, although a different attitude to the politics of building support for development is tentatively suggested below.

## **5.4 Constructing global citizens; constructing politics**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

Having considered the trajectory of events in which global poverty achieved public prominence in 2005, this section provides three case studies through which to explore New Labour's public politics of global poverty. It discusses: first, their relationship with the global poverty campaigns, Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History; second, their strategy of Building Support for Development; and third, their discursive construction of politics and the global citizen. This highlights the tension between the politics of coalition building around political opportunity and a broader transformative politics, and draws attention to the different interpretations of the political in the accounts presented.

### **5.4.2 New Labour and global poverty campaigns**

Non-Governmental organisations have been crucial in the development of New Labour's agenda on global poverty. The election of New Labour was perceived by mainstream development actors as a political opportunity to open up political space for global poverty (Sireau 2009). The presence of many development NGOs may have influenced the decision to establish the Department for International Development, and certainly many staff were recruited from these organisations rather than being career civil servants. Thus, strong links were established with the development community of academics and NGOs (Porteous 2005). Most notably Oxfam played an important part in policy making as an insider group and through key individuals becoming advisers to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown (Sireau 2009). Indeed, critical voices have spoken of the revolving door between Oxfam, government and the World Bank (Hodkinson 2005, Biccum 2007).

Early in their time in office New Labour's global poverty discourse had to respond to the campaigning activities of the global justice movement. They responded to and attempted to close down the debates initiated by anti-globalisation protestors at the WTO Summits and this was the focus of the second DfID white paper '*Making globalisation work for the poor*'. New Labour argued that globalisation is a fact and dismissed a global movement fighting against globalisation as a contradiction in terms, thus negating their concerns about its contingent contemporary construction. Further in a Third Way conflation, New Labour represented a post-Washington Consensus beyond the positions of the anti-globalisation movement and neo-liberalism, and following the G8 Summit, the Make Poverty History campaign was constructed as seeking to improve the conditions of globalisation for the poor in comparison to the simple rejection of globalisation by these protestors (Benn, January 2006). This construction of 'good' and 'bad' protestors silences the linkages between these two groups and a backstory of Make Poverty History as part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty initiated at the critical counter-space of the World Social Forum (Biccum 2007, Hodkinson 2005).

The broad coalition campaigns Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History have been important influences on New Labour's global poverty discourse. The relationship between these campaigns and the New Labour government is an important element of the public politics of poverty that unfolded from 1997 onwards. The Jubilee 2000 coalition was established in 1997 to campaign for the cancellation of poor countries' debts by the year 2000 and was a departure from earlier campaigns in terms of scale and scope of mobilisation and impact. Jubilee 2000 is considered one of the most successful mass action campaigns and the huge amount of constituency mail generated had a big impact on MPs (Collins et al., 2001). Sireau (2009:5) describes Make Poverty History as the direct successor of Jubilee 2000 but with 'bigger and more ambitious' goals. He argues that both these campaigns: were broad coalitions with 110 and 540 organisations making up Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History respectively; included faith-based groups, trade unions, academics and celebrities; were time-limited with the Jubilee endpoint of the millennium and Make Poverty History's focus on the 2005 G8 Summit; and used similar campaigning techniques. In particular, both campaigns produced major demonstrations at key global political summits attracting many people who had not been previously involved in such activities. However, there were also differences in the style of the two campaigns with Jubilee 2000 being said to have 'reined in celebrity supporters and forefronted issues' (Gorringe and Rosie 2006: 11) and less enmeshed with the government's own agenda.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the exact nature of the interplay between the government's global poverty discourse and the campaigns. However, on debt relief one interviewee argued that the development of New Labour's discourse reflected the pressure and persuasion of the Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History campaigns in

moving the government's position on the issue, but also that as a state actor in an international debate, New Labour were conscious of the need to appear 'credible' to other state actors and needed to move their stated position incrementally (personal interview with civil servant and former NGO actor, 2006). As discussed above, during the Make Poverty History campaign a different discourse on trade emerged too with their advocacy for ending forced trade liberalisation and privatisation and a timeframe for meeting the commitment of aid spending of 0.7 per cent of GDP was set (Labour Party 2005; Benn, September 2005). Certainly, New Labour portrayed themselves as wanting to go further but needing a wider public politics of global poverty. They actively encouraged both campaigns to publicly hold them to account. Indeed, Jubilee 2000 and later the Make Poverty History became models of progressive public politics that key figures in New Labour wish to see emulated in other policy areas, including domestic poverty.

It must be said though, that this public encouragement to NGOs stands at odds with accounts of New Labour's anxiety about independent political action. Pettifor (2003), formerly Director of Jubilee 2000, describes the day of the human chain demonstration organised by the Jubilee 2000 coalition around the venue of the 1998 G7 Ministerial Summit in Birmingham. She recounts the anxieties Clare Short expressed at a prior meeting with Jubilee 2000 organisers that the Government should achieve a successful Summit outcome and that she did not want the Prime Minister or other G7 leaders embarrassed. Furthermore, the Summit venue was moved to a country house location a few days before and, despite Government claims of security considerations, this was perceived by the organisers as an attempt to demobilise their supporters. This left '70,000 peaceful, cheerful Jubilee 2000 protestors, their banners and posters' and about 3,000 journalists there to cover the event, and having realised their 'strategic error', Tony Blair flew back from the meeting early and met with the Jubilee 2000 organisers (Pettifor 2003:9). Given New Labour's continued calls for public demonstration following this event, a more favourable reading would be that they learnt from the experience. However, the last minute ban on the long-standing anti-poverty group, World Development Movement, attending the G20 Summit on the Financial Crisis in London 2009 (WDM 2009) is just one of a number of incidents that suggest a continued anxiety about oppositional voices and the desire to carefully manage the political story.

There is a whole spectrum of claims for the origins of the Make Poverty History campaign and its relationship with government. Scheunpflug and McDonnell (2007) cite it as an example of the increasing role of the UN and governments in public advocacy for development issues, with its origins in Tony Blair's invitation to civil society organisations to build a campaign for the United Kingdom's G8 Presidency. Potter (2006) describes a conference held by the Treasury in 2004 bringing many development agencies together to discuss opportunities in this area for 2005, in which 'a shared understanding of the political and social space was developed'. Others point to the Global

Call for Action against Poverty as the starting point for the British campaign (Biccum 2007). Other accounts highlight the intra-politics of Make Poverty History coalition. For some inside and outside the campaign, it was a democratic coalition that was co-opted by the Government via powerful players in the coalition, with differences between their demands and the Government's agenda sidelined (Sireau 2009, Hodkinson 2005, Hilary 2010). Yet others inside the campaign describe the pursuit of a deliberate inside/outside strategy, aimed at shifting the government's position on issues but also working with them in generating support from other G8 leaders, projecting a message generally supportive of government that made specific critical intervention more powerful (Martin et al., 2006).

A picture of the campaign genesis emerges from these accounts. New Labour figures had called for years for a campaign focused on the Millennium Development Goals as the international narrative for global poverty, based on their experience of Jubilee 2000 and as part of the international consensus on the need for public support for development. The idea of a Global Call to Action against Poverty was aired at a meeting of Southern NGOs in September 2003 and formalised at the World Social Forum the following year. The UN also had its own campaign aimed at progress on the Millennium Development Goals. In 2003, Oxfam, by far the most powerful development NGO and insider group under New Labour, initiated a British coalition, Make Poverty History, aimed at influencing the G8 world leaders during the British Government's hosting of the summit in 2005. The MPH was affiliated to the Global Call to Action against Poverty although this was not a prominent part of the message. This coalition grew to over 500 diverse member organisations and had a democratic decision-making structure but also had a working group in close contact with the Government.

The disagreements within the coalition reflect different views between moderate insider and radical outsider groups about the nature of campaigning in terms of its aims, its relationship with Government and the use of celebrities and the Live8 concert (Sireau 2009). In part, they reflect a tension between the dual goals of mobilisation of large-scale public demonstrations of support perceived necessary to influence the G8 leaders in July 2005 on the one hand, and on the other hand, developing an awareness and understanding of the causes of global poverty amongst the public, reframing it as a justice issue to which the G8 leaders must respond, and ultimately challenging the legitimacy of the G8. Within this tension there was the question of how to portray Make Poverty History's demands in relationship to the position of the New Labour Government and the extent to which distance between two needed to be maintained. Essentially these are questions about the nature of the political. As Sireau (2009: 103) notes, the Make Poverty History campaign enabled the government 'to present itself as responding to a mass movement in society in favour of the developing world'.

In fact, it could be argued that New Labour has positioned itself as part of, and even leading, the Make Poverty History coalition (see Section 5.4.4). It has ‘worked hard to associate itself closely with the campaign and take on its discourse on trade, aid and debt and its key communications such as the white band’ (Sireau 2009: 103). The government’s appropriation of the language of Make Poverty History was debated within the coalition. For some this was seen as an important step on the way to political change (see for example Lovett’s arguments in Sireau 2009: 105), just as it had been for Jubilee 2000 campaigners:

*‘Perhaps the greatest testament to the campaign’s impact was the fact that G7 leaders borrowed from Jubilee 2000’s language in their June 1999 Cologne Debt Initiative and in all subsequent official statements - the basic messages had been won. Government pronouncements were full of references to “faster, deeper, and broader debt relief”, “the threshold of a new millennium”, and the need for “poverty reduction plans for the effective targeting of savings derived from debt relief”, developed through “consultation with civil society”.’*

(Collins et al., 2001)

However, there was a concern from some within the coalition that the government was ‘associating itself with the cool Make Poverty History brand and Live8 celebrities, ...to increase its popularity and promote policies that were not in accordance with the campaign’s demands’ (Sireau 2009: 103). The message of MPH was more complex than Jubilee 2000’s focus solely on debt relief and of the three campaign themes, trade liberalisation was the one with which there were more perceived differences with the government. The question of whether the government was co-opting the campaign caused much debate and tension within the coalition (Sireau 2009). Indeed, the Government changed its position on trade liberalisation during the campaign and this could be an example of something they wanted to do and felt the campaign gave them the public political space to do, something the campaign had succeeded in changing their thinking on, did not represent the amount of change they could have achieved if they had not played their hand too early in the process (Martin et al., 2006) and was still largely at odds with the Make Poverty History demands. Ultimately, the Government’s position on trade was criticised from all angles and did not attract support from other G8 members.

For some in the coalition, the Make Poverty History campaign had focused particularly on building public support for political action on trade justice and debt relief in an attempt to move away from the traditional focus solely on aid and the charity framing, and the endorsement of the Live8 concert was a unilateral decision that diluted that message (Hilary, 2010). This was related to the criticism of supporting the Government’s G8 agenda and focusing on the opportunity this presented to the exclusion of moving the public debate on. It was also part of a tension between campaigning and marketing

approaches particularly around the use of celebrity endorsements, which was a tactic particularly favoured by Tony Blair, with Porteous (2008:97-8) describing him 'assiduously court(ing) celebrities who were willing to put their names to his efforts to address poverty...as a means of mobilising international popular opinion' for his agenda for Africa. He argues that the high profile of global poverty in the mass media was the result of the close association with the Make Poverty History campaign and what he calls 'celebrity humanitarianism' producing a simplified, one-dimensional media friendly version of a complex issue. He addressed the paradox of this popular success for informed public discourse: 'While the use of celebrity humanitarianism may have served the useful purpose of co-opting the NGOs and the media, for that very reason it also marginalized and blunted expert criticism of the policies advocated by those same politicians' (Porteous 2008:99). It also leads to criticism that despite the change from Live Aid's charity to MPH's justice frame, 'celebrity humanitarianism' still feeds into the image of non-African heroes helping Africa (Porteous 2008).

Hodkinson (2005:5) quotes the criticisms made by members of the Make Poverty History working group in similar terms:

*[Richard Curtis] believes that we should support the efforts of the UK government to bring other G8 countries into its line on aid and debt, and is adamant that Brown and Blair should not be criticised.'*

*'There has often been a complete divergence between the democratically agreed message of our public campaign and the actual spin that greets the outside world...Our real demands on trade, aid and debt, and criticisms of UK government policy in developing countries have been consistently swallowed up by white bands, celebrity luvvies and praise upon praise for Blair and Brown being ahead of other world leaders on these issues.'*

Sireau (2009) describes Bob Geldof's decision to stage Live8 as based on the perception that the Commission for Africa Report was not being taken seriously in the G8 countries that did not have Make Poverty History style campaigns. This caused problems in terms of retaining the MPH message but many members of insider groups thought they worked well together. Similarly, those close to the G8 negotiations felt that insufficient pressure had been put on other G8 governments in the run up to the Summit and Live8 was seen as crucial in moving their positions (Martin et al., 2006).

*'We had activists mobilising on this issue pretty in-depth analysis and activating campaigners over a long period of time. Then we had Live8 which was much broader, much shallower, much more celebrity-based, much more focused on just trying to create a feeling in the air that the G8 just couldn't ignore.'*

(Vallely, quoted in Sireau 2009: 191)

Different understandings of whether this represented a trade-off between this (limited) policy success and the impact on the public debate on global poverty or whether they were complementary components of the campaign ultimately reflect different understandings of politics and the political process. Some critics do not differentiate between MPH, Live8 and the New Labour Government (Biccum 2007, Nash 2008). Biccum (2007:1120) sees all the events leading up to the G8 Summit as a ‘stage-managed simulation of democracy ‘at work’ aimed at legitimising neo-liberal global governance, arguing that ‘as Britain and DfID were already committed to these goals before the forming of the Make Poverty History campaign, the official ‘protests’ and the Live8 concerts were effectively a great staging of a set of demands in the name of ‘the people’.’ There was also a conceptual difficulty for those seeking to involve themselves in this politics. The ‘success’ of the government’s strategy to associate themselves with MPH was such that as indicated in qualitative research, some members of the public thought that the campaign was a government initiative (Darnton 2007). It is not known how widespread this view was, but this level of association may not have been beneficial for the government, for the Make Poverty History campaign, or for political engagement. Focus groups with members of the public involved in MPH, some of whom had little or no experience of campaigning, revealed confusion at *‘being asked to send an email to Tony Blair if the government was behind the campaign that was asking them to send the email’* (Darnton 2007).

#### **5.4.3 The politics of building support for development**

##### ***Building Support for Development***

Building awareness and support for development amongst the UK public has been a central DfID objective from the outset. This was outlined in the first White Paper (DfID 1997), developed in a subsequent strategy paper, ‘*Building Support for Development*’ (DfID 1999) built on and reaffirmed in the second White Paper (DfID 2000). Promoting awareness of global poverty and the means of reducing it was specifically provided for in the 2002 International Development Act. The aim was:

*‘to promote public understanding of our interdependence, of the need for international development and of the progress that has been made and that is possible. This should help raise awareness, and probably change behaviour and attitudes’*

(DfID 1999)

The strategy paper stresses the aim of ‘achieving change across society’ through an overall approach rather than focusing on groups traditionally seen as sympathetic to development. It sets out four main priority areas for initial development awareness work: formal education, to incorporate development issues into the national curriculum; media, to strengthen coverage of development issues; business and trade unions, to work in partnership to

raise public awareness; and churches and faiths, to build and support a worldwide alliance to alleviate poverty (DfID, 1999). It also invited applications to the Development Awareness Fund established in 1998 with a fund of £5 million in the first year for development education initiatives (DfID 1999; Cameron and Fairbass 2004). There was a particular emphasis on formal education with the White Paper (DfID 1997) specifically asserting that 'every child should be educated about development issues, so that they can understand the key global considerations which will shape their lives' and DFID worked together with the Department for Education and Employment in 2000 to produce '*Developing the Global Dimension in the School Curriculum*'. Over time black and ethnic minority groups have been added to the list of target groups. The strategy paper makes reference to the need for inclusivity and the involvement of ethnic minority groups, specific ethnic minority groups and diaspora groups were engaged in the run up to the G8 summit, and the third White Paper introduced more development awareness commitments including a diaspora volunteering programme (DfID 1999, DfID 2006).

This third White Paper was the most public facing of all. As well as pledging increased investment in developing education, it also purported to engage directly with members of the public about their individual role in development with a short section entitled '*What can you do?*' In the wake of financial crisis the International Development Select Committee had examined the question of how to sustain public support for development (House of Commons 2009b) and the fourth White Paper pulled back from this public-facing style, instead focusing on the public as taxpayers, although there was no reduction to the development awareness programme. They aimed to increase awareness that their taxes helped tackle global poverty and climate change and to engender a national pride in Britain's role in international development (DfID 2009).

DFID's investment in Building Support for Development grew considerably throughout New Labour's period in office from £1.5 million in 1998/99 to £24 million in 2009/10, although was still less than 0.5 per cent of DfID's budget and, in common with all donor countries, below the two per cent recommended by the UNDP (Stern 1998). They also encouraged development NGOs to undertake this work through their Public Partnership Agreements (Dominy et al., 2011). The institutional means for profile-raising of DfID and its development objectives discussed in Section 7.3.1 -annual reports to parliament, legislation, White Papers and other publications - are also described as part of this task (DfID 1997).

DfID sought to evaluate their awareness and support building with both the general public and school pupils through annual attitude surveys and focus group work. They also funded a three year programme of survey and focus group work titled *Public Perceptions of Poverty*, assessing levels of public awareness and understanding of world poverty, and barriers and drivers to

public empathy and action in light of the Make Poverty History campaign (Darnton, 2007). However, as discussed in Chapter Four, there has been criticism of the survey instruments used to measure support (House of Commons 2009b) as well as the lack of evaluation of the specific development awareness projects (Dominy et al., 2011).

### ***A political project?***

Focus on development education was restored following a period of minimal uncoordinated activity under the Conservative administration. This was a long-term Labour commitment dating back to their 1987 manifesto, with the 1992 development policy document '*A World of Difference*' for example, including the goals of 'put[ting] development back on the public and parliamentary agenda' and 'increas[ing] the understanding among the British public of the causes of poverty and the process of development' (Labour Party 1992). As discussed above (Section 5.2.3), previous Labour Governments had funded development education but under the Thatcher government this was not seen as a legitimate activity and was an easy target for spending cuts. Thus, Labour contrasted its commitment to building support for development with the Conservative government's inactivity and presented it as a legitimate activity for donor governments (Labour Party 1992).

As discussed in Section 5.2.2, the anti-poverty global consensus amongst donor countries and international institutions also extends to the belief that public support is necessary to take forward this agenda and they have all increasingly taken on the role of generating and monitoring public support. Clare Short's foreword to the Building Support for Development strategy paper is illustrative of this view, arguing that 'an informed public opinion helps ensure that the UK plays its full role in generating the international political will necessary to meet the international poverty eradication targets' (DfID 1999).

Indeed, they argue that 'without such support, the prospects of achieving the targets will be significantly weakened' (DfID 1999). Here, the objectives of development education are tied to gaining support for this particular development narrative and the immediate goal of securing from donor countries the funding and policy changes necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals. This narrative is consistent throughout New Labour's global poverty speeches and the International Development Select Committee reiterated the same claim in their recent report (House of Commons 2009) but has been criticised for failing to articulate a model of this policy process (Dominy et al., 2011).

Donor governments seek legitimacy for their policies and expenditure from their citizens, both in terms of accountability for development spending and as a source of legitimacy in international diplomacy. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the evidence of a linkage between domestic policy and public opinion, this is under-researched for foreign policy, and this is a newly

developing sphere of political participation. Hudson and van Heerde's review (2009) found no empirical evidence showing positive co-variation between public opinion and development aid. This lack of linkage is often attributed to low salience, limited awareness or knowledge of foreign policy amongst the public, and difficulties in processing complex information into consistent opinions (Hudson and van Heerde 2009). Foreign policy has traditionally been detached from government: public opinion nexus of domestic electoral politics and has not been a party political issue (Callaghan 2007). Recent work, however, suggests that the 'public is able to develop and hold coherent attitudes on foreign policy, that citizens can and do apply their attitudes to electoral decisions' (Baum & Potter 2008:44, quoted in Hudson and van Heerde 2009).

In this sense New Labour's strategy addresses the need to create an educated public citizenry able to make policy demands on international development policy. This creates the potential for pluralist education agenda in which different development alternatives are discussed, but instead the language is of accurate information and understanding the dangers of not addressing poverty.

*'The British people should have accurate, unbiased, accessible information about the causes of poverty and inequality in developing countries, and about what the international community can do. It is also right that they should understand the dangers for the future of their world of failing to address the problems of environmental degradation, overpopulation and the instability arising from extreme poverty and lack of access to basic resources. And it is right that we should be held publicly to account to show that their resources are being put to good use.'*

(DfID 1997)

This is presented as particularly important for young people who will need to navigate a globalised world in which domestic and global policy merges (DfID 1999). The assumption within this project continues to be that greater awareness will generate support for development, or more specifically the particular model of development inherent in the anti-global poverty consensus:

*'Giving people in Britain the facts about the forces that are shaping the world - and their lives - will help strengthen support for this effort.'*

(DfID 1997)

*'I believe that when the public understand that a relatively small increase in resources, a greater focus and effectiveness in international development efforts, and fairer trading and investment arrangements, could produce a massive advance in life opportunities for a generation of children, they would demand that it was done'.*

(Clare Short, November 1999)

The political nature of this project and the closure of development alternatives have been highlighted by a number of commentators. Biccum's (2007) analysis of DfID's promotional materials leads her to conclude that they attempted to produce a 'global citizen' who advocates development under neoliberal terms, first co-opting then negating more critical voices. Cameron and Fairbass (2004) also suggest that what appeared to be an opening of space for deliberative democracy in 1997 was closed down from 2000 onwards with changes in the funding criteria of the Development Awareness Fund to exclude alternative development perspectives. These critiques illustrate the contested and inherently political nature of poverty and the tensions implicit in DfID's (1997) professed goal of ensuring that the public have access to accurate and unbiased information. New Labour's emphasis on 'building support for development' could be seen as opening up of public political space for global poverty, providing increased educational resources to enable broader public engagement. However, there is a concern that support for their agenda is sought through the closure of alternative explanations of the causes of poverty and the role of the 'international community' - itself a concept that cannot be treated uncritically.

There was no party political challenge to the Government's role in development education or the nature of its message, presumably reflective of the broader consensus between the main parties on international development. This is particularly noteworthy given the debate surrounding the introduction of citizenship education into the national curriculum. However, the report of the Conservatives' Globalisation and Global Poverty Policy Group foreshadowed their less evangelical approach. It contrasted the need to demonstrate aid effectiveness with 'telling the story' of aid to the taxpayer, arguing that 'DFID's focus should be on demonstrating actual results, rather than 'marketing' DFID to the British people' (Conservative Party 2007: 437).

Whilst this thesis concentrates on public politics during New Labour's period in office, it is worth noting that the Coalition Government commissioned a review of the Building Support for Development strategy. Whilst building support for development was seen as a legitimate activity for government, it said that:

*'From the evidence reviewed, we conclude that raising awareness of development issues in the UK is likely to contribute to reducing global poverty but it is not possible to establish a direct link or quantify the contribution made by DFID-funded activity. Therefore, a decision to continue funding activity in this area cannot be entirely evidence-based. Continued funding will, by default, therefore be a matter of opinion and judgement and therefore a political decision.'*

(Dominy et al., 2011; underlining in original)

Andrew Mitchell, Secretary of State for International Development, took the decision to dramatically reduce spending on public awareness. There were to be no new development awareness projects and ongoing projects would be allowed to continue to conclusion subject to project reviews showing that they achieved results, because '*the link between these programmes and poverty reduction is not strong enough to satisfy our rigorous criteria for development impact*' (DfID 2011). Mitchell had already announced the end of the Development magazine with savings 're-directed towards projects that directly help the world's poorest people lift themselves out of poverty' (DfID 2010). However, development education work in schools, and school and hospital links with developing world partners continued, and there are opportunities for school leavers to volunteer in developing countries under the International Citizen Service initiative (DfID 2011).

Again, this case study illustrates different views of politics inherent in the positions taken on whether the government should have a role in promoting development and the form it should take. It also highlights the tension between a strategy of global citizenship education and promoting support for specific policy goals. It is suggestive of a historical party political difference, with the Conservatives not supportive of the idea of government as global development campaigner. The lack of clarity about the relationship between public support and policy change and an associated lack of evaluation, coupled with its implied 'political' nature, contributed to the cuts in this area.

#### **5.4.4 Constructing global poverty politics**

New Labour's politics of global poverty were constructed around the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals as a means of halving global poverty by 2015. Following the UN Millennium Declaration in September 2000, these goals were presented as an international consensus on how to tackle global poverty and a promise made by the richer countries to the poorest countries that they must be held to. The politics they constructed up to the G8 Summit in 2005 is not one of different visions of global society, and nor are there

conflicting interests at play given the universal benefits of ending global poverty. Instead, it is about ensuring that these goals are met, emphasising the responsibility of developed country governments to increase aid, cancel debts and make changes to global trade that will benefit the poor. The enemies that are constructed are the lack of political will to make the promise of the Millennium Development Goals a reality and cynicism that politics can bring about change.

It is here that New Labour attempted to construct the role of the global public in the politics of poverty. Along with many other donor governments and international organisations, New Labour argued that pressure from their publics is necessary to ensure the political will of donor governments. Conversely, they assigned responsibility to the UN and national governments, as well as non-governmental organisations and the media, for building public support for the Millennium Development Goals. This is an attempt to develop a global citizenry and democratise international politics, albeit within a tightly prescribed framework of the MDGs and current political structures. The focus is on the British citizen as potential global citizen, but with a related call for Southern non-governmental organisations to help 'local people to realise their human rights and demand improvements in the provision of core government services such as health and education' as national citizens (Short, January 1999).

They presented two obstacles to public support that needed to be combatted, the first being the idea of poverty in Africa as inevitable and intractable, creating a sense of hopelessness that in turn produces compassion fatigue. To this end, Clare Short's speeches consistently stressed that the Millennium Development Goals were both 'achievable and affordable' and constructs our generation as unique in being able to rid the world of poverty (Short, January 1999). She also urged the non-development organisations and the media to provide stories of progress.

*'Doom and gloom will not inspire people to demand action. It is right that people should be aware of the amount of suffering and poverty there is in the world. But why is it that so few know of the enormous advance made in the past 50 years?... One of the major tasks of the development community is to spread the good news of what is possible at this point in history, so that the people can demand that what is possible should be done.'*

(Short, January 1999)

The second obstacle to public support is cynicism that aid makes a difference and concern about corruption. Here, the Millennium Development Goals themselves are championed as a 'new approach' (Blair, February 2002) and a means of monitoring progress, and the UN tasked with providing the necessary 'clear and measurable' indicators (Short, October 1999).

The British global citizen and their motivation to support anti-poverty policies are constructed in this context. The British public were characterised as generous and compassionate but the low levels of awareness and knowledge of global poverty hampered the level of public support needed. New Labour asserted that greater public knowledge is key to ensuring 'committed and constant public support' needed to mobilise the political will necessary to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

Concern for the world's poor is described as a core British value and the public are described as compassionate and generous. Public donations, particularly to the Tsunami appeal, are used to illustrate public support for international development and the story of the public politics of development is traced back to Live Aid.

*'For there has been a golden thread of British support for international development, from Live Aid through Jubilee 2000 to Make Poverty History. The huge public responses to natural disasters - after the Tsunami, and the earthquake in Pakistan for example - only serve to underline that support.'*

(Alexander, October 2007)

The question raised is the extent to which the generous donor responding to a natural disaster provides a basis for development into the global citizen supportive of international development. The public politics that New Labour and the Jubilee 2000 and MPH campaigns sought to engender is based on a justice claim and this narrative is silent on the need to develop a new public politics of development. This need was articulated in a few speeches which highlighted that while people have compassion, few take an interest in development (Benn, November 2004) and asserting the need to understand growing interdependence.

*'Northern domestic audiences remain, in most countries, too passive about global social justice issues. There is a real need to build up a constituency against indifference in the North: a popular base for development. The challenge for all of us is to explain more clearly the growing interdependence and globalisation of the modern world and the need for more profound changes in international structures.'*

(Keeble, July 2002)

As discussed in Chapter Four, New Labour presents a world view of global interdependence and the resultant moral and self-interested reasons for developed world citizens to be concerned about poverty, and at times the British public are constructed as sharing this view (Benn, June 2004). Indeed, perhaps somewhat counter to the image of support for development as a core value, self-interest was described as the key factor leading most people to full consent (Merron, March 2008). Nash (2008) identifies the construction of cosmopolitan nationalism - a hybrid of globalism and nationalism - in the

speeches of Blair and Brown and the Department for International Development argues that Britain's role in international development will be a source of pride and an expression of Britishness that could unite diverse communities (DfID 1997, DfID 2009).

New Labour described a form of pressure politics that they wanted British citizens to engage in. Neither party political nor oppositional in construct, it is based on the need for public engagement with, and ultimately legitimisation of, their global poverty agenda. The New Labour Government are characterised as having taken on a leadership role on international development and as able to advocate a more progressive position when they are able to demonstrate, both to their national public and to their international counterparts, public pressure in that direction. This is consistent with the political spectacles provided by the Jubilee 2000 human chain around the 1998 G8 Summit in Birmingham, and the Make Poverty History, and Live8 events around the 2005 G8. In New Labour speeches these campaigns are both strongly encouraged and ascribed great influence. Following the Birmingham G8, Clare Short (November 1998) asked 'whether the international campaign for debt cancellation [could] be broadened into an alliance to eliminate poverty' and in the run up to the 2005 G8 Summit the Jubilee 2000 was praised for producing policy change through broad-based, focused campaigning, such that 'world leaders had to listen' (Benn, June 2004).

Post 2005 the same claims are made for Make Poverty History, although there is often ambiguity about the relationship between the Government and MPH, such that they are both part of, and responding to the campaign.

*'Last Saturday, I went on another march. In Scotland, Edinburgh, 200,000 people - the biggest demonstration the city has ever seen - brought together by a shared concern for Africa.'*

(Benn, July 2005)

*'Let's reflect for a moment on what we achieved last year. And by we, I do mean we. All of us. None of this would have been possible without the Make Poverty History campaign in the UK, and campaigns around the world. None of this would have been possible without politics - the tide of people calling for justice.'*

(Benn, January 2006)

Again, whilst largely focused on a domestic audience, the narrative is linked with development governance agenda and universalised, such that the need for active global citizens to hold their governments to account is applied to recipient countries.

*'Why do politicians move on issues? They have a leadership role, they have values, and if change is demanded, they can move... We should*

*never underestimate the capacity of people to make a difference. And we have seen this in action this year - with Live 8 and the Make Poverty History campaign...And that's why we will only make progress if we help the citizens of the world's poorest countries hold their governments to account for their human rights obligations.'*

(Benn, November 2005)

For New Labour then, the central narrative becomes one of progressive politics. Having constructed this public politics, progress in tackling global poverty becomes a defining test of our political system, of multilateralism and of politics itself. It is about an informed public engaging with global poverty as a question of justice and as a political issue; the rejection of cynicism about the ability of the political process to make a difference; and global governance in which active global citizens influence decision making. The public politics of 2005 and the agreements secured at the G8 Summit are therefore claimed as a legitimisation of (conventional) politics.

*'In an age when it has become fashionable to decry the ability of politics to change things for the better, here is clear proof that politics works. It's the best answer to that cynicism.'*

(Benn, May 2005)

As discussed in Chapter Three, development is connected to the history of social progress pushed for by the Labour Movement and Benn's (September 2005) Party conference speech, it is Labour politics that made the difference. Following the Conservatives entering the global poverty debate under David Cameron, and their matching of the commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of GNP on aid by 2013, the discourse of progressive politics takes on a more overtly party political tone, accepting ownership for the choice they made to assume a leadership role and to prioritise development.

*'Since this Government came to power in 1997 there has been a marked step change in the UK's commitment to International Development - DFID became a Department in its own right, with a single mission of alleviating world poverty. By 2010, this Labour Government will have trebled the aid budget in real terms since 1997; the Tories halved it when they were in power.'*

(Merron, March 2008)

*'That announcement was possible and those hundreds of lives will be saved because right across our country people decided to get involved in party politics to try to give expression to their innate belief in the equal worth of every human being. It is not by chance but by choice that this Government has prioritised development over the last decade. It didn't just happen and it wasn't inevitable. It speaks to who we are, where we come from and what we came into politics to do.'*

(Alexander, 24 October 2007)

As discussed above, politics is thus constructed within a model of non-governmental actors mobilising the public and working with a receptive (Labour) government as part of a transnational policy community, building a popular consensus that will, in turn influence the G8 leaders. The public are potential global citizens and supporters of development policy should they just know that change can be achieved and understand that it is both morally right and in their own interests. British values and Labour values coincide, and indeed an inclusive British identity is constructed in meeting our global responsibilities. This creates a deterministic account of an emergent global citizenship. It projects an incremental, conventional politics taking place at the global level where the conditions of globalisation can be determined to mutual benefit and contrasts with the constraints globalisation constructs at the domestic level. Having said that, Chapter Six illustrates how this model of policy-making is held up as an example for domestic poverty politics. This is an attempt to engage people involved in more popular forms of new political activities in party politics. In contrast to criticism of their politics as 'anti-politics' in closing down political alternatives, in this context New Labour seek to construct themselves in a political role.

#### **5.4.5 Conclusion**

These three case studies have illustrated the different ways in which the public politics of global poverty, as constructed through the Building Support for Development Strategy, the events surrounding Make Poverty History and the G8 Summit are constructed by different actors. They highlight again the tension between responding to political opportunities and transformative change, and illustrate the ambiguity of this form of politics and public: policy interaction.

### **5.5 Chapter Conclusions**

This chapter provided a historical contextualised account of the public politics of global poverty under New Labour. As such, it discussed the way that public political space was created for global poverty through the activist role of Clare Short, the institutional mechanisms employed to promote the issue of development, and the support of Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, and suggested that the Department for International Development acted like a highly effective insider pressure group. It then described how Brown and Blair later became key players in this agenda, seeking to drive the global political narrative and policy agenda and orchestrate the events leading up to the G8 Summit. It described them as having shown considerable leadership on this issue, whilst acknowledging that the public political space created was contingent on many factors absent from the domestic domain. It argued that policy achievements of the G8 Summit were disappointing when set against the Make Poverty History discourse but when viewed as part of war of positions taking place in a complex global multi-actor environment they can

be judged more favourably. In comparison though, in terms of a cultural politics, the public perceptions of poverty were not reframed in justice terms.

This chapter also drew on three case studies to explore further the way that global citizens and global politics were constructed within New Labour's public politics of poverty. This politics was about building a coalition within a complex global multi-actor environment, constructed not as a policy choice, but as the need for sufficient political will to come together 'to make poverty history', with New Labour part of a transnational policy community. The achievements of the G8 Summit were celebrated as 'politics in action' but this chapter discusses potential problems with a model in which the Government is constructed as both ally, or even leader in a campaign on one hand, and recipient of the campaign's demands on the other. It also discussed the problematic ambiguity of the relationship between public support and policy change and the tension between a politics of generating a political spectacle around a political opportunity and a more transformative politics. Chapter Six goes on to discuss New Labour's public politics of domestic poverty and provides a comparative conclusion.

## **6      Ending Child Poverty: The public politics of domestic poverty**

### **6.1    Introduction**

Having examined the public politics of global poverty under New Labour and the nature of the policy-making process constructed by their global poverty discourse, this chapter now provides an account of New Labour's public politics of domestic poverty. First, a brief historical context for New Labour's public politics of domestic poverty is provided (Section 6.2). Section 6.3 then outlines the emergence of child poverty onto domestic political and policy agenda, its evolution during New Labour's period in office, and public attitudes to domestic poverty during this time. The conclusion makes comparisons with the public politics of global poverty.

### **6.2    The history of poverty politics**

#### **6.2.1   Introduction**

New Labour's public politics of poverty needs to be examined in historical context. Section 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 present brief accounts of the public politics of poverty during post-war welfare consensus years and during the Conservative governments of the 1980s respectively.

#### **6.2.2   The post-war years: Abolishing want**

The vision for post-war welfare provision outlined in the Beveridge Report gained great popular appeal, due largely to the claim that want could be abolished (Timmings 1995). The report received cross-party support and the Labour Party had not campaigned explicitly on poverty or want in the 1945 election. However, it had been a traditional concern of the Labour movement and it seems that the electorate was convinced that they were 'more likely to mount a concerted attack on Beveridge's five giants than the Conservatives' (Page 2008: 125). Their election in 1945 saw the introduction of an anti-poverty programme that included a comprehensive social security system, the introduction of family allowances and the National Health Service, and pursuit of full employment (Page 2008). Crucially the 1945 Labour Government also recognised that 'poverty is itself experienced as a reflection of attitudes and beliefs held both by those enduring deprivation and by those in wider societies' (Golding 1995: 213): 'One of the principle aims of their reforms was to bring about a 'cultural' transformation in the public attitudes to those in poverty. Labour was keen to ensure that those claiming assistance would be treated with respect both by their neighbours and by those administering the scheme. The 'less eligible' ethos of the Poor Law was to be consigned to the past' (Page 2008: 126-7).

Indeed, they believed that radical change in society though redistribution, changes in housing and education policy, public ownership, and ultimately the creation of a socialist citizenry, were necessary for social justice (Page 2008). As Page (2008) argues though, they were unduly optimistic about feelings of

wartime solidarity as the basis for a new social order, and traditional social divisions and stigmatisation of the poor re-emerged.

The Beveridge settlement was a rare moment of consensus in British politics, and subsequently there had been 'no new political, ideological, moral or social consensus on which to build a popular and politically acceptable programme to abolish poverty and fear of poverty' (Becker 1997:3). Arguably flaws in the Beveridge settlement itself hindered the possibilities for tackling poverty and embedding public support for those in poverty. The social security system was based on the liberal conception of a social minimum, drawing on Rowntree's analysis of subsistence levels, and solidarity was sought through ensuring flat-rate contributions and flat-rate benefits for all. This settlement was influenced by concerns stretching back to the Poor Law's principle of 'less eligibility' about creating disincentives to work (Lister 2000). This meant that the resultant benefits were scarcely above assistance levels and, unlike in continental Europe, there was little integration of the non-poor in this aspect of welfare state provision (Timmins 1995; Glennerster 2004).

At the 1950 Election, Labour claimed to have eradicated extreme poverty and abolished the Poor Law in their first term in office, and comparison of Rowntree's surveys of 1936 and the late 1940s appeared to confirm such progress (Page 2008). However, by the 1960s poverty had been 'rediscovered', partly influenced by US discourses involving 'nothing else than the overturning of these established images of society' (Banting 1979:68). Richard Titmuss and his followers rejected the static subsistence measure of poverty adopted by Beveridge and advocated a relative definition of poverty. Using this definition and drawing a poverty line above Supplementary Benefit levels, Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend (1965) demonstrated in *The Poor and the Poorest* that despite growing affluence, poverty had increased between 1954 and 1960. Their work was explicitly political: 'it posed sharply the question of what minimum standard of living was acceptable in the affluent society, and simultaneously suggested a much larger problem of poverty than had previously been recognised' (Tomlinson 2008: 137). The constitution of those in poverty - working families with children - also defied the conventional wisdom that there was only residual poverty amongst the elderly.

Despite close links with the Labour Party, the Titmuss group<sup>5</sup> had little success in persuading them to prioritise family poverty - the issue was absent from their 1964 General Election manifesto. This resulted in the decision to launch a public campaign in the winter of 1965 with the establishment of the Child Poverty Action Group and the publication of *The Poor and the Poorest*

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Townsend and Brian Abel-Smith were taught and influenced by Richard M. Titmuss, Professor of Social Administration at the London School of Economics. Titmuss' work with a group of younger sociologists – Townsend and Abel-Smith in particular – demonstrated the continued existence of poverty was an important intellectual influence within the Labour Party (Ellison 1994).

(Banting 1979). The success of the campaign meant that family poverty gained immediate political salience and was a feature of both the main parties' electoral platforms in 1966. Poverty was a politically sensitive issue for the Labour Party as they saw it as central to their self-identification and a dividing line between the parties. Despite internal ideological divisions there was the shared 'assumption that - whatever else it stood for - Labour was 'about poverty'' Banting (1979: 74). However, family poverty was a bipartisan issue that lacked a depth of support and did not catch fire as a political issue. As Banting (1979:75) puts it, 'concern about poverty was widespread within Labour, but even there it was not a leading issue of the day'. The Labour Government of 1964-1970 increased family allowances but in the face of economic constraints introduced a clawback through the wage packet that proved unpopular. Britain's relatively low levels of economic growth and related problems of public expenditure and taxation rates dominated the 1960s and 1970s (McGregor 1981) and a sympathetic reading of the 1964-1970 Labour Government points to economic constraints curtailing their policy ambitions. The CPAG under Frank Field took the opposing view and there were bitter exchanges between CPAG and the Labour Party in the run up to the 1970 Election (Evans 2011).

Despite the high profile public campaign of 1965, the group of NGOs that made up the poverty lobby, of which Child Poverty Action Group was the key player, 'never sought to be a national movement or had the staff to create one' and concentrated their efforts on elite persuasion (Donnison 1982:127). They made extensive use of the media and direct contacts to influence civil servants and politicians, particularly those in the Labour Party (Banting 1979) and Evans (2011) argues that they were crucial in the discursive change from a pathological to structural explanations of poverty and greater empathy for the poor amongst policy-makers.

There was no political constituency for an anti-poverty agenda though. It was not central to trades union concerns and crucially, Banting (1979) argues that poverty never became a major concern for the electorate: in surveys it was rarely mentioned as an important issue for government and never became an election issue. There is little evidence on public attitudes to poverty in the 1960s, but a picture was emerging of growing resistance to taxation and to certain elements of welfare state provision. Taylor-Gooby (1985) describes a public strongly supportive of services for the elderly, the sick and disabled, education and the NHS, but antipathetic to benefits for the unemployed, low paid, lone parents and children. A study of perceptions of poverty in Europe also found that 'in comparison with other European countries, UK respondents were less likely to believe that there were people 'really in poverty' around them, much more likely to attribute poverty to personal failings of the poor themselves rather than social injustices, and more likely to think the authorities were doing enough, if not too much, already' (Banting 1979: 78, describing Commission of the European Communities 1977). As such there was no public pressure to tackle family poverty. If anything,

Labour ministers were discouraged by signs of antipathy to public spending and to the poor amongst its traditional voters (Banting 1979). Indeed, the picture of a Government constrained in office has relevance for an examination of New Labour's public politics. Banting (1979: 105) puts it well: 'Outside social constraints were real and potent. But they were present as estimates in the minds of policy-makers rather than demonstrations on the steps of Parliament.'

The decline in support for certain aspects of welfare spending from the 1950s onwards was manifest in the moral panic about 'scroungers' claiming unemployment benefit in the mid-1970s and it briefly became a public political issue. This was largely agenda-setting by the press but it tapped into entrenched attitudes to the poor and contemporary concerns about differential between benefit levels and earnings. There was widespread press coverage of fraud cases and unemployment benefit recipients supposedly better off out of work and they were highly critical of the increase in benefit levels in 1976. The public responded to this and the scrounger became a key figure in the public discourse of welfare and poverty (Deacon 1978, Golding and Middleton 1982). Paradoxically in a period of rising unemployment the political focus was instead on the problem of the unemployed (Deacon 1978).

The extent of the poverty lobby's influence on policy-making during the 1960s and 1970s is subject to debate (see discussion in Chapter Six of Whiteley and Winyard 1987). Evans' (2011: 159) evaluation centres more on the question of discursive influence and concludes: 'The poverty lobby was certainly successful in changing the opinions of academics and officials that worked with and on behalf of the poor during the 1970s. Whether it sustained that power it is harder to gauge and whether it impacted on the wider political culture is even more complicated to ascertain.' The open criticism of the Labour Party under Frank Field's leadership had created distance between the two organisations and by the end of the 1970s there was a concerted effort to develop a more non-partisan approach. As the next section illustrates though, under the Thatcher Government the poverty lobby found itself in a more hostile policy environment and the dominant discourse moved to individualistic explanations of poverty in the form of underclass theory.

### **6.2.3 The Thatcher Years: The End of the Line for Poverty**

There was an unprecedented growth in poverty and inequality during the Conservative's period of office, such that 'by the early 1990s the UK had moved from being one of the more equal European countries to one of the most unequal, more comparable on poverty and inequality measures to the United States than to Europe' (Stewart and Hills 2005). This societal change was due in large part to Thatcher's ideological rejection of the Keynesian post-war political consensus and the attempt to construct a new consensus around neo-liberalism (Hall 1979). Political space for policy change was sought through a legitimating discourse that evoked 'British values' of a limited state and liberal economics. Thatcher 'defended the people's right 'to

be unequal' with claims that the pursuit of equality weakened incentives, penalized success, was costly and ineffective, and created a dependency culture ... talked of 'rolling back the frontiers of the Welfare State' and ... insisted on distinguishing between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor' (Schmidt 2002: 174). Conservative political discourse juxtaposed the claimant and the taxpayer as separate groups with competing interests, the former dependent on benefits and the latter independent and paying for them (Andrews and Jacobs 1990).

In fact, poverty was largely absent from the Thatcher Government's lexicon and its existence denied. As a senior civil servant put it to the Select Committee on Social Services in June 1989: 'The word poor is one the government actually disputes' (quoted in Gordon et al., 2000). In John Moore's famous speech entitled 'An End of the Line for Poverty', relative concepts of poverty were rejected as 'bizarre' and 'an attempt to discredit our economic achievement'. Instead a subsistence concept was used to argue that improvements in living standards over the twentieth century had eliminated poverty (Moore 1989). Of particular significance for this thesis, is the similar stance the Conservative Government took to the 1995 United Nations Summit on Social Development, which aimed to tackle poverty at an international level. As discussed in the previous chapter, this Summit drew attention to the 'dual structural phenomenon' of a growing gap between rich and poor both *within* and *between* developing and developed countries and produced a two-part definition of poverty that could be applied to all countries. Margaret Thatcher refused to attend the Summit and whilst Britain signed the declaration which committed member states to 'enact national plans for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty', the Secretary of State for Social Security, Peter Lilley, subsequently argued that these were a matter for Third World countries and that 'the UK [already had] the infrastructure and social protection systems to prevent poverty and maintain living standards' (Guardian April 1996).

Instead the Conservative Governments drew on Charles Murray's language of the underclass to characterise those in long-term receipt of out-of-work benefits as a group whose values were at odds with the rest of society. In this reading, the welfare state removed any incentive towards self-help, instead producing an intergenerational dependency culture. Lone parenthood was particularly demonised as a lifestyle decision supported by the welfare state and perpetuating the underclass and poverty became primarily associated with deviant attitudes and behaviour (Murray 1984). In policy terms, benefit levels were eroded and there was a greater emphasis on means-testing. However, in the context of recession and mass unemployment, public support for addressing poverty grew as poverty levels increased during the 1980s.

Throughout this period the Labour Party attacked the Conservatives for 'punishing the poor' (see for example, Andrews and Jacobs 1990), but their electoral platform also underwent significant change. Their 1983 manifesto

was the most left-wing ever adopted; directly opposing Conservative values they promised ‘socialism in one country...more nationalisation and a more generous and egalitarian welfare state’ (Schmidt 2002: 175). This resulted in their worst ever defeat and a thorough policy review was initiated in 1985, with two subsequent defeats in 1987 and 1992 continuing the move to the centre ground (Gamble 2005).

#### **6.2.4 Conclusion**

Accounts of the post-war poverty politics reveal that poverty has achieved only fleeting recognition as a social problem; an ambivalent and, at times hostile, attitude amongst the public to elements of the welfare state and to those in poverty; and a Labour Party with a strong self-identification with issues of poverty but preoccupied with economic problems in the 1960s and 1970s, and uncertain of public support for redistribution. This took place within the context of a Keynesian welfare consensus that was broken under the Conservative Governments of the 1980s as they sought to embed a neo-liberal order and this period saw a substantial rise in poverty and inequality, and a resultant growing public concern. The public politics of poverty has been largely focused on elite politics with little direct public involvement. The poverty lobby focused its efforts on the Labour Party until the late 1970s when it became more non-partisan, but it then found itself in a hostile policy environment.

### **6.3 New Labour: Bringing (Child) Poverty Back In**

#### **6.3.1 Introduction**

Having set the scene in the preceding section, a chronological account of the public politics of domestic poverty under New Labour is now provided. This draws on a wide range of literature, as well as analysis of New Labour speeches and policy documents, and seeks to describe the emergence of poverty as a policy issue under New Labour, how the public and the public politics are constructed.

#### **6.3.2 Blair’s first term: eradicating child poverty in a generation**

Poverty was not completely absent from early New Labour discourse. The word poverty occurred six times in Labour’s 1997 manifesto and also appeared twice in the Conservative manifesto. Both parties asserted that work was the best route out of poverty and New Labour described their flagship ‘welfare to work’ programme as an anti-poverty policy. Crucially for a public politics of poverty though, poverty was not an issue on which the 1997 election was fought. As Becker (1997:4 *italics in original*) put it, “(d)espite calls for welfare reform from across the political spectrum and elsewhere, there is, however, a lack of political will amongst those in government, and in opposition, to come to terms, and grapple with, *poverty* as a social problem.”

Toynbee and Walker (2001) cited Blair’s choice of the Aylesbury Estate as the site for his first speech as Prime Minister as an indication of New Labour’s

commitment to tackling poverty and disadvantage. However, early New Labour discourse often employed the language of dependency theory (Deacon 2002) and in this particular speech references to poverty are outnumbered by those of a 'workless class' (Blair, June 1997). It was the concept of social exclusion that achieved early prominence in New Labour discourse. Whilst also not a feature of the election campaign, the concept was part of early New Labour thinking (Mandelson and Liddle 1996) and the establishment of a cross-departmental Social Exclusion Unit was announced in August 1997. It was this commitment to tackling social exclusion that was said by Blair to be the defining difference between New Labour and the Conservatives (Levitas 1998).

As might be expected of an incoming government, the early speeches of Tony Blair and Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security (May 1997 - July 1998), presented their election victory as vindication that the electorate share their vision of Britain and as a mandate to tackle social division and exclusion.

*'A number of surveys have charted people's response to the symptoms of growing social division in Britain over recent years. Not surprisingly, people don't like it, and they want something done about it. The poll that perhaps showed that most clearly was the one that took place on May the first. The result of that poll proved that the British people were not prepared to put up with such a deeply divided society any longer. The Government therefore has a clear mandate to tackle social exclusion and rebuild a better "one nation" society.'*

(Harman, November 1997)

There are different articulations of the concept of social exclusion and Levitas (1998) examined its use within early New Labour's discourse. She found three competing discourses of social exclusion, arguing that New Labour had moved away from a redistributive discourse to a discourse that combined social integration through paid work and concerns about a moral underclass. As Fairclough (2000:53) describes, New Labour speeches constructed social exclusion as 'more than poverty', setting up an implicit antithesis so that social exclusion is actually contrasted with material poverty, and thus tackling social exclusion involves other measures *instead of* increasing benefits and redistribution. In a similar vein, welfare-to-work discourse constructed a policy of employment opportunities *in opposition to* benefit increases (Lister 1998). Academics and campaigners voiced their concerns about the Social Exclusion Unit's lack of consideration of income poverty (Lister 1998) and cuts to lone parent benefit in 1997 appeared to confirm that work was considered the only solution to poverty (Stewart et al., 2009).

It was Tony Blair's famous pledge to eradicate child poverty within a generation, made in his Beveridge Lecture of March 1999, that reframed New Labour's defining commitment as that of child poverty and officially re-

established poverty as a key social problem. To the apparent surprise of his speechwriters and Government colleagues he announced: 'Our historic aim will be for ours to be the first generation to end child poverty. It is a 20-year mission, but I believe it can be done.' Whilst poverty had been part of New Labour's lexicon and the 1998 and 1999 Budgets had actually raised benefits for those out of work, this is widely considered to have 'marked a sea-change in both the government's language and its policy approach' (Stewart and Hills 2005:11). McKay and Rowlingson (2008) draw on Hall's (1993) work on policy paradigms, to describe it as a paradigm shift involving major discursive change. Gordon Brown is largely credited with driving the child poverty agenda and the Treasury published a major study into the causes of poverty and inequality days later (HM Treasury 1999). Following the speech there was a real increase in the level of resources aimed at poverty reduction, with initiatives including working and child tax credits, Sure Start, the national minimum wage, increases in child benefit and the child element of income support (Flaherty et al., 2004: 1), and tackling child poverty became an enduring theme of Pre-Budget and Budget reports. Crucially though, there was no associated governmental or Labour Party promotion of the announcement and the next key speech on child poverty appears to be Gordon Brown's in July 2004. Dean (2008) argues that this was a missed opportunity at a time when there was still strong popular support for creating a fairer Britain.

There was much speculation about why this discursive and policy change took place, and more specifically why Tony Blair was so bold as to set a time-limited commitment (Walker 1999; Deacon 2003). Possible explanations are: the end of the two year commitment to keep to Conservative spending plans finally enabled them to outline their own governing agenda; this announcement was a response to the outcry over lone parent benefit cuts; and evidence to be published by the Treasury that childhood poverty had a scarring effect on future opportunities (Deacon 2003). As Deacon (2003) argues, this third explanation threatened New Labour's Third Way construction of social justice through equality of opportunity. As Chapter Three discusses, some Government members, including Gordon Brown, were already framing their domestic policy in terms of poverty and linking domestic and global poverty agendas, and time-limited targets had become a feature of New Labour policy-making in other policy areas, including International Development. Given Treasury dominance in social policy, it is also possible that Blair's intervention at that particular time was partly a personal move to be associated with this agenda.

Tony Blair's description of ending child poverty as 'a 20 year mission' was quickly operationalised into a time-specific and incremental target, with the number of children living in income poverty (defined 60 per cent of median income) to be cut by a quarter by April 2005. The Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions shared responsibility for its achievement under a Public Service Agreement, reflecting Gordon Brown's authority over

social policy throughout New Labour's period in office (McKay and Rowlingson 2006). The first annual report on poverty and social exclusion, *Opportunity for All*, was also published later that year (DSS 1999). Stewart and Hills (2005:12) describe this as a 'sort of second manifesto...offering a vision hugely different and more ambitious than the manifesto for the 1997 General Election'. The 2001 Election Manifesto also gave greater prominence to poverty, with nineteen references to domestic poverty and opportunity mentioned more than 40 times (Stewart and Hills 2005). It promoted child poverty as a key electoral issue: 'Our aim is to make the goal of ending child poverty in Britain a political litmus test for any political party running for office' (Labour Party 2001). However, the campaign itself focused on public investment and a strong economy and failed to highlight the child poverty commitment or progress towards it (Fabian Society 2005).

In terms of the relationship between government and the poverty lobby, Dobrowolsky (2002:58) describes a policy environment in which childrens' charities were 'consulted more than in living memory'. In early speeches to anti-poverty organisations Gordon Brown describes a new shared vision. He praises their dedication in fighting to end the injustice of poverty, 'unheard in a political wilderness' and asserts that this is no longer solely their ambition but it is now shared by the government. Now in government, Labour could at last take action, he argued, but it is necessary to work together. They were urged to visibly hold them to account on their child poverty commitment and the Government itself instigated and funded the advocacy coalitions, Child Poverty Alliance in Northern Ireland and End Child Poverty in Britain (Dobrowolsky 2002; information from Robert Walker 2011). End Child Poverty was established in 2001 and, responding directly to the Government's child poverty discourse, it aimed to: inform the public about the causes and effects of child poverty; forge commitment between, and across, the public, private and voluntary sectors to end child poverty by 2020; and promote the case for ending child poverty by 2020 with this and every future Government.

There was little discussion of the public politics of poverty in New Labour discourse and it is the related issue of the welfare state where they described the need to re-gain popular support. Indeed this was the focus of speech in which Tony Blair famously pledged to end child poverty. He argued that a lack of reform of the welfare state under the Conservatives had led to a decline in its popularity. In his narrative, their failure to respond to the conditions of the late twentieth century and to tackle the weakness of the welfare state led to it being associated with a dependency culture. This underplays the discursive work the Conservatives did in promoting this construction of welfare receipt and demonstrates their own acquiescence to this discursive framing. He described the task of making the welfare state popular again by demanding more responsibility from benefit recipients and in turn providing more support and this more active conditional welfare state is 'the application of Beveridge and Attlee's popular vision for modern times'. Public politics plays an important role in this construction as a reformed

welfare state is justified as both 'what works' and what the public are prepared to support.

*'So under the last Government, social security spending went up, but poverty and social exclusion went up too. So they cut away at the Budget, sometimes creating problems along the way, for example, encouraging fraud in their cuts to housing benefit. But they failed to tackle the fundamental weaknesses of the welfare state...They failed to create a modern welfare state fit for the modern world. Therefore welfare became unpopular. Welfare, though not the concept of the welfare state, became a term of abuse. It became associated with fraud, abuse, laziness, a dependency culture, social irresponsibility encouraged by welfare dependency. Welfare was blamed as the problem not the solution.'*

(Blair, March 1999)

By his second term in office Blair (June 2002) described 'growing public support for the welfare state that tackles poverty at its source; that gets people into work; that offers people hope - in exchange for a commitment to help themselves'. He described a cultural change within the welfare state such that 'it is universally accepted that it is right to expect unemployed people to look for work and take jobs' making the welfare state popular again, and the fall in the number of benefit recipients constructed as making possible spending for particular groups - children, pensioners and the severely disabled. Throughout their period in office though, the same argument was used to justify further conditionality.

*'Social justice requires such an explicitly conditional welfare state. Firstly because we know that conditionality works, in helping people to turn around their lives. And secondly because it is the foundation for the public support on which the welfare state is based.'*

(Purnell, May 2009)

### **6.3.3 Blair's second and third terms: missing the target**

New Labour's second term in office saw Gordon Brown commit the Government to ending pensioner poverty in his 2002 party conference speech. No targets were set for this but a comprehensive two pronged approach resulted, with Pension Credit for current pensioners and a Pensions Commission to review policies for future pensioners resulting in major legislative change (Stewart et al., 2009). Following a consultation exercise, the child poverty measures for the 2010 and 2020 targets were announced, adding absolute poverty and material deprivation measures but crucially continuing the relative poverty measure (DWP 2003). The tax and benefit system was further developed with the introduction of Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit and these became the government's key anti-poverty measure. Child Tax Credits covered households in and out of work and were received high up the income scale under Gordon Brown's principle of

'progressive universalism' defined as 'support for all, and more help for those who need it most, when they need it most' (HM Treasury 2003: paragraph 5.1). They aimed at redistribution whilst removing benefit disincentives for those entering work, reducing the stigma of benefit receipt and ensuring support amongst broader society (Stewart 2009).

However, Stewart et al., (2009:13) identify a slowing of momentum from 2003-04 onwards with the spending increase slowing sharply and suggest three factors. First, attention and resources focused on foreign affairs notably the Iraq War; second, the gradually slowing economy placing constraints on spending; and third, Blair's overriding interest in public service reform. Indeed, it is possible to speculate that the focus on foreign affairs includes Blair's increasing interest in global poverty and the planning of the EU and G8 Summits of 2005. It must also be noted that this policy area had not received any momentum from public demand for action. On the contrary, there was little awareness of the issue amongst the public. Despite the impact Tony Blair's commitment had on anti-poverty community, there was little press reporting (Cross and Golding 1999) and research suggests the public are not aware of it (Fabian Society 2005; Blake et al., 2009). Lister (2001) reported disappointment amongst ministers that it did not generate political returns amongst their traditional supporters.

There was agreement amongst New Labour politicians, academics and anti-poverty campaigners that the scale of investment needed required public support (Walker 1999; Dent 2009). The disagreement lay in the extent to which the New Labour Government themselves were responsible for this lack of knowledge and support both in terms of pursuing 'redistribution by stealth' and the continuation of punitive language associated with the broader welfare reform agenda (Lister 2001). Despite the 'paradigm shift' represented by the rehabilitation of the word poverty, a relative poverty commitment and redistributive Budgets from 1998 onwards (albeit only for certain groups), there had not been an associated redistributive discourse. Indeed, Lister (2001:66) noted how Gordon Brown 'resists the 'redistribution' tag completely, or deflects it by arguing that he is rewarding work and families in contrast to the old-style something for nothing redistribution'. Whilst New Labour set ambitious targets on health inequalities, income or wealth inequalities have been largely absent from their discourse. In another false antithesis they stressed their pursuit of greater inequality of opportunity rather than outcome and denied the importance of greater inequality at the top of the income distribution.

New Labour's narrative of tackling child poverty was part of a broader aim of greater equality of opportunity (Deacon 2002; Lister 2001) in the ultimate pursuit of the dual goals of economic progress and social justice. As discussed in Chapter Four, there are few examples of description of ending child poverty as a good in itself in the 'here and now'. This future-oriented goal combines financial support for families with improvements in public services,

particularly education, in an attempt to break cycles of disadvantage. Whilst the rediscovery of poverty in the 1960s highlighted ‘family poverty’, in keeping with their social investment approach New Labour chose to focus discursively on ‘child poverty’. Critics have highlighted the practical impossibility of this separation as all those with children have benefitted from the increased household income. For households without children, work remained the only route out of poverty under New Labour, and those who were out of work or in low paid employment were comparatively disadvantaged. Commentators also pointed to the further disparities that would be created by meeting the child poverty targets through these selective measures (Hirsch 2009, Kenway 2010).

Other discourses in New Labour’s repertoire interwove and competed with the dominant social investment discourse, some of which drew on a cultural explanation for poverty (Deacon 2003). Despite the increased financial provision for tackling child poverty within households in and out of work, the main narrative was that of supporting parents into employment and making work pay. Whilst in early speeches on child poverty the emphasis was on supporting parents rather than their responsibility, this sat within a broader welfare discourse in which the need for greater responsibility amongst benefit recipients and the problem of benefit fraud were reiterated. Cultural explanations are found in some articulations of a ‘cycle of deprivation’ and ‘poverty of ambition’, as well as Tony Blair’s use of the concept of social exclusion to describe the ‘hardest to reach’ families whose poverty is caused not by ‘lack of work or low income per se, but may well be the result of a multiplicity of lifestyle issues’ (Blair, September 2006).

In more practical terms, there was no government communications strategy for increasing knowledge on and gaining support for the child poverty agenda (personal communication with DWP speechwriter) and little political noise was generated. In fact New Labour actors portrayed themselves as being constrained in power by the lack of visible public support for their anti-poverty agenda. With the experience of being at the receiving end of Jubilee 2000, and later Make Poverty History, key Treasury figures saw a broad-based campaign and associated political spectacles as the missing ingredients in the domestic poverty politics. The Jubilee 2000 campaign produced great volumes of mail from members of the public calling for debt relief and large-scale public demonstrations, involving more than just ‘the usual suspects’, and had a great impact on Gordon Brown, Ed Balls and Ed Miliband, all of whom called for a similar campaign on child poverty.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the unprecedented scale of participation in Make Poverty History led to renewed calls amongst Labour politicians and the poverty lobby for a public demonstration of support and for the government to give greater prominence to their child poverty agenda respectively. Furthermore, despite New Labour’s reticence in the domestic domain and the lack of a public campaign, the policy environment of the global poverty

domain, in which they showed more willingness to lead, impacted on the public politics of domestic poverty through the discursive linkages made by David Cameron. This speech was part of a wider discursive project to counter the assumption that this issue belonged to the Labour Party, rejecting neo-liberal interpretations of poverty and social justice and instead claiming back the One Nation tradition and adopting a relative definition.

This change can be seen as an important victory for New Labour's discursive project with poverty becoming the dominant concept around which competing political visions would be articulated. Indeed, Kenway (2006:36) argued that Cameron's Scarman Lecture 'Poverty is a social responsibility' had politicised poverty by 'acknowledging the problem and developing a programme of their own in opposition to Labour's' and that this 'could be the best thing that has happened on poverty since the Prime Minister made his pledge seven years ago to end child poverty in a generation'. Despite Gordon Brown's attempts to define their child poverty commitment in social investment terms, in seeking to claim this policy area and present a dividing line, Cameron portrayed Labour's approach as bureaucratic redistribution that failed to address the causes of poverty, listed in this instance as family breakdown, drug and alcohol addiction, unemployment and poor education.

*'So I want this message to go out loud and clear: the Conservative Party recognises, will measure and will act on relative poverty. But there is a crucial difference between how we will act and how Labour acts. Tackling poverty involves much more than the redistribution of money through the tax and benefits system. We have to think about the causes of poverty.'*

(Cameron, November 2006)

2004 saw the Child Poverty Review and an uprating of the Child Tax Credit to meet the 2005 target, and the following year Alan Johnson (March 2005) reported 'general agreement that we are on track to meet our target of reducing child poverty by a quarter by April 2005'. By March 2006 though, it was clear that the Government had narrowly missed their first interim target of reducing child poverty by a quarter by April 2005. Child poverty rates had dropped by nearly one fifth after housing costs and close to the one quarter target before housing costs, reversing a twenty year trend in the opposite direction at a time of rising incomes (Hirsch 2006). Nonetheless the target had been missed and this made the task of meeting the subsequent targets more difficult. Labour politicians reaffirmed their commitment to tackling poverty, stressing the ambitious nature of the target they had set themselves and the poverty lobby tempered in their criticism.

Perhaps more significantly for the politics of poverty though is that in the following month the Conservative Party endorsed the target of eliminating poverty by 2020. This remained an aspiration rather than a pledge because, they argued, they did not know how much progress would be made towards

this target when they regained office (Letwin, April 2006). This enabled the Conservatives to criticise the fact that the target had been missed but also to assert that it was they who really understood the causes of ‘the cycle of deprivation’ and the policy interventions that would work. Again it represents the acceptance of a relative child poverty target as the dominant discourse and an attempt to work with and reshape it.

In the wake of the missed target and the renewed party political interest there was a flurry of activity in the Department for Work and Pensions. The then Secretary of State, John Hutton, announced in May 2006 that he was making child poverty his department’s number one priority and instituted a review to assess what more could be done to meet the 2020 target, with independent social policy analyst, Lisa Harker, commissioned to advise this review. His speech, responding to the publication of the Labour-affiliated Fabian Society’s Commission on Life Chances and Child Poverty report, provided a platform to place this announcement. The Commission called on ministers to replace an emerging narrative linking tackling poverty to social mobility with the more inclusive notion of life chances for all (Fabian Society 2006). Hutton went on to make two further ‘key’ speeches outlining the department’s current thinking on child poverty and the welfare state (personal communication with speechwriter), including one at the publication of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s assessment of what would be necessary to achieve the 2020 target (Hirsch 2006). He announced the child poverty proofing of policy and a refocusing of employment programmes on helping parents into work, and also set out to construct the nature of the public politics of poverty following the Conservatives’ adoption of the 2020 target as a policy ‘aspiration’:

*‘Seven years on from setting the target of eradicating child poverty within a generation, we remain absolutely committed to our goal - and we welcome the consensus of ambition now also shared by others across the political spectrum. The debate must now be about the means to get there. Eliminating child poverty cannot merely be an aspiration. It must be a clear commitment.’*

(Hutton, July 2006)

As the Conservatives entered the debate, the language once again became more partisan, as they sought to define the difference between the two parties.

*The Conservatives now say they have signed up to our child poverty target. I welcome this. But it will take more than words to deliver on it. All of the measures we have taken to tackle child poverty have been opposed by the Tories. Tax Credits; Sure Start; The Minimum Wage; The New Deal; the list goes on and on. It's no good willing the ends if you remain opposed to all of the means. These kind of promises are simply empty and hollow.*

(Hutton, May 2006)

Hutton's third 'key' speech entitled 'Supporting Families' adopted a new tone, possibly responding to Conservative discourses, describing the family as 'the bedrock of the welfare state' with the extended family caring for children and elderly relatives as something the state should never attempt to replace (Hutton, September 2006). He argued for greater personal responsibility in relation to child support reforms, the benefits of living in a two parent family, and the responsibility of families and communities to tackle anti-social behaviour and end the cycle of deprivation.

There also appears to have been an attempt to directly engage stakeholders and members of the public in the child poverty agenda. Using the language of the disability movement, 'nothing about us, without us', the then Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform, Jim Murphy, announced departmental seminars with young people from deprived areas 'exploring their perspectives on what poverty means and what can be done to tackle it' (Murphy, July 2006). As discussed in Chapter Three, this appears to have been further recognition that their child poverty agenda needed promoting to the public through the extension of awareness of what it means to be in poverty.

*'Achieving our target of eradicating child poverty by 2020 is the challenge and responsibility of Government. But our approach must be strengthened, not just by popular engagement but by popular refusal to tolerate child poverty in today's Britain. For this to happen, I believe we must extend awareness of what poverty means to children in Britain today. By helping young people's voices to be heard - we truly can "make poverty history at home".'*

(Murphy, July 2006)

Jim Murphy ran a blog on welfare reform and child poverty from October 2006 until May 2007 aiming to 'involve the public in the Government's plans to reform the welfare state and eradicate child poverty' (archived DWP webpage). In February 2007 the Government was required to respond to one of the few externally generated interventions in the child poverty debate to

receive media prominence. A UNICEF (2007) report on child wellbeing placed Britain at the bottom of a league table of 21 industrial countries and highlighted the high levels of child poverty as a major contributory factor. The year 2007 also saw the establishment of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation programme aimed at improving ‘understanding of how to build public support to end poverty in the UK’.

#### **6.3.4 Gordon Brown’s premiership: legislating to end child poverty**

In June 2007 Gordon Brown succeeded Tony Blair as leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister. It was hoped that his premiership would bring to the fore the redistributive agenda that the Treasury had been pursuing on child poverty and that the terms of debate around inequality and social justice might be broadened (Stewart 2009; Lister 2007). Harriet Harman had pledged to establish a Commission on Income and Wealth in her campaign for the deputy leadership and her election was another promising sign. In fact, Gordon Brown did not deliver a speech on poverty as Prime Minister and there was little discursive change in that sense. Indeed, Stewart (2009) noted the greater emphasis on parental responsibilities in tackling child poverty continuing in the report *‘Tackling Child Poverty: Everybody’s Business’* (DCSF, DWP and HM Treasury 2008). Instead, there was a renewed pursuit of the child poverty agenda through a number of institutional means, replicating elements of the public politics of poverty witnessed in the global domain.

A new Department for Children, Schools and Families headed by Gordon Brown’s close ally, Ed Balls, was created, responsible for all policy affecting children and young people. The 2007 Public Service Agreement child poverty target was shared between the Treasury, as lead department, DCSF and DWP. In October 2007 a joint Child Poverty Unit was established within DCSF, bringing together officials from DWP and DCSF to ‘drive forward the government’s commitment to eradicate child poverty in the UK’ (DWP 2008). The Government also took responsibility for monitoring and understanding public support for tackling child poverty for the first time. A survey conducted in the summer of 2007 examined perceptions of the current level and trends of child poverty and its causes, as well as views on the adequacy of benefit levels and income from low-paid work for families with children (Kelly 2008) and subsequent work was commissioned to include questions on child poverty in the battery of DWP funded questions in the British Social Attitudes survey (Blake et al., 2009). By far the most important development for the public politics of domestic poverty though, was Gordon Brown’s announcement in his first speech to the Labour Party conference as Prime Minister that their child poverty pledge would be enshrined in legalisation.

*‘Because child poverty demeans Britain, we have committed our party to tackle and to end it. The measures we have taken this year alone will help lift 250,000 children out of poverty. The economic times are tough, of course that makes things harder, but we are in this for the long haul - the complete elimination of child poverty by 2020. And so today I*

*announce my intention to introduce ground breaking legislation to enshrine in law Labour's pledge to end child poverty.'*

(Brown September 2007)

Following a consultation document '*Ending child poverty: making it happen*' (DSCF, DWP, and HM Treasury 2009), a Bill was introduced in June 2009 that: 'established four separate child poverty targets to be met by 2020/21; required the UK Government to publish a regular UK child poverty strategy; required the Scottish and Northern Irish Ministers to publish child poverty strategies; established a Child Poverty Commission to provide advice; required the UK Government to publish annual progress reports; and placed new duties on local authorities and other 'delivery partners' in England to work together to tackle child poverty' (Kennedy and Townsend 2009).

As discussed in Chapter Three and Five, the use of legislation to institutionally embed their policy commitments and produce binding targets and annual reports is a form of public politics that the New Labour had previously used in the global poverty domain and for climate change and fuel poverty targets. It was not necessary for pursuing their policy agenda and legal attempts to challenge the Government on the fuel poverty targets had been unsuccessful (see Kennedy and Townsend 2009), but this public politics provides a political moment in which poverty receives public attention, giving greater visibility to the issue and to the position of the opposition parties both when the legislation is being enacted and to any changes of policy made under future administrations. It required the opposition parties to vote either for or against the child poverty commitment and it was intended that changes to the child poverty targets would require new primary legislation or the repeal of the Act (Stephen Timmins speaking to the Work and Pensions Committee, quoted in Kennedy and Townsend 2009). It became law in March 2010 with cross-party support.

Despite the professed institutional embedding of their agenda, it is worth noting that from 2007 onwards the annual *Opportunity for All* report was no longer published. These reports discussed governmental strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion amongst a range of target groups as well as progress against a set of indicators. They also provided the Government with an annual event to publicise their poverty agenda and were often accompanied by a ministerial speech. The indicators continued to be published but readers were guided elsewhere for strategic discussion, the argument being that the remaining challenges require a new focus: action at a local level and a focus on those not supported by existing strategies (DWP 2007). Its withdrawal could be seen as the quiet dismantling of an institutional process built up around the poverty agenda and just the thing the New Labour Government were apparently seeking to prevent through legislative means.

As the process of institutionally embedding the child poverty commitment got underway there was concern that the Government would miss the second interim target of halving child poverty by 2010. The 2009 Budget was seen as the last chance to impact on this. A month prior to the November 2008 Pre-Budget Report, The End Child Poverty coalition's held the 'Keep the Promise' rally in Trafalgar Square, aimed at raising awareness and keeping the pressure on the Government to make the financial investment necessary to reach the target, which attracted ten thousand demonstrators. More specifically they called for an extra £3 billion in tax credits and benefits for children. This was the kind of political spectacle that leading Treasury figures had called for and received broadcast and press attention. It echoed the discourse of the Make Poverty History campaign in holding the Government to account for the 'promise' they had made on child poverty. However, the Pre-Budget and subsequent Budget outcome was a disappointment to campaigners. End Child Poverty coalition and its composite charities, the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Treasury Select Committee all saw it as insufficient to meet the target. The IFS had estimated the need for an additional £4.2 billion per year on child tax credits to meet the 2010 target and the 2009 Budget committed only £140 million (described in Townsend 2009). The Chairman of the Treasury Select Committee also criticised the Chancellor for the lack of reference to the child poverty target in the Budget statement for the first time in years (Guardian April 2009). By May 2009 ministers were admitting that it would be hard to meet the 2010 target due to the financial crisis (Guardian May 2009). This will be assessed in June 2012 when data is available for 2010/2011.

It is worth pausing to consider this episode in the public politics of poverty under New Labour and its part within broader Government discourse on the role of the voluntary sector and political engagement. As Chapter Five discussed, changes in the guidance issued on the political campaigning of charitable organisations were brought about by global poverty campaigns in the late 1990s and the Charity Commission issued further guidance in the 2000s, demonstrating the latitude charities have and encouraging them to use it to further their charitable aims. The New Labour Government also promoted the role of the voluntary sector in reducing the democratic deficit and enhancing social capital by enabling people to influence decisions at a local and national level. They floated the idea of enabling charities to undertake political campaigning as their predominant activity (HM Treasury and Cabinet Office 2007) and provided funding for charities to develop innovative forms of political campaigning involving vulnerable groups (Cabinet Office April 2009). As mentioned above, they called for, and indeed funded, a campaigning coalition around their child poverty target akin to those on debt relief and global poverty.

Speeches made by those associated with the Treasury described a public politics of poverty in which voluntary sector organisations played a dual role; working in partnership with the government in anti-poverty programmes and

generating a wider public consensus on poverty through campaigning work. In fact, these roles were intertwined as anti-poverty programmes were key sites for empowering future political advocates:

*'And anyone who like me has attended a sure start conference - and seen the dynamism, energy and determination of parents, volunteers and carers in action - can begin to understand the transformative power that organisations from the playgroup movement to the child care campaigns can have. And I look forward to the little platoons in our communities becoming veritable armies demanding we do more.'*

(Brown, July 2004)

Both Gordon Brown and David Cameron's speeches have drawn on Conservative thinker Edmund Burke's (1985:135) [1790] notion that 'to be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections', in reasserting responsibilities to others in a post-Thatcherite world. They differ though on the role of the state as the means through which some of these responsibilities can be discharged and the extent to which civil society is separate or part of the political arena. In their public politics New Labour describe voluntary sector organisations as critical to policy change with reference frequently made to Make Poverty History.

*'If you think about lots of the changes that have happened in the last 10 years, whether it is Make Poverty History, whether it has been gay and lesbian rights, through the campaigning of Stonewall, whether it is disability discrimination - lots of those changes that have happened, have been because the voluntary sector organisations have demanded that the changes happen.'*

(Ed Miliband, March 2007)

As this chapter has illustrated, the domestic poverty lobby's genesis was in seeking to call the Labour Party in government to account and promote policy change as evidence emerged that poverty was not eradicated. Traditionally, and in contrast to the global poverty lobby, they focused on elite influence and have not sought to generate mass public engagement, but this has changed somewhat in recent years. Under New Labour the policy-making process was characterised by the poverty lobby seeking to publicly hold the Government to account against the specifics of their own policy commitments - at their own request - and on which ultimately they did not deliver. This generated criticism from the political right who argue that charities should cease political campaigning and concentrate on 'helping the needy' and 'relieving individual suffering' (Kirby 2009; Phillips 2009).

### 6.3.5 Conclusion

New Labour left office in June 2010 having rehabilitated the concept of poverty to the extent that they secured party political agreement that

government should seek to eliminate relative poverty and that this should be achieved for child poverty by their target date of 2020. Furthermore, they institutionally embedded this target through the use of legislation so that mandatory annual progress reports and interim targets to be set will be potential political moments for domestic poverty. They also reversed a trend of growing poverty and inequality. In the context of the post-war public politics of poverty and the policy and discursive legacy of the previous Conservative Governments, this has been a significant achievement.

However, they quietly missed their first interim target and anticipated missing the second in the face of the economic constraint. There was concern that their poverty and social exclusion agenda had narrowed as both Government and commentators focused on the child poverty target and that their policy strategy was not sufficient for the ambition of that target (Hirsch 2008; Stewart 2009). It appears then that New Labour's own performance and the Conservative's discursive success in narrating the financial crisis will ensure limited loss of political capital for the Coalition Government should they fail to be on course to meet the target during their first term in office. Another reason that the political impact may be limited is that whilst anticipated public reaction has been a crucial element in New Labour's poverty policy-making, they have not been engaged in a public politics of domestic poverty or of inequality. The party politics of child poverty that has taken place around the 2020 target has not achieved public salience and the position of the main political parties is currently more progressive than public opinion on the need to tackle relative (child) poverty. As the next section illustrates, public opinion is less progressive on matters of poverty and inequality than it was ten years ago (Sefton 2009).

#### **6.4 Leading public opinion on child poverty?**

This short section discusses the available evidence on current public understanding of child poverty and support for anti-poverty policies. It also considers trends over the period of the New Labour Government and whether their discourse contributed to a decline in support. The term 'public politics' used throughout this thesis emphasises the centrality of 'the public' in understanding political change. Party politics is a discursive contest between different groups as they seek to win political support for their visions of the world through a process of working with and changing the dominant political discourse of the time (Fairclough 2000). Electoral support or disapproval of policy change - whether real or anticipated - is a key factor in the policy-making process. Equally though, discourse and neo-institutional theory suggests that public discourses are fluid and open to change through political discursive work and the subsequent experience of the new institutional environment.

New Labour's period in office is characterised by an ambitious target on child poverty, that if achieved would represent a radical change in the structure of

society, coupled with reluctance to promote this ambition to the British public. For some commentators New Labour's approach represents a careful reading of how far it is possible to go with the grain of public opinion, taking the public with them in small steps, whilst for others it represents a failure to provide the leadership necessary for transformative change, and may have reinforced adverse trends in public opinion. As discussed above, there is also the criticism that their own discourse was detrimental in its characterisation of benefit recipients. There have been attempts to consider the extent to which New Labour have led or been led by public opinion, although it is ultimately not possible to determine causation even if trends in public opinion following government policy and discourse or vice versa suggest it (Hills 2002; Sefton 2009). There is also a growing body of qualitative research attempting to understand the beliefs and values that underlie attitudes to poverty and inequality and that explore possibilities for fostering public engagement and support (see for example Castell and Thompson 2007; Fabian Society 2005).

It is well established that domestic poverty has relatively low salience as a public policy issue. There appears to be little, if any, knowledge of New Labour's child poverty targets (Fabian Society 2005), and more fundamentally, Castell and Thompson (2007) report that the lack of awareness or denial of domestic poverty amongst the public is such that there is a need to get the public to 'base camp' before the challenge of engaging them with the issue can begin. Their qualitative research suggests that there is a disjunction between party political and popular discursive worlds as 'the public at the moment lacks an understanding of UK poverty which makes sense in terms of their understanding of how society works' (Castell and Thompson 2007:8). Ultimately, the lack of public-orientated advocacy must be considered a factor in this.

Qualitative studies found that people struggle with the concept of relative poverty. As discussed in Chapter Four, the immediate association is often with the extreme poverty of the developing world and the image of a starving African child, and even people in poverty themselves hold this as a benchmark (Beresford et al., 1999; Fabian Society 2005; Castell and Thompson 2007). It is worth considering what is at work here. Pieterse (2002:7) has argued that global inequality helps to sustain domestic privilege in advanced countries, as 'televised images of extreme poverty in Africa and Asia may work not merely as a compassion wake-up call but also as a domestic pacifier'. Certainly Castell and Thompson (2007) report resistance to applying the word 'poverty' domestically and opposition to the idea of extending something like the Make Poverty History campaign to a UK context, because it was felt that sympathy for the more extreme poverty in the developing world would be unduly 'co-opted' for the less serious problem of relative poverty in UK. Conversely though this framing poverty has a long history in the UK popular discourse and its institutional settlement, and this may exert a strong influence on the popular interpretation of the poverty of the developing world (Lumsdaine 1993). As discussed in Chapter Four, the

framing of poverty in both domains appears conceptually consistent. When asked to consider poverty in Britain, the same studies also report temporally distancing with reference to Dickensian England and locating it in situations of homelessness and addiction.

Survey evidence also shows that when asked to consider what poverty would look like in Britain, only one in five (22 per cent) of the public subscribe to a unambiguously relative definition of poverty as 'not having enough to buy the things most people take for granted' and responses to questions on the adequacy of benefits are also consistent with a definition below the official poverty line of 60 per cent of median income (Sefton 2009). This understanding of poverty has got slightly stricter in the past decade (Sefton 2009). However, as Sefton (2009) points out, a more generous picture emerges through qualitative budget standard research in which members of the public are asked to construct a minimum standard of living for different family types. Campaigns around this minimum income standard may offer the potential for engaging the public in ways that counter difficulties with the concept of poverty and may also generate debates about broader issues. The success of the Living Wage campaign for a minimum wage that pays for the necessities of life provides such a model. Given that many families in poverty are in work, this offers an opportunity to create an understanding of poverty as a normal daily experience rather than a result of extreme life event or personal problem. It also had a significant representation of people in low paid jobs. Research suggests that the most effective voice for engaging the public in anti-poverty debate is those themselves experiencing poverty (Delvaux and Rinne 2009), something New Labour sought to initiate in 2006 but ultimately failed to promote.

Resistance to the idea of poverty in the UK or a lack of sympathy for those in poverty is related to understandings of agency and constraint. As discussed in Chapter Four, recent qualitative evidence suggests that people believe that there are ample opportunities for people in Britain and poverty is ascribed to individual failings rather than social injustice (Castell and Thompson 2007). Whilst the historical context provided above shows this is a long-held stance, Sefton (2009) reports that attitudes to benefit recipients hardened substantially under New Labour, with more people attributing poverty to personal rather than structural causes (up from 15 per cent to 27 per cent from 1994 to 2008) and that this was especially pronounced amongst Labour's own supporters and linked to concerns about the disincentive effects of the benefit system. There has been a reversal from the 1980s to the mid-1990s when most people questioned thought that benefits for unemployed people were too low. He argues that of the two elements of New Labour's 'rights and responsibilities' discourse - helping people overcome structural barriers but also their responsibility to take opportunities offered - the latter resonated with the public (Sefton 2009). This leads to the argument that:

*'Welfare would appear to be less popular than it was when Labour came to power - and even those aspects of the welfare state that were popular are being called into question. In hindsight, attempts by Tony Blair and his ministerial colleagues to shore up confidence in the welfare state by 'talking tough' may have reinforced the very concerns they were seeking to address...New Labour could and should have done more to challenge negative preconceptions about the poor.'*

(Sefton 2009: 241-2)

These attitudes may also be shaped by the state of the economy and it may be that they will soften in a period of recession, but this does not negate a missed opportunity at changing underlying beliefs.

On a positive note though, despite evidence of the resistance to the idea of poverty in the UK and to welfare recipients, when asked in a quantitative survey about the extent of child poverty in 2007, half of respondents (53 per cent) thought there was 'quite a lot' of real child poverty in Britain (Kelly 2008) and there was a similar response when asked about poverty rather than child poverty in 2006 (52 per cent) - albeit that this represents a decline from a peak of 71 per cent in 1994 (Taylor-Gooby and Martin 2008). There also appears to be support for the government action on this. When told about the government's vision to eradicate child poverty focus group members were impressed (Fabian Society 2006) and when asked who has responsibility for addressing child poverty, 80 per cent of survey respondents thought it was central government's job (Kelly 2008). However, Sefton (2009) again points to the trend over the last ten years against assigning responsibility to government for meeting a range of needs and against redistribution.

In 2008, three-quarters of the population thought the gap between the rich and the poor was too large, although this is itself a drop from 85 per cent in 1997 and there is little evidence of resentment of the rich in comparison to those seen as 'scrounging the state' (Pahl et al., 2007, quoted in Sefton 2009). Crucially in relation to the role of government, there is much less support for redistribution than might be expected from these levels of concern about inequality, and support decreases as questions become more explicit about redistribution (Taylor-Gooby and Martin 2008). Conversely, there is evidence to suggest implicit support for redistribution, i.e. support for policies that have a redistributive effect and the idea that the welfare state should ensure that people have their basic needs met (Hedges 2005 and Sefton 2005, quoted in Sefton 2009). For Hills (2002) avoidance of talk of redistribution may have reduced its perceived legitimacy or this strategy may have followed a change in attitudes already underway. Johns and Padgett (2008) are more unequivocal, arguing that Left: Right values are negligible in predicting policy opinions, and attributing a decline in support to redistribution to the waning of equality in New Labour discourse.

This section reviewed the evidence on attitudes to poverty and related issues during Labour's time in office. It suggests that a lack of campaigning and advocacy for their anti-poverty strategy aimed at changing the public's perception of poverty, combined with an emphasis on rights and responsibilities and absence of redistributive language in the broader welfare discourse, may have reduced support for poverty reduction. Evidence such as the focus group responses to news of the government's child poverty agenda suggests potential for a positive response, but the idea of linking a campaign to the Make Poverty History was a conceptual step too far for the public at present. Ultimately, this thesis argues that resistance to the concept of relative poverty, attributing poverty to personal failing and decline of support for redistributive measures impacts on the global as well as the domestic domain. Such attitudes no doubt interact with the images of extreme poverty in the developing world and the resultant charity rather than justice framing.

## 6.5 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the trajectory of New Labour's public politics of domestic poverty in historical context. In comparison to the global discursive environment where a consensus on poverty reduction was already emerging, when New Labour entered office poverty still required rehabilitation. Initially, New Labour chose to focus instead on the concept of social exclusion and it was not until Tony Blair's commitment to end child poverty in a generation in March 1999 that a discursive and policy sea-change was detected. This announcement was unexpected and significantly, unlike the global domain, it was not promoted further and nor was a public campaign initiated. This reflected the fact that unlike the global domain where there is broad - if shallow - support for global aid and a history of public campaigning, there is resistance to the idea of domestic poverty amongst the public and it is ascribed to individual failings, coupled with a lack of public engagement in campaigning. While domestic poverty is a low-profile issue, it is attached to the more party political issue of welfare provision, and New Labour sought to distance themselves from their tax and spend reputation and to emphasize a rights and responsibilities agenda. Reticence to promote their child poverty agenda and to counter negative stereotypes of poverty therefore combined with a punitive welfare discourse.

As with previous Labour Governments, there was a perception that there was little public support for poverty reduction. They pursued a policy of 'redistribution by stealth' whilst encouraging the poverty lobby to publicly hold them to account against, and thus generate a consensus around, their child poverty target. In similar language to that employed in the global domain, the End Child Poverty Coalition organised a rally to urge the Government to 'keep the promise' prior to the November 2008 Budget. In the domestic context though, the coalition was seeking to hold a single-actor government to account against their own target. In this sense it could be subject to similar criticism made about Make Poverty History; that is, an

orchestrated political spectacle. Conservative writers made this criticism and also questioned charities' role in political campaigning. In fact, in the domestic domain this appears to be a greater departure from conventional understandings of the policy-making process.

The time-limited target and annual reports on progress were similar institutional agenda-setting devices to those employed in the global domain, but, in contrast, their domestic target was not enshrined in legislation until 2010. There are also differences in the institutional setting. Global poverty reduction is the *raison d'être* of the Department for International Development, and it enjoyed authority in this role across government, relative stability of tenure for the Secretary of State and was outside of mainstream party political concerns. The child poverty target sat with a swathe of departmental targets and policy concerns in the Department for Work and Pensions, a high profile department that had nine Secretaries of State. It was not until 2006, having missed their interim target, that child poverty policy proofing was introduced and it was declared the department's top priority, and it was 2008 before the Child Poverty Unit was established. Unlike the global domain, there was no department acting as an insider pressure group.

The extent of the policy commitment also requires consideration. The target that New Labour set of eliminating child poverty not only requires substantial financial investment but would represent a transformational change in British society. It has been suggested that their policy strategy was insufficient for this task. In contrast, the resource commitment, if not the rhetorical end goal, in the global domain was relatively small. However, it was in the Government's gift to deliver on, at the least on the interim target, and in 2005 this was missed. Just as in the global domain, the period following David Cameron's election as leader saw the Conservatives move towards New Labour's position in adopting and voting for the child poverty target. This can be viewed as an achievement in embedding their child poverty agenda. However, the accompanying discourse was more oppositional, rejecting Gordon Brown's redistributive approach and constructing the causes of poverty in more individual terms. In terms of a broader public politics, it appears that attitudes to poverty have hardened during the New Labour years, representing a missed opportunity, particularly in the early years, to bridge to a more progressive discourse.

## **7      Conclusions and Reflections**

### **7.1     Introduction**

This thesis has sought to examine New Labour's public politics of poverty primarily through the detailed examination of speeches and policy documents. It provides a retrospective account of their global and domestic poverty discourses and policy trajectories during their years in government. Section 7.2 provides an overall conclusion to the thesis by addressing in turn each of the five research question outlined in the introductory chapter. Section 7.3 then reflects on the contribution this thesis makes to the wider literature and suggests avenues for further research.

### **7.2     Overall Conclusions**

This section addresses each of the research questions set out in the introduction of the thesis.

- a) Did New Labour make explicit connections between their global and domestic poverty discourses and commitments? If so, what was the nature of these connections?**

Analysis of New Labour discourse revealed that explicit connections were made between global and domestic poverty. Chapter Three provided a detailed analysis of the various ways in which New Labour actors sought to discursively connect New Labour domestic and global agendas. Three types of explicit connections were identified.

First, **domestic to global connections** were made in speeches (predominately to Party and Trades Union conferences), in terms of lists of policies exemplifying enduring Labour values, assertions of internationalism born of both Labour tradition and necessity in a globalised world, and self-interest recast as achievable only through national and international community. They asserted a universal social justice goal, with their domestic commitment demanding a reciprocal global commitment. This can be seen as both part of an international dimension of their domestic Third Way project but also part of the active promotion of this project as a model for other countries and the international community.

Even prior to Tony Blair's commitment to tackling child poverty, this social justice goal was associated with poverty reduction in both domains. Gordon Brown defined his whole domestic agenda in anti-poverty terms and the domestic to global connection got extended treatment in his 2004 party conference speech made in the midst of the Make Poverty History campaign. Domestic politics was transposed to the global and infused with Labour's traditional assumption of world leadership, with leadership on healthcare and

education at home providing hope to the world of free universal public services.

Second, the rise of Make Poverty History and global poverty up the public political agenda led to **global to domestic connections**. New Labour Secretaries of State of Work and Pensions – as well as Cameron’s Conservative Party - made discursive links to ‘Making Poverty History at Home’, although with limited conceptual substance. More substantively, there was considerable interest amongst NGOs and the Labour Party in Make Poverty History as a model of public political action. Questions that inspired thesis about lessons for domestic poverty campaigning were being asked and in the Labour Party this fed into a debate about renewal in office and the possibilities of centre-left politics.

In speeches to poverty NGOs, key New Labour figures compared public attitudes to poverty. They highlighted the problem that public discourses of poverty do make a connection between the global and domestic domains: poverty is seen in absolute terms and images of extreme poverty in Africa leads to rejection of the possibility of domestic poverty except those individual failing. The need to break down stereotypes and a stronger ‘encounter culture’ between social groups was discussed, but there was silence on the Government’s role in campaigning against these stereotypes and their culpability in perpetuating them in their welfare discourse. A speech by Ed Balls, presumably much-shaped by his time in the Treasury, addresses global and domestic poverty as public political issues. He made a global to domestic connection in which credibility on the global stage requires progress on domestic poverty and set out four lessons from Make Poverty History for the domestic campaign: a track record of success; ambitious long-term goals; institutional reform and a broad-based political consensus demanding change. Chapter Three discussed this speech in detail.

Third, the Secretaries of State for International Department made **historical and contemporary conceptual connections**. Clare Short’s speeches made historical connections between extreme poverty in the developing world and that of nineteenth century Britain, and between the ‘historical shifts’ of domestic industrialisation and globalisation. Both Clare Short and Hilary Benn also describe the politics of the British Labour Movement and other social reformists as the forerunners to contemporary global poverty campaigners. More significantly, Hilary Benn’s speech to the Fabian Society in early 2007 provides a rare example of a contemporary conceptual connection between the two poverty agendas and is considered at length in Chapter Three. In this account, poverty is the denial of human potential; two-way policy learning between developed and developing countries on education and work policy, asset-building and democratic participation is advocated; and again, Make Poverty History is portrayed as a template for a domestic poverty campaign and ‘politics in action’.

These explicit connections illustrate how, at times, the two poverty agendas were a mutually reinforcing discursive resource, and are often the interventions of individual actors in intra-party politics. Explicit connections were predominately made in political speeches to the Labour movement and also to civil society organisations involved in domestic and/or global poverty campaigns, and crucially a study of official government speeches alone would have missed many of these discursive interventions. These audiences were often themselves transnational actors who sought to construct discursive connections between the global and the domestic.

**b) What ‘narratives’ were employed to justify government action to tackle poverty? What were the similarities and differences between the two poverty domains?**

Chapter Four demonstrated how the **dual rationale of morality and self-interest** was consistently made for tackling poverty in both domains throughout New Labour’s period in office. The two claims were both conceptually interwoven, providing a critique of neo-liberal and realist conceptions of self-interest, and at times strategically deployed, with each privileged and subordinated in the two domains. This chapter provided a detailed examination of the moral and self-interest claims, how they were made and how they relate to different poverty frames.

The moral claims identified were: those based on our values and our identity, in which those of the Labour Party and the nation are projected as one; assertions of the moral responsibility of our generation, based on the particular circumstances of our time and a special responsibility to children; images of extreme suffering in the global domain producing a claim of patent injustice, with the Millennium Development Goals addressing this as promises that must be kept; those based on poverty as lack of life chances and potential denied; and finally, Gordon Brown’s cosmopolitan vision of a global community based on shared moral sense and equivalent domestic argument. In both domains, liberty was recast as a positive freedom achievable through social justice.

The self-interested claims were made in terms of enlightened self-interest and a more inclusive mutual interest and often had an implicit moral claim. In both domains these were made in terms of prosperity and security. Domestically the threat of global competition make it necessary to mobilise the talent of all and globally the next stage of the global economy requires future citizen-workers and citizen-consumers in a positive-sum globalisation. In the global domain, security claims were made in terms of terrorism, migration, climate change, the drugs trade and diseases. Global poverty was linked to the global security agenda through Tony Blair’s articulation of the active multilateralism in which ‘values and interests merge’, with action on poverty the other side of the coin of military intervention and representing the even-handed application of the value of liberty. Domestically, poverty

reduction was portrayed as necessary for social cohesion and the cost-benefits of investing to prevent future social problems and economic inactivity and their associated economic and social costs were advanced, with crime a recurring example. In both domains poverty reduction was constructed as key to national cohesion and the integration of ethnic minority communities in Britain.

This dual rationale and its appeal to, and recasting of, self-interest can be seen as bridging discourse moving to a social democratic framing and achieving policy change through broad coalition-building. However, there are potential problems with this narrative in terms of characterising the poor in instrumental terms or as a potential threat, and that these claims may refocus the policy agenda. The totalising nature of the discourse also sits in tension with some of the more long-term, educative goals pursued in the global poverty domain and with the goal of a deliberate, progressive political environment. This tension is returned to throughout the thesis.

A key difference identified between the two domains is the emphasis on moral claims for tackling global poverty as currently experienced. Extreme poverty provided an important claim of patent injustice, but can be problematic in both domains, perpetuating a charity-based response to global poverty and scepticism about domestic poverty. This chapter argued that there was a need for moral claims in the domestic domain based on the injustice of poverty as an everyday lived experience. Furthermore, the two discourses were both set within a framework of rights and responsibilities but with different actors emphasised. The domestic child poverty discourses cannot be separated from associated welfare discourses which emphasised the need for welfare recipients to take responsibility for finding work. In the global domain the responsibility emphasised was that of the donor countries, at times with the responsibility of recipient governments also asserted. Unlike the domestic poor, the global poor themselves did not figure in this relationship as subjects that required change.

**c) Did the general public share these ‘narratives’ and, if not, how did they differ?**

Drawing on the available evidence, Chapter Four went on to assess whether the public shared New Labour’s framing of poverty in moral and/or self-interested terms and how this relates to support for government action. There is a limited amount of research on public narratives of poverty and it is not a salient public issue; nevertheless it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions. The public express high levels of concern when asked about global poverty, whilst in contrast there is scepticism about domestic poverty. These attitudes appear to tap into the same conceptual framing of poverty as an extreme condition, with aid associated with emergency disaster relief. There is scepticism about aid and benefits in both domains, however in the

global domain there is support for aid as the poor themselves are not blamed for their poverty.

As discussed in Chapter Four, qualitative research reveals claims of developed countries' moral duty to assist developing countries in alleviating poverty, as well as possible benefits in terms of reducing conflict and migration. It is not clear whether this moral duty derives from relational frames of charity or justice. Public discourses of domestic welfare provision are also framed by concepts of fairness rather than simple rational self-interest. However, this is based on a strong reciprocity that, combined with scepticism about structural causes of poverty, appears to negate needs-based claims and produces negative views of welfare recipients.

Survey evidence suggests little public connection with the consequential self-interested idea that poverty in the developing countries would affect Britain or respondents directly, and when this view was expressed it was negatively associated with support for poverty reduction. It may be that the public do not share New Labour's global interdependence framing, at least in terms of the argument that poverty in developing countries affects them. Those who perceive an immediate effect are not inclined to concern about poverty, perhaps reflecting a sense of 'other' simply as threat, with migration being the most common effect cited. Consequential self-interest appears to be a successful argument in the domestic domain, where investment and preventative rationales and detrimental effects of inaction are necessarily more conceptually immediate. Again though, there is a danger that these rationales 'other' the poor and create conceptual barriers to understandings of relative poverty that hinder deeper public support.

**d) How did New Labour's 'public politics of poverty' evolve over time in both global and domestic domains?**

**Global poverty**

Chapters Five and Six provided historical situated accounts of the evolution of the public politics of global and domestic poverty during New Labour's period in office. Chapter Five sought to illustrate the contingent nature of global poverty's unprecedented public prominence in 2005, highlighting the political agency of key New Labour actors but also the favourable external factors absent from the domestic domain. A number of historical contextual factors for the development of the public politics of global poverty under New Labour were identified: poverty had already been 'rediscovered' when New Labour entered the global policy arena; Labour Governments have traditionally had a propensity towards leadership in this area, including creating a separate department and funding development education; the Conservative's legacy was a low development profile, low levels of tied aid and a lack of development education, but a relatively autonomous aid office engaged with changing global discourse; development non-governmental organisations had moved from delivery to a more 'political' advocacy role, and by the 1980s

they formed a strong lobby group and succeeded in mobilising the public in numbers unprecedented in any policy area.

The New Labour Government quickly engaged with the global poverty agenda. Indeed, they developed a strong leadership role in creating public political space for global poverty, from the establishment of the Department for International Development on entering office, to the political spectacle of the 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles. There was a manifesto commitment to mainstream development - as well as the precedent set by previous Labour Governments, a receptive global policy environment, and an active and expert development lobby and specialist civil servants - but it also evolved in office, through the activism of Clare Short, the institutional mechanisms employed to promote and embed their development agenda, and the support of both Gordon Brown and Tony Blair.

The Department of International Development had relative autonomy in the first term in office and strong leadership under Clare Short, acting akin to an 'insider' pressure group. A number of factors were identified as crucial in extending the public political space for global poverty: the establishment of a separate department of state with cross-departmental responsibility for development policy; the elimination of world poverty as its core mission; the operationalization of this mission through, and domestic and global advocacy for, the time-bounded Millennium Development Goals; the embedding of these aims in legislation and their extensive promotion through a public-facing website, glossy White Papers and accompanying communications; a commitment to building public awareness and support for development, including funding development awareness projects, its incorporation into the national curriculum, and monitoring public attitudes to development.

The UK's hosting of the EU and G8 Summits in 2005 provided an opportunity for the public politics of global poverty, and the New Labour Government made global poverty and climate change the joint priorities. In the years preceding the Summits, DfID under Clare Short, and latterly Tony Blair and Gordon Brown had all developed a high-profile commitment to tackling global poverty. Chapter Four discusses the reasons for Tony Blair's focus on Africa in New Labour second term in office, including the interventionist foreign policy of his 'doctrine of international community'. It also traces Gordon Brown longer standing involvement through questions of global economic governance, the targeting of the Treasury by the highly organised public campaigning of Jubilee 2000, and evidence of the transposition of domestic policy prescriptions to the global domain in his speeches.

All three actors shared the same discourse of globalisation as an inexorable process that could create global prosperity if managed well, or could lead to greater poverty and inequality if managed badly, and they sought to construct their position as a Third Way beyond the Washington Consensus and the anti-globalisation protestors. The debate was framed around meeting the

Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and this was constructed as a political issue in that it required the political will of the international community to come together, but in a sense it was depoliticised in that the choice was simply between reaching an agreement or not.

The establishment of the public-political space for global poverty in the run up to the G8 Summit in 2005 appears highly orchestrated, with the Make Poverty History campaign and the Commission for Africa setting the agenda for the Summit. Make Poverty History called for a new approach to global poverty based on justice rather than charity and making three key demands on aid, trade and debt. Tony Blair's Commission for Africa was presented as a response to global popular demand to tackle poverty, with a similar narrative (although with differences in terms of trade liberalisation) promoted as a definitive account of the way forward. The Make Poverty History campaign mobilised millions of people, with a wide variation in the levels of engagement from lobbying MPs to wearing a wristband, and there was considerable media buy-in ensuring that many consumed the MPH message. The campaign was to culminate in a march in Edinburgh but in the event this was overshadowed by the Live8 concert.

Chapter Five provides a detailed examination of the ambiguous relationship between the New Labour Government and the Make Poverty History coalition. Make Poverty History and its predecessor campaign, Jubilee 2000, were important influences on New Labour's global poverty discourse. They portrayed themselves as wanting to go further but needing a wider public politics of global poverty to strengthen their position within international discussions. They encouraged the campaigns to hold them to account and indeed, they had invited the establishment of a campaign around the Millennium Development Goals and the UK's G8 Presidency. However, there was a continued anxiety about independent - and potentially oppositional – political action. At times New Labour presented themselves as part of, and even leading, the Make Poverty History campaign and there was tension within the coalition between those who thought they were too closely aligned to the Government and those who saw the Government seeking to associate themselves with the campaign as a measure of their success. This debate heightened with Make Poverty History's endorsement of the Live8 concert. For some this was a unilateral decision that diluted the campaign's message of political action for global justice, replaying frames of aid and Western largesse and focusing on the Government's G8 agenda rather than moving the public debate on. For others the celebrity-based Live8 concert was a complimentary part of the campaign, producing a mass demonstration sufficient to convince G8 leaders to act. The New Labour Government portrayed Make Poverty History as an exemplar of public political action affecting change, whilst for its critics it represented a political spectacle; an artificial simulation of democracy.

In evaluating the outcomes from the G8 Summit, Chapter Five argued that whilst the policy achievements were limited, they represent progress as part of a ‘war of positions’ in a complex global multi-actor environment, and domestically, the Conservative Party also moved closer to New Labour’s policy position. However, there was little success in reframing poverty in the British public imagination. To some extent, this highlights the tension between public mobilisation around a political opportunity and long-term transformative goals; a tension the chapter also explored in New Labour’s approach to development education.

### **Domestic poverty**

Having discussed the public politics of global poverty, Chapter Six provides a parallel account of New Labour’s public politics of domestic poverty. First, it provides an historical context, revealing that poverty has achieved only fleeting recognition as a social problem; an ambivalent and, at times hostile, attitude amongst the public to elements of the welfare state and to those in poverty; and a Labour Party with a strong self-identification with issues of poverty but preoccupied with economic problems in the 1960s and 1970s, and uncertain of public support for redistribution. As the Conservative Governments of the 1980s sought to embed a neo-liberal order, there was a substantial rise in poverty and inequality, and a resultant growing public concern. However, the public politics of poverty has been largely focused on elite politics with little direct public involvement. The poverty lobby focused its efforts on the Labour Party until the late 1970s when it became more non-partisan, but it then found itself in a hostile policy environment.

In comparison to the global discursive environment where a consensus on poverty reduction was already emerging, when New Labour entered office poverty still required rehabilitation. Initially, New Labour chose to focus instead on the concept of social exclusion and it was not until Tony Blair’s commitment to end child poverty in a generation in March 1999 that a discursive and policy sea-change was detected. This announcement was unexpected and Chapter Six discusses possible reasons why Tony Blair made this commitment. Unlike the global domain, it was not promoted further and nor was a public campaign initiated. This perhaps reflected the fact that unlike the global domain where there is broad - if shallow - support for global aid and a history of public campaigning, there is resistance to the idea of domestic poverty amongst the public and it is ascribed to individual failings, coupled with a lack of public engagement in campaigning. While domestic poverty is a low-profile issue, it is attached to the more party political issue of welfare provision, and New Labour sought to distance themselves from their tax and spend reputation and to emphasize a rights and responsibilities agenda. Reticence to promote their child poverty agenda and to counter negative stereotypes of poverty therefore combined with a punitive welfare discourse.

They pursued a policy of ‘redistribution by stealth’ whilst encouraging the poverty lobby to publicly hold them to account against, and thus generate a consensus around, their child poverty target. In similar language to that employed in the global domain, the End Child Poverty Coalition organised a rally to urge the Government to ‘keep the promise’ prior to the November 2008 Budget. In the domestic context though, the coalition was seeking to hold a single-actor government to account against their own target. In this sense it could be subject to similar criticism made about Make Poverty History; that is, an orchestrated political spectacle. Conservative writers made this criticism and also questioned charities’ role in political campaigning. In fact, in the domestic domain this appears to be a greater departure from conventional understandings of the policy-making process.

The time-limited target and annual reports on progress were similar institutional agenda-setting devices to those employed in the global domain, but, in contrast, their domestic target was not enshrined in legislation until 2010. There are also differences in the institutional setting. Global poverty reduction is the *raison d'être* of the Department for International Development, and it enjoyed authority in this role across government, relative stability of tenure for the Secretary of State and was outside of mainstream party political concerns. The child poverty target sat with a swathe of departmental targets and policy concerns in the Department for Work and Pensions, a high profile department that had nine Secretaries of State. It was not until 2006, having missed their interim target, that child poverty policy proofing was introduced and it was declared the department’s top priority, and it was 2008 before the Child Poverty Unit was established. Unlike the global domain, there was no department acting as an insider pressure group.

The target that New Labour set of eliminating child poverty not only requires substantial financial investment but would represent a transformational change in British society. It has been suggested that their policy strategy was insufficient for this task. In contrast, the resource commitment, if not the rhetorical end goal, in the global domain was relatively small. However, it was in the Government’s gift to deliver on, at the least on the interim target, and in 2005 this was missed. Just as in the global domain, the period following David Cameron’s election as leader saw the Conservatives move towards New Labour’s position in adopting and voting for the child poverty target. This can be viewed as an achievement in embedding their child poverty agenda. However, the accompanying discourse was more oppositional, rejecting Gordon Brown’s redistributive approach and constructing the causes of poverty in more individual terms. In terms of a broader public politics, it appears that attitudes to poverty have hardened during the New Labour years, representing a missed opportunity, particularly in the early years, to bridge to a more progressive discourse.

- e) **What were the key characteristics of New Labour's public politics of poverty? How might they have differed and what impact did they appear to have on public opinion?**

Having explored New Labour's public politics of poverty through comparative inquiry throughout the thesis, three characteristics common to both domains can be identified as significant in their construction of the policy-making process: agenda-setting through the institutional embedding of policy goals; seeking broad coalitions and political spectacles around their policy goal; and a totalising appeal based on morality and self-interest and redistribution as investment.

Both global and domestic policy domains were defined by policy narratives based on specific time-limited targets. These targets and their associated annual reports provided a timeline for public political moments in terms of campaigning and media interest. This was most significant in the domestic domain where there were few external political opportunities. These targets were enshrined in legislation providing: an opportunity for further profile-raising; authority in intra-governmental battles; an event which requires opposition parties to vote for and against; and the institutional embedding of policy objectives such that any future government wishing to change objectives would be required to bring in new legislation.

This is a new development in which legislating for policy objectives becomes a form of politics. It subverts traditional views of policymaking in which legislation is a response to political demands and provides for specific policy measures. This form of agenda-setting could be viewed as a success given the Conservative Party's adoption of the goal of ending child poverty by 2020 and the commitment to reach 0.7 per cent of GDP spending on aid by 2013. As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, public attitudes research suggests there was little, if any, public recognition of the global or the domestic targets, although research participants responded positively to the news that the government had made these policy commitments. It will be interesting to watch the politics generated by this legacy. The Coalition Agreement included the commitment to enshrining of the aid target in legislation and they have reaffirmed spending 0.7 per cent of GNP by 2013. However, legislation was not announced in the latest Queen's Speech (Guardian May 2012).

In both domains the Government called on the poverty lobbies to work with them and publicly campaign for progress on the MDGs and the child poverty target. Globally, they sought to achieve the necessary political will from G8 leaders to meet the 'promises' on financing and policy change to meet the MDGs. Domestically, they argued that they needed greater public support to enact the policy necessary to meet their own child poverty targets. There are potential problems in the construction of politics requiring public campaigning aimed at a government perceived as part of that campaign

globally and holding the political power to implement the necessary policy domestically. Globally, there was also a tension between providing a political spectacle for a particular political opportunity and a more transformative politics. This same tension is also evident in the objectives of government funded development education. Domestically, New Labour construct themselves as constrained in office and needing a broad progressive coalition to create the public political space for them to act. In this sense they describe themselves as part of the same social movement while at the same time keeping tight discursive control of the policy agenda.

The third common feature shared by the two domains is the totalising discourse that conceptually interweaves moral and self-interest claims and constructs anti-poverty measures as investments. This was a pragmatic strategy for reasserting social democracy in the context of neo-liberalism, particularly applicable to the incremental consensus-building of global politics. This discourse necessarily downplayed conflicts of interest and our culpability for poverty. At times it does discursive work in reshaping self-interest into a mutual or essentialist claim, but at other times it highlights the threat to self-interest of inaction. It also qualifies the moral argument and there is concern that appeal to self-interest becomes self-fulfilling and may have limited New Labour's ability to bridge to more progressive discourses and the possibility of an enriched democratic debate.

Finally, New Labour showed more leadership on global than on domestic poverty and indeed, New Labour's broader welfare discourses may have actually hardened public attitudes to benefit recipients. However, research around the Make Poverty History campaign suggests that it has not succeeded in creating a broader concept of poverty in the global domain; the public framing of poverty did not move from a transactional charity to a justice model, suggesting a shallow basis for more redistributive goals. Arguably attitudes to both global and domestic poverty tap into the same conceptual framing in which poverty is associated with developing countries, images of extreme poverty and helplessness and aid is associated with emergency disaster relief. It may be that rather than looking to the lessons of Make Poverty History, a stronger justice frame in the domestic domain would have impacted on both domestic and global poverty politics. As Noël and Thérien's (2002: 650) cross-national study of public attitudes to global and domestic poverty suggests: 'the achievement of justice at home in fact sustains justice abroad'.

### **7.3 Reflections**

#### **7.3.1 Contribution to the literature**

This thesis has provided a timely retrospective of New Labour's public politics of global and domestic poverty through detailed examination of their speeches and policy documents and secondary literature on the post-war politics of poverty and development, New Labour and public attitudes to

poverty. As such it provides an important contribution to the literature on New Labour and to the fields of political and policy analysis.

First, as discussed in Chapter Two, the political speech is relatively under-analysed in British political study and ‘we do not yet have a systematic approach from the perspective of political studies that seeks to relate the general phenomenon of the political speech to political activity and institutions more broadly’ (Finlayson and Martin 2008: 446). This study has undertaken a detailed and grounded analysis of speeches as a key data source, viewing them as an important form of public political intervention. It understands politics as the discursive struggle to embed a particular vision of the social world in the public imagination. Correspondingly, this form of politics plays a key part in the policy making process and this study considers speeches made on poverty, and available evidence on corresponding public conceptualisations, in this light.

Second, the study provides a rare example of a cross-domain study of New Labour, seeking to connect analysis of global and domestic policy. As the demarcation between global and domestic policy fades with multi-level governance, this becomes essential to understanding a particular political project. Similarly, globalisation makes ‘publicness more problematic’ (Cerny 2006:105) with transnational policy communities and global political action, so it is timely to seek to understand public politics across domains. Poverty provides a pertinent object of this comparative endeavour for four reasons: first, the history of theoretical and political interventions seeking to conceptualise poverty as a transnational problem; second, New Labour made high profile time-bound commitments on both domestic and global poverty; third, it is central to the debate about New Labour connection to their social democratic roots; and fourth, they claim Make Poverty History and the G8 as ‘Labour politics in action’ and sought to learn lessons for domestic poverty politics.

Correspondingly, the third contribution of this study is the detailed consideration given to international development policy. As discussed in Chapter Five, there is no specific literature of what could be called a British (or Labour Party) post-war public politics of global poverty. Furthermore, development policy has often been absent from accounts of post-war foreign policy, and indeed from some accounts of New Labour’s foreign policy. More recently, development policy has been included in foreign policy analysis (see Vickers 2011 on the post-war Labour Party and Williams 2005 on New Labour) and there are rare examples of its independent treatment in accounts of New Labour’s policy agenda (e.g. Young 2000, 2001 and Honeyman 2009), and latterly in the assessment of the Conservative opposition and the Coalition Government (Honeyman 2009, Vickers 2011). This study contributes to the embryonic mainstreaming of development policy within British policy analysis, no doubt itself influenced by its greater prominence under the New Labour Government.

Fourth and finally, it is worth emphasising that this account of the public politics of poverty is part of a growing move to bring the public back into policy analysis. It seeks to examine the New Labour's politics of poverty as a constantly evolving project set within a broader cultural context, interacting with non-governmental actors, and both seeking to change and responding to multiple public discourses.

### **7.3.2 Further research**

There are many possible avenues for further research leading from this wide-ranging thesis, both in terms of contributing to the retrospective examination of New Labour and complimentary historical and contemporary studies of public politics.

First, the story of the public politics of poverty during New Labour's years in office could be further illuminated through elite interviews with key actors, such as former Secretaries of State, senior civil servants and influential members of the poverty lobby in both global and domestic domains. In particular, they could explore the interaction of this elite group, similarities and differences in their visions and strategies for a progressive public politics of poverty, and retrospective evaluation of New Labour's achievements and the possibilities for alternative courses of action.

Second, the detailed analysis of New Labour speeches and policy documents provides the basis for a comparative analysis of the narratives the current Coalition Government draw on in both poverty domains. This too could be complimented by elite interviews exploring the relationship between government and poverty lobbies under the current Coalition Government. More specifically, it is necessary to assess how the public politics of poverty has evolved in the post-New Labour years. New Labour framed their global and domestic poverty politics in cultural terms, as part of a broader goal of building a 'progressive consensus', such that ending global and child poverty would be a political imperative for all politicians. In this sense, New Labour's legacy can only be assessed through examination of the public politics under its successor Government.

Third, whilst there is a growing recognition of development policy within British policy analysis, there still appears to a place for a dedicated analysis of post-war British development policy or more broadly, the public politics of global poverty.

Fourth, this thesis examined studies of public attitudes to global and domestic poverty and observed similarities in the social psychological insights drawn on in both domains. The last few years has seen growing academic interest in

public attitudes to aid and development in particular.<sup>6</sup> There is still much work to be done in both domains in understanding what drives attitudes and the interaction between public attitudes and policy formation. More specifically related to this study, as yet there has been no collaboration across the domains and no studies have specifically juxtaposed discussion of domestic and global poverty. One interesting possibility would be the exploration of understandings of, and attitudes to, domestic poverty amongst those involved in global poverty campaigns.

Fifth and finally, there is also scope for a comparative study of the public politics of global and domestic poverty in donor countries. Canada would seem a particularly appropriate country for such a study, given that the UK and Canada have been identified as the two 'prototype social investment states', having both been governed by parties that attempted to provide an alternative to their neo-liberal Governments predecessors (Lister 2004). It is interesting too that unlike in the UK, the Canadian Make Poverty History campaign combined global and domestic aims ([www.makepovertyhistory.ca](http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca), accessed 1/09/2011).

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<sup>6</sup> Many of the authors discussed in Section 4.5.2 continue to work in this area and the thinktank IPPR is currently conducting a qualitative project.

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## **Appendix I    Glossary**

**Bretton Woods Conference** – A conference of allies held in Bretton Woods, USA in 1944 to agree a system of international financial and monetary management post-World War Two. The IMF and the International Bank of Reconstruction (now part of the World Bank) were created as key organisations of this system. The Bretton Woods system exchange agreement ended in 1971 when the US suspended the convertibility of the dollar to gold.

**British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)** – The semi-autonomous British public service broadcaster.

**Children in Need** –The BBC's corporate charity that fundraises through an annual telethon to support organisations working with disadvantaged children in the UK.

**Comic Relief** – A British charity established in 1985 to 'create a world free from poverty' in response to the Ethiopian famine. It fundraises through two events held in alternate years – the Red Nose Day telethon and Sport Relief - and supports projects overseas and in the UK. Comic Relief, and its founder Richard Curtis, were key players in Make Poverty History.

**Commonwealth** – An intergovernmental organisation made up of 54 independent member states, all but two of which were previously part of the British Empire.

**Compass** – A pressure group aimed at influencing the Labour Party to work with others for a more equal, democratic and sustainable society.

**Doha Development Round** - The latest round of trade negotiations among the World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership. This round commenced in Doha, Qatar in December 2001, but negotiations stalled, with significant differences between developed and major developing countries. Proponents argue that the fundamental objective of the round is greater trading prospects for developing countries through the introduction of lower trade barriers and revised trade rules.

**End Child Poverty** – A coalition of UK children's charities established in response to New Labour's commitment to end child poverty by 2020. They aim to: inform the public about the causes and effects of child poverty; forge commitment between, and across, the public, private and voluntary sectors to end child poverty by 2020; and promote the case for ending child poverty by 2020 with this and every future Government.

**European Union (EU)** - An economic and political union of 27 European member states established in 1993, and tracing its origins from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC) formed by six countries in 1958.

**Fabian Society** – a socialist society and membership-based think tank affiliated to the Labour Party.

**G7/G8** – A group of leading post-industrial countries that meet at annual Summits to discuss major economic and political issues. The G7 are France, US, UK, Germany, Japan, Italy, Canada and the G8 are the G7 plus Russia. Russia was involved in the Summitry from the early 1990s and from 1998 the G8 and G7 co-existed, until Russia gained full membership of the Group in 2003.

**International Monetary Fund (IMF)** – An international organisation created at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, whose primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system. It undertakes surveillance of the economic performance of member states and the whole world economy and provides technical assistance and financial support to member states with payment imbalances.

**Jubilee 2000** – An international coalition movement that called for cancellation of third world debt by the year 2000. Martin Dent, a British retired politics lecturer, linked the biblical Jubilee to a modern debt relief programme and founded the Jubilee 2000 campaign in the early 1990s. Jubilee 2000 staged a mass public demonstration at the 1998 G8 Summit in Birmingham.

**Keep the Promise** – A rally organised by End Child Poverty in October 2008 to demonstrate support for measures to end child poverty prior to the Government's Pre-Budget Report.

**Live Aid** - A televised pop concert organised by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure, held simultaneously in London and Philadelphia in July 1985, to raise funds for relief of the Ethiopian famine.

**Live8** – A free televised pop concert organised by Bob Geldof for the Saturday before the G8 Summit in Gleneagles in July 2005 to promote the aims of Make Poverty History.

**Make Poverty History (MPH)** – A high-profile campaign focused around the G8 Summit held in Gleneagles, Scotland in July 2005, with three key demands: more and better aid, drop the debt and trade justice and the tagline ‘justice not charity’. It aimed to raise awareness of global poverty and achieve policy change by the UK government in the year that they hosted the presidency of the EU and G8. The campaign coalition was made up of hundreds of non-governmental organisations and was part of the Global Call for Action Against Poverty. There were other national campaigns in other countries with similar aims, some also using the ‘Make Poverty History’ banner.

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** - Eight time-bounded, quantifiable international development goals aimed at combating extreme poverty across the world by 2015. They are: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality rates; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development. They derive from earlier international development targets and were officially established following the Millennium Summit in 2000, where all United Nations member states adopted the Millennium Declaration.

**New Labour** – A term used to describe the Labour Party from the period from 1994 when Blair became leader of the Labour Party and the post-1997 Labour governments of Blair (1997-2007) and latterly Brown (2007-10). The term was first used as a re-branding of the Labour Party at the 1994 Party Conference and is associated with their ‘Third Way’ political programme.

**North Atlantic Trade Organisation (NATO)** - An intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. It constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party.

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** – An international economic organisation founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. It has its roots in a European organisation that administered the Marshall Funds for post Second World War reconstruction.

**Third Way** – A term associated with New Labour’s attempt to disassociate their political programme from the Old Left of the Labour Party and the Conservative New Right, and therefore articulate ‘a third way’ that reconciles previously antagonistic goals such as economic efficiency and social justice.

**Trades Union Congress (TUC)** – A federation representing the majority of UK trades unions.

**United Nations (UN)** - An international organisation founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries. It aims to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and promote social progress, better living standards and human rights.

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** – An international charity aimed at addressing the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries and a permanent part of the United Nations system.

**United Nations Development Program (UNDP)** – the United Nations' global development network. It co-ordinates the UN's activities in the field of development, works closely with individual developing country governments, and produces annual Human Development Reports.

**UN Security Council** - The Security Council has primary responsibility under the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. It consists of five permanent members – China, France, Russia, UK, US – and ten non-permanent members.

**World Bank** – An international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs. Its predecessor, International Bank of Reconstruction was created at the Bretton Woods Conference to aid post Second World War reconstruction.

**World Trade Organisation (WTO)** – An international organisation founded in 1995 to promote free trade and to arbitrate on international trade disputes. It replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade established in 1948.

## **Appendix II List of Ministers in Relevant Departments during the New Labour Governments 1997-2010**

This appendix lists the post-holders of the positions of Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for Social Security and its successor department Work and Pensions, and Secretary of State for International Development. It also listed the capacity in which other members of the New Labour Government 1997-2010 gave speeches quoted in this thesis.

### **Prime Minister**

Tony Blair (3 May 1997 - 27 June 2007)  
Gordon Brown (28 June 2007 - 11 May 2010)

### **Chancellor of the Exchequer**

Gordon Brown (3 May 1997 – 27 June 2007)  
Alistair Darling (28 June 2007 - 11 May 2010)

### **Secretary of State for International Development**

Clare Short (3 May 1997 – 12 May 2003)  
Baroness Amos (12 May 2003 – 6 October 2003)  
Hilary Benn (6 October 2003 – 27 June 2007)  
Douglas Alexander (28 June 2007 – 11 May 2010)

### **Secretary of State for Social Security (1997-2001)**

Harriet Harman (3 May 1997 – 27 July 1998)  
Alistair Darling (27 July 1998 – 8 June 2001)

### **Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (2001-2010)**

Alistair Darling (8 June 2001 – 29 May 2002)  
Andrew Smith (29 May 2002 – 8 September 2004)  
Alan Johnson (8 September 2004 – 6 May 2005)  
David Blunkett (6 May 2005 – 2 November 2005)  
John Hutton (2 November 2005 – 27 June 2007)  
Peter Hain (28 June 2007 – 24 January 2008)  
James Purnell (24 January 2008 – 4 June 2009)  
Yvette Cooper (5 June 2009 – 11 May 2010)

### **Other members of the New Labour Governments quoted**

Ed Balls – no ministerial position at the time of the speeches quoted  
Robin Cook – Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (3 May 1997 - 8 June 2001)  
Sally Keeble – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development (29 May 2002 – 13 June 2003)  
Gillian Merron - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development (24 January 2008 – 5 October 2008)  
Ed Miliband – Minister for the Third Sector (6 May 2006 – 28 June 2007)

**Jim Murphy – Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform (8 May 2006 – 28 June 2007)**

**Steven Timms – Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform (24 January 2008 – 2 October 2008)**