

## ***'Public policy windows for philanthropic funding: the case of charitable giving in UK higher education in the 21st century'***

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### **Abstract**

Philanthropy in higher education in the UK received notable policy attention in the early 2000s, yet the topic has not formed part of well-developed policy process theories so far and its appearance has been left unexplained. Policy process theories, such as Kingdon's Multiple Streams Approach (MSA)(1984, 1995, 2003) offer opportunities to introduce and embed philanthropy in formal policy studies. Kingdon's approach will form the substantial investigation of this research in which the reasons behind the opening of a policy window for philanthropy are examined along with investigating what the role of government should be with regards to supporting philanthropy. This will be supported by data from interviews with senior fundraising professionals. This study firstly argues that several factors including the right timing in which political and ideological shifts were already under way in higher education were present for the window to open. These factors include the use of higher education institutions (HEIs) as a key policy instrument to deliver government goals and the important role of policy entrepreneurs. Secondly, this study found that from the view of fundraisers', positive outcomes were attributed to the government in encouraging philanthropy which help conceptualising its role but that overreliance on giving mechanisms by policy makers is problematic. This study is a first step towards understanding philanthropy in the policy making process with the help of a dedicated theory, allowing further enrichment of policy and fundraising theory.

### **1. Introduction**

The Multiple Streams Approach (MSA), introduced by Charles Kingdon, has been widely applied in multiple areas of research (Ness 2010; Zahariadas 2007) and acknowledged as a robust framework for assessing how policy agendas emerge and how topics receive attention. While this approach has been widely applied, the seemingly sudden policy attention to philanthropy in the higher education sector in the UK has not been focused on. It has been left mostly unexplained in academic research, but is a relevant field of study given philanthropy's attention to and generally important role in higher education. While philanthropy has been on an upward trajectory where donations to HEIS have reportedly been increasing year on year since 2006 when the first Ross-CASE survey measured philanthropic

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income in higher education (Ross-CASE survey, 2006-2017), higher education as a sector has also been subject to a number of significant changes since the 1960s. These changes include an expansion to mass-higher education in terms of student volumes which was followed by a range of questions over access, equality and above all a debate on financing higher education. In this context, a shift in funding higher education from a state funded system to the introduction of tuition fees and student loans systems took place and resulted in an increasing debate over funding sources by the late 1990s. In this context, more attention has been paid in policy to the role of philanthropic funding at the beginning of the 21st century (DfES 2004; DfES 2003; UUK 2003) and until then it has been argued that the “encouragement of university fundraising was a relatively minor theme” (Squire 2014, p. 64).

As part of the policy attention, two main policies introduced to encourage philanthropic giving were a Capacity Building Scheme (CBS)<sup>1</sup> and a Match Funding Scheme (MFS)<sup>2</sup>. Yet, despite the recent interest, the role of philanthropy and its seemingly sudden presence in 2000s remains a relatively underexplored field in academic studies and no studies have researched why philanthropy was introduced to the policy agenda in those years. The research questions therefore examined in this paper are ‘What are the reasons behind the opening of a policy window for philanthropy in the 21st century in the UK HE sector?’ and ‘What is the role of policy making in charitable giving in higher education?’ These questions will be examined with the help of Kingdon’s MSA (1984, 1995, 2003) and will be supported by data from interviews with senior fundraising professionals. According to Kingdon’s MSA, policy formation is described as the result of the flow of the three ‘streams’; the problem stream, the proposal stream and the politics stream (1984). When these streams merge a policy window opens which facilitates policy change and this approach will help examining philanthropy’s apparently sudden appearance on the policy agenda. What was found is that there have been several reasons such as ideological and political shifts and the rise of policy entrepreneurs involvement that have led to an increased attention that enable the coupling of the three streams.

Importantly, within the academic literature it is indicated that historically philanthropy has always played a crucial role in higher education, from the creation of the oldest universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the ‘civic’ or ‘redbrick’ universities of the 19th and early 20th century to the creation of the ‘plate-glass’ universities of the 1960s to today (Pellew 2014, Squire 2014, Proper 2009). Most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK would not have come into existence without the contributions of philanthropic funding, which not only created the universities but also continue to support higher education today (Proper 2009; Pellew 2014). However, comparing this set of literature with government policy documents discussing philanthropy, the long tradition of philanthropy in higher

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<sup>1</sup> Following recommendations of the 2004 Task Force Report, the scheme was implemented during a Labour government and run from 2006-2009 in which 27 HEIs took part. Institutions were offered up to £125,000 per annum over the three year period (HEFCE, 2012a). The scheme required recipient universities to match the money they were given for the three year period. The goal was that these posts would not only make a short-term difference but would have a long term impact such that by 2009 the universities would be in position to commit to funding these posts on a permanent basis (HEFCE, 2012a).

<sup>2</sup> The scheme ran from 2008-2011. The aim of the scheme was to encourage further giving to higher education. It worked in the way the donation gifts to participating institutions were matched through a fund of £200 million (CASE, 2008) and this raised £540 million in total for English universities (Green, 2013). HEIs received matched funding depending on HEIs’ chosen tier. There were three tiers each with a different funding ratio (1:1, 1:2, 1:3) and a cap suitable for institutions with differing degrees of fundraising experience (CASE, 2008).

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education has not been mentioned, except for the practitioner led reports (DfES 2004; HEFCE 2012). This highlights the importance of briefly reviewing the available documents' key message on philanthropy to gain a better understanding on how philanthropy's role is expressed and discussed before and during the policy attention by policy makers. It will be important to contrast these views with the findings from the interviews.

### *1.1 Policy documents reveal shift in attention to philanthropy*

There have been a handful of relevant UK government policy documents from 2002-2016 and government supported expert reports that have been published to date discussing philanthropy. The key documents scrutinized for this literature review can be divided into three different genres<sup>3</sup>; White Papers<sup>4</sup>; Independent Reviews<sup>5</sup>; and expert-led other reports commissioned by government<sup>6</sup>. The reports that have been published have largely rested on the assumption that philanthropic income will increase with help of UK government's interventions in form of policies that foster giving such as the aforementioned CBS and MFS. However, when looked at closer they differ substantially with regards to the attention being paid by policy and its goals linked to philanthropy's role of philanthropy in higher education. Currently the UK government's approach to philanthropy has not been studied to a great extent in the UK, but the number of studies embedding philanthropy in public policy internationally is on the rise (Jung, Phillips and Harrow 2016; Reich, Cordelli and Bernholz 2016; Wiepking and Handing 2015). As a result of limited research available in the UK, there is limited understanding of the relationship between policy and philanthropy in higher education. How philanthropy is 'used' in policy documents requires briefly examining to add to the understanding why a policy window opened.

Philanthropic income sources for example, were discussed in the 2003 White paper 'The Future of Higher Education'. This paper set out details for fundamental reform and investment in universities and higher education colleges. The paper proposed changes in the student finance system and how to make higher education more accessible. It also asked for institutions to take a greater responsibility with regards to their own funding. Reference would be made to a funding need and that it is unrealistic for governments to continue their commitment, as expressed in the extract "it is unrealistic to expect the Government to match the total funding levels of the world's best-endowed universities... and reducing dependence on government" (DfES 2003, p.80). This represents an ideological shift based on neo-liberal principles to deregulate higher education further and to then expect students to contribute as the following quote highlights *"...The principle that it is right for students to make a contribution to the costs of their course was established by Lord Dearing in 1997. It is now generally accepted, and raises £450 million a year. But universities have asked us to consider whether students might be asked to contribute more to the*

<sup>3</sup> The literature suggests that the genre of the text is an important tool to investigate the text's role (Fairclough, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> 'The Future of Higher Education' (2003); 'Students at the Heart of the System' (2011) and 'Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice' (2016)

<sup>5</sup> Securing a sustainable future for higher education an independent Review of Higher Education funding & Student Finance 2010 (or known as the Browne Report)

<sup>6</sup> Increasing Voluntary Giving to Higher Education- Task Force report to Government- DfES (2004) and 2012 HEFCE Philanthropy review

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*cost of their education*" (DfES 2003, p.91). Also, the White Paper was one of the first documents published by the Labour government that notably started to discuss philanthropic funding. The 2003 White Paper concluded that *"we also need to look to other sources of income –in addition to those from government – to sustain a strong and thriving higher education sector"* (2003, p.82). As part of the ideological and financial shift that took place, philanthropy was discussed and viewed as a (new) funding stream<sup>7</sup>. These ideas have been justified by saying *"giving greater financial freedom to our universities will mean increasing the financial underpinning of the sector; widening the number and type of sources of finance available to it; and reducing dependence on government"* (p.89). While it was positively noted by the sector in the practitioner led reports that government had been paying more attention towards philanthropy (DfES 2004; HEFCE 2012), there were also concerns over the reasons for the sudden attention and shift (DfES, 2004). The fears of substituting the private funding from philanthropic income for public funding were discussed in the government funded Task Force Report (DfES, 2004). The report recognises the concern that *"encouragement to fundraising is no more than an exercise in saving money...at its extreme, on this view, the long-term goal would be a higher education system largely funded from private sources"* (DfES 2004, p.15). Furthermore, the report recommended a set of steps that could be introduced to make giving easier and more profitable for donors with help of government but these were inconclusive and imprecise at that stage.

However, unsurprisingly, the Task Force Report 'Increasing Voluntary Giving to Higher Education' that followed the White Paper 16 months later and produced by practitioners on behalf of government, discussed philanthropy in a different way. As the report had the main objective of this report to explore the state of voluntary giving in the UK higher education sector, it made recommendations on how giving could be increased, following previous announcements in the 2003 White Paper that universities should become more independent and look after their income sources. The paper recommends capacity building incentives that could support giving. Following these initial publications, the two schemes mentioned earlier were introduced.

Similarly, philanthropy featured in policy documents in the latter part of the 2000s, after the aforementioned CBS and MFS schemes were completed. For example, another key document, the 2011 Coalition Government White Paper 'Students at the Heart of the System' was published as part of the newly created BIS section, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. This paper focused on economic benefits of higher education and how to sustain funding. Philanthropy's role was expressed, similarly to earlier statements, as *"another important source of income for higher education institutions is philanthropic donations"* (BIS 2011, p. 22). On the contrary, the 2012 practitioner led 'Philanthropy Review, commissioned by HEFCE, was unsurprisingly more specific about philanthropy's role given that it was a document solely focused on the topic. The review set up twelve recommendations to continue fostering charitable giving in the higher education sector in the UK including

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<sup>7</sup> The idea of philanthropy being a new funding stream is heavily contested given that HEIs in the UK would have not come into existence without philanthropic support.

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increasing culture of giving, advancing and training professionals, institutions to take responsibility for developing philanthropy as an important as part of HEIs. Yet, the attention decreased after a period of increased attention to philanthropy in policy documents and no mention of philanthropy was found in the latest White Paper 'Success as a Knowledge Economy' (BIS, 2016).

### *1.2 Kingdon's MSA framework offers opportunity to embed philanthropy*

Another important aspect to review as part of the key literature is to discuss the chosen policy process theory, the MSA. The objective of policy research is to understand the interaction between the state, political actors (formal and informal) and the public (Petridou, 2014) but it is said to be a complex, emotional process (Kennan quoted in Gaddis 2011, p. 308). Policy process theories have been discussed in the literature and there are a large number of theories, models and frameworks that have been developed over the past three decades (Petridou, 2014). Peters and Pierre (2006) and Schlager and Weible (2013) argue these tools are complementary rather than challenging. Petridou reasons that theories of policy process generate meaningful research and that there is a conceptual development that strengthens the theories (2014). Smith and Larimer (2017) critique the field for not producing a single policy process theory that can be applied to policy processes. Weible et al. (2011) however make a plausible point that the field's multiplication of research within different traditions and cultures is a strength. This is because it can address multifaceted and varied occurrences in the policy process as a result.

In this paper, the chosen theory, the MSA examines policy formation from an agenda setting point in which Kingdon focused on the agenda setting phases of policy making based on the assumption that policy making is ambiguous and complex (Pollitt, 2008) and not a rational linear process (Kingdon, 1984). It involves different agents, ideas, institutions and external processes and starts with assuming continual policy change rather than stability (John, 2003). Policy formation is described as the result of the flow of the three 'streams'; the problem stream, the proposal stream and the politics stream (1984, 1995, 2003). The theory has been praised for achieving a major step in understanding policy formation (Zahariadis, 2012) because it takes into account different aspect of internal and external factors in its three streams and is convincing in its arguments as to why policy changes (John, 2012). However, the framework has also been criticised for lacking application to other policy areas outside the US (Cairney and Jones, 2016). Other main policy process theories in comparison offer a single lens on the policy process (Schlager and Weible, 2013) by investigating one aspect of the policy process such as the Avocation Coalition Framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993), the Institutional Analysis Framework (Kiser and E. Ostrom, 1982) and the Punctual Equilibrium Theory (Baumgartner and Jones, 1991). However the MSA employs multiple perspectives through the influences of the three different streams which help to understand how policy is formed which the other theories do not to this extent.

Furthermore, there is no rigid conceptual scheme that Kingdon applies unlike many policy analysts, which it

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is argued by Pollitt “is offering an alternative that is more relevant to the real world” (2008, p. 127). Kingdon’s argument is that there is an element of chance which explains fluidity and rapid change in the policymaking process (John, 2003). There is also an interaction between randomness and the more recognisable process of problems, policies and politics as Kingdon argued (1984). However, the benefit of this has been widely debated in the literature (Cairney and Jones 2016; Béland 2016; John 2003). For example, while the idea has often been ‘universally’ applicable (Zahariadis 2007; John 2003), it has been argued that it has been used superficially in some cases (Cairney and Jones, 2016). It has also been criticised for lacking a wider spectrum of sophisticated publications that addresses the theoretical underpinnings of the theory (Cairney and Jones, 2016). Cairney and Jones discuss this in their recent publication where they scrutinised the framework and evaluated approaches by scholars assessing the scholars’ broader impact and trends in usage by an in-depth analysis of studies with comprehensive coverage of MSA. They combined motivated articles and then categorized the impact. Even though they found that there is a large body of literature that used his framework, they criticised the lack of theory development with this particular idea and suggested that a more systematic approach was needed (2016). On the other hand, Cairney and Jones acknowledged that the theory has contributed towards “evolutionary” policy theories (p. 37), such as the PET (Baumgartner and Jones 1991; 1993) and has encouraged a frequent literature in public policy.

It is also relevant to this research that the model has been applied to the higher education sector in the US. For example, McLendon’s work from 2003 used the model to describe decentralization of state level governance structures in the higher education sector in the UK. It has been suggested that the MSA has been too focussed on American political systems (Peditrou, 2014). In recent years however research has more widely applied the MSA to different political systems and international context such as the EU (Zahariadis 2012; Ness 2010).

Another important actor within the agenda setting process was identified as policy entrepreneurs. Policy entrepreneur’s role in relation to influence was pointed out by Shannan et al. (2008), and the role has expanded and received increasing attention within the context of agenda setting (Guldbrandsson and Fossum 2009; John 2003; Mintrom 1987); Béland 2005; Béland 2016; Petridou 2014). In this context policy entrepreneurs are according to Kingdon “Surfers waiting for the big wave” (Kingdon 1995, p. 225). Furthermore, Kingdon’s baseline is that these people can take on various roles and are adaptable, recognising the *“messiness of policy process, with its complexity and apparent unpredictability ... policy entrepreneurs propose policy solutions to problems, they can be bureaucrats, politicians, analysts, consultants, journalists and academics”* (p.173). The importance of policy entrepreneurs in this process has been further recognised within the literature (Guldbrandsson and Fossum, 2009). However, Petridou argues that *“policy entrepreneurs emerged as a complementary component of broader theories of policy change”* (2014, p. S22). While the idea of policy entrepreneurs has advanced the discussion, it has been criticised that it *“suffered from conceptual imprecision”* (2014, p. S22). Petridou’s criticism (2014) is based on the fact that the term has been used very broadly and studied in many different disciplines that can then as a result lead to imprecise

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definitions and use and debatable whether studies are comparable.

Following the gaps identified in the literature, to date no scholars have made more than a cursory attempt to embed theories about philanthropic influence within other well developed formal policy process theories. As a result this research will focus on embedding philanthropy in a policy process theory where research on policy making is a much more mature field of study with multiple robust theoretical frameworks used by researchers to explore the influence of a variety of actors on the development of public policy. As a result of these gaps, the research questions therefore examined are ‘What are the reasons behind the opening of a policy window for philanthropy in the 21st century in the UK HE sector?’ and ‘What is the role of policy making in charitable giving in higher education?’ These questions will be examined in the next section.

### **2. Methods and Findings**

15 interviews with senior fundraising professionals and experts from a range of different age groups of institutions were carried out and gave insights into the sudden attention to philanthropy by those professionals that apply the policies. The interviews, despite its number of 15, are representative with regards to the differently performing institutions and age groups of universities and cover the diversity based on acknowledging the sector’s fundraising income results being heterogeneous. The computer software Nvivo was selected to help categorising and ordering the large amounts of data (Bourdon, 2002)<sup>8</sup>. Braun and Clarke’s steps to thematic analysis were followed (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to remain flexible but also to use a consistent framework to analyse the data in segments and as a whole. The two main sections are divided into findings sections according to data relevant to the two research questions. The first section will highlight the most relevant findings with regards to why a policy window opened for philanthropy.

#### *2.1 Reasons for opening of policy window are fourth fold*

The focus of the interviews was to find out what in the fundraisers’ view the reasons for the attention of government with philanthropy were. The most important reasons that were found relevant to this research questions were: Firstly, the diversification of funding streams, secondly that higher education institutions were being used as policy tool, and finally the important role that policy entrepreneurs play.

##### *2.1.1 Diversification of funding streams have led to increasing attention to other sources of income*

Firstly, as part of the changes in the higher education landscape in the UK, a reason for the sudden attention has been the diversification of funding. Government seeking other ways of funding, creating flexibility with funding sources and encouraging diversification of funding sources were three commonly cited ideas. For example,

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<sup>8</sup> Discussing pros and cons of a computer assisted software would exceed the remit of this paper, however there is a wide-ranging literature available that discusses the issues including Bazeley 2011; Bringer et al. 2006; Lewins & Silver 2007; Mangabeira et al. 2004.

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*“I think they could see that the funding streams were gonna change and therefore they needed to find another way (Pause) to support universities” and to “make funding more flexible” and “to encourage universities to diversify their funding sources”*

Furthermore, two explanations by fundraisers were expressed that were in their view reasons for the diversification of funding streams. The shift were ideological as well as pragmatic reasons for the attention to philanthropy. The ideological reason was the idea that government was no longer going to be the sole payer for higher education as the review of the documents in the literature review indicated and arguing that students current and past should also contribute (DfES, 2003). The second shift, the practical shift, was that philanthropy in the funding context was seen as a way of contributing as another funding source that was also already discovered in the review of documents earlier. The following quote gives an example that fundraisers saw the attention attributed to these ideological and pragmatic motives.

*“for various reasons you’ve got a shift, haven’t you, in the funding of higher education over a couple of decades away from the state towards the individual through fees and also through philanthropy so that there is a [...]... the balance has shifted over time in different places and some of that is probably ideological and some of it is pragmatic because of governments can see how... I think in the past I’d have said governments can see how important universities are in terms of delivering national agendas but there isn’t the money not least because of demography, not least because of all these aging people who are going to need care and hospitals and pensions and etc. so where do you get the resources to fund this aging and so that’s the kind of... that’s the pragmatic...”*

What this quote also suggests in the second part is the recognition by government that HEIs are useful in delivering agendas nationally and internationally, leading to the second finding that HEIs were used as a government policy tool.

### *2.1.2 HEIs are seen and used as policy tool*

Another finding from interviews with regards to the policy windows has been that universities have been used as a policy tool or an instrument of government policy. The famous three words ‘Education, education, education’ pledged by Tony Blair in Labour’s manifesto brought education to the heart of their key policies in 1997. One interviewee stressed the importance of the national and political mood towards education during that time that supported the ideas of talking about philanthropy suggesting there was a lot of backing and eagerness for higher

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education *“this was a time when in the Blair government there was a lot of interest in this kind of activity and it’s before the financial crisis so there’s a lot of sort of optimism and excitement about all of this...”* Soon enough philanthropy was then also mentioned as found in the 2003 White Paper. With regards to the key instrument point, it was highlighted that HEIs were used as a policy instrument because they support economic growth but also tackle social exclusion such as access and equality. For example this idea of being an instrument was expressed by one respondent saying

*“there really was a sense that universities were an instrument, a key instrument of government policy because they delivered some really important things that the government were trying to do. One was around economic growth and another was around social inclusion and access, so philanthropy was a very natural thing to encourage and incentivise and applaud for all sorts of reasons but not least because the thing that was being given to was being recognised as valuable and important”*

As a result of HEIs being used as part of a policy agenda by Labour, it was also found that philanthropy was a ‘natural’ step towards furthering Labour’s targets such as access and equality for example. While being used as a policy instrument could be interpreted as a negative aspect of government by means of encouraging philanthropy for their own purposes, fundraisers were keen to make the case that it helped showcasing that philanthropy was able to help deliver key messages and support the values of higher education and were therefore not as concerned about the potential misuse. The finding that was also important was that the people who are involved in making policy happen, so called policy entrepreneurs, had been attributed a key role in enabling the opening of a policy window.

### *2.1.3 Policy entrepreneurs played a role in increasing the attention*

The third main finding with regards to why policy windows opened is the important role of policy entrepreneurs that have influenced the positive and increasing attention. The personal interest of people involved in the policy report seemed crucial and was highlighted in the literature (Gulbrandsson and Fossum 2009; John 2003; Mintrom 1987); Béland 2005; Béland 2016; Petridou). Access to fundraisers allowed research into how policy makers’ role was perceived and gave some insight on how philanthropy ended up on the policy agenda by for example one participant suggesting that the personal interest was a key reason for a policy maker to be involved. One fundraiser stated the crucial involvement of the policy maker and the role his/her interest played in moving the topic up the agenda

*“the only time I’ve ever been to Number 10 was presenting that report to (name anonymised) who I think was very interested in this so there was a personal engagement from him so that will have just pushed things along a little bit, I think”*

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It suggests that personal interest is an important point for an item to be pushed further on the policy agenda. However, an important point was also made about incentives such as the match funding schemes and the short-lived attention span that is attributed towards these policies because ministers do not stay for long periods in one job and then the attention can decrease because the person who takes over the role might not be interested in this area. One senior expert expressed this

*“schemes only have the lifetime very often of the minister involved. When ministers come in, they know that usually they’ve only got probably a couple of years on average and so they don’t particularly want to work on the previous minister’s scheme, they don’t get any kudos. They want to be seen to be doing something because they might hope for promotion particularly cases in education in the UK that set them up and when they move on the opportunities as well as the intent might decrease”*

This finding helps explaining why philanthropy received less attention from 2012 onwards, but that would only be one factor as part of a bigger picture that has been drawn there so far. One other point to consider for this section is the concept of philanthropy being perceived as a relatively sudden and new idea.

### 2.1.4 Philanthropy is as old as higher education itself

A final point of the findings that need to be made and that helps summing up the findings section is that philanthropy is not a new concept in higher education. In the introduction of this paper it was argued that philanthropy is as old as the institutions themselves (Proper 2009; Pellew 2014). One fundraising expert also stressed not to forget that philanthropy is not a new concept and that suddenly policy was using philanthropy as something new which was not the case. The quote below highlights the historical aspect of philanthropy and confirms that philanthropy has always been there but the attention by government was not coupled before 2000s. This finding further supports the argument of this paper that the policy window for philanthropy opened at that time but that philanthropy’s important role more broadly in higher education, without the influence of directed policy, was recognised. Philanthropy always played a part in the history of higher education but did not receive a lot of policy attention prior to the 2000s. For example, the importance of the tradition of philanthropy often forgotten was expressed by one fundraiser reminding us that philanthropy in HEIs goes back to the creation of institutions and has taken many forms.

*“Well I’m on a soap box regularly that this is our tradition and that right across Europe there are examples of universities and colleges and schools and galleries and hospitals and alms houses and everything you can*

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*think of going back hundreds and hundreds of years that are created and sustained by philanthropy from individuals, from groups, from the church, all sorts, so I think it's extremely important that we save that tradition and don't think philanthropy is something that we invented in about 2000. It really has long origins and traditions."*

Another interviewee also strongly argued that philanthropy has always been important in higher education and many institutions would have not come into existence with philanthropic support. This was also strongly put by another interviewee who argued

*"But in fact of course philanthropy is the starting point for all universities in the UK from Oxbridge, much more recently Sheffield University, Bristol University and many others at all stages of the development of universities have depended upon philanthropy but that has been lost, particularly since the post-war and post-Robins review of universities and so it is in most people's mind something that is fairly recent in the UK higher education."*

This quote helps explaining why a sudden appearance of attention could be perceived but in fact there is no evidence that policy paid any attention prior to the 2000s. As part of this point, it is also important to understand what the role of government should be in charitable giving in higher education, discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 'What is the role of policy making in charitable giving in higher education?'**

Having established reasons why the policy window for philanthropy has opened above, it is also important to further this discussion and understand role of policy making and government with regards to charitable giving in higher education from a practitioners' perspective. That perspective is relevant to compare below alongside what has happened and how the role has been expressed by policy makers in the reviewed literature documents earlier in this paper.

### **2.2.1 The supportive framework as part of government's role**

Interviews have brought further points to this discussion of what the role of the government should be from the view point of practitioners. These include being supportive and providing the framework to promoting philanthropy but not interfering to a great deal. Firstly, a large amount of interviewees suggested that the role of government in charitable giving should be supportive and providing a framework that enables fundraisers for example to work with all the tools available while the potential donor has got the confidence in policy makers but also the knowledge how for example tax incentives work. This for example was expressed in a representative quote stating *"I think their role*

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*is to create a framework which encourages it but not to interfere and not to be directive.*" As well as another interviewees pointed out that *"I think it absolutely needs to encourage it. I think it needs to play its part but I don't think it's sustainable or healthy if the government is the lead in this."* For government not being too directive was also elsewhere described as *"My preference would be for arm's length government intervention"* suggesting that while support is needed, fundraisers still aim for some freedom and ways of engaging with donors rather than just discussing tax related benefits as an example. If government were too prescriptive and focussed on tax giving, various fundraisers felt that something would be overlooked. The criticism is that while government's role is recognised, incentives can not replace the actual asking for donations and a donor's relationship with a university as the quote below further illustrates.

*"...has an important role to play in creating a broad framework which encourages it but it's never, ever a sufficient factor to encourage people to give and I think that there can sometimes be a bit too much focus both on the role of government and the linked role of tax, different tax regimes, as a motivation for giving. So government as a rule tends not to understand philanthropy very well and it tends when it comes through in various reports that governments tend to focus on primarily tax efficiency of giving..."*

The second part of the quote also highlights that in the practitioners' view the tendency of government to focus on tax efficiencies as the main means is an indicator for a lack of understanding. There is also a feeling by practitioners of government paying a lot of attention short-term, implementing two major schemes and then leaving philanthropy without any attention. The criticism within this is that, if the goal was to increase philanthropic giving long-term a cultural shift needed also long-term commitment from government to continue fostering giving. This was also illustrated in the following quote:

*"... I think that it's interesting that after that very intense burst of trying to get people to build up capacity, government have now just kind of walked away and left us all to it. You know, if you want to make that kind of cultural shift, just banging money at something for three years is not long enough. We're talking a massive, massive, massive cultural shift. As you say, one that I'm not even sure we can achieve in that particular way but if you're going to try to do that, you can't do it just in three years..."*

Furthermore, the query over too much reliance on government supported giving mechanisms was rightly asked by practitioners. This was expressed by one interviewee reflecting on the role of government but also arguing that philanthropy is not well understood

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*"I think there can sometimes be a bit too much focus both on the role of government and the linked role of tax, different tax regimes, as a motivation for giving. So government as a rule tends not to understand philanthropy very well and it tends when it comes through in various reports that governments tend to focus on primarily tax efficiency of giving"*

Leading on from this point about people within government being perceived of not understanding philanthropy, one other finding is that promoting and understanding the value of philanthropy should, according to interviewees, be part of government's role by saying "... And I think there's something in the area of publicity which governments haven't been good at which is drawing attention to the value of philanthropy ...". Furthermore, the underestimation by people, within government such as policy makers of understanding the value of philanthropy was not just supported by the just mentioned quote but goes further. If the value, the idea that philanthropy is a cultural and long-term goal for society to support higher education, is not cherished, there will be further problems maintaining support. Also maintaining the relationships that are built as part of this process between those that raise the funds (the fundraiser), those that provide the funds (the donor) and those that receive and benefit from the fund (the institution). The risk that is run is that while long-term relationships can be fostered by the fundraiser with the donor, policies suggesting that philanthropy is 'used' when needed and neglected when not required. This was further illustrated with a comment by a fundraiser using the analogy of a water tap that can be turned on an off when needed. For example,

*"... I think that one of the problems is that governments can think of philanthropy as being something like a tap that you can turn on and off [...] and because of the nature – the complex nature – of why people give in fact which is highly personal means that you can't just turn to philanthropy to fund your museums and galleries because it's a public good and likewise with universities..."*

The expression of describing government's view of philanthropy as a source of funding that is used like a tap was also an interesting finding and further highlights a problem with a potential mis-conceptualisation between fundraisers and government. Further indication and a second major criticism related is that the efforts by government in the form of a match funding scheme were not thought through. For example one fundraiser expressed the problem that government would hope more donors would start giving because of the schemes which fundraisers fundamentally disagreed with. For example this was expressed as

*"The idea that matched funding would suddenly create prospects is part of the failure of that particular line of thinking. I mean loss leaders, you know, don't' ... I mean that was the idea, you know, that somehow that*

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*people would start rushing towards the door because the biscuits were cheap, you know”*

The criticism with regards to the government's and politicians' lack of understanding of philanthropy was another theme that came out of the interviews in which government's discomfort with philanthropy was further established and the provision with for example tax rates is lacking clarity.

In summary of the above points, it is argued that one role for government is providing a clear and consistent framework that enables fundraisers what they need to do and for government to be clear about their role and philanthropy's role by understanding the mission and values of philanthropy's purpose is a second point.

### **3. Discussion- Convergence of the three streams**

The theoretical concept of policy windows, as displayed in Kingdon's MSA framework, was visible in the policy process of philanthropic engagement in higher education in the UK. The MSA framework by Kingdon (1984, 1995, 2003) is applied to this discussion of the findings of this paper to address the questions '*why did a policy window open for philanthropy in higher education in 2003?*' and '*what is the role of government in charitable giving in higher education?*' The three streams that Kingdon identified; the policy, politics and problem streams are discussed with help of the findings from the previous section from interview findings and earlier reviewed literature and the model is displayed in Figure 1.

#### *3.1 The Problem formulation*

According to the theory, a policy window opens when all three streams couple together. The first stream to be discussed is the problem stream. The problem stream "*refers to issues that capture everyone's attention, including the government*" (Chow 2012, p. 52). One of the obvious reasons that has also already been examined as part of the introduction and literature review of policy documents is that of the political and ideological shift. Within the literature as well as policy documents several points and developments were identified. For example, trends such as rising costs, constricted state budgets, managerialism, rationalisation, internationalisation and a changing understanding of the right the government and universities' systems are noted (Berman and Paradeise, 2016)<sup>9</sup>. The literature review already indicated that the government raised their concerns over sustainable funding and shifted their ideas that government could not be expect to pay for all education (DfES 2003, p.80). Fundraisers' view on what happened supported this impression as a response that is "pragmatic as well as solution to diversify the way universities are funded". In his theory Kingdon recognised that feedback is essential for the problem to be heard and can happen through different means (1984). For example, attention was raised through feedback from existing

<sup>9</sup> Here the term 'government' is used to describe no particular party but the government in charge at the time of any policy implementation and interventions. Leading government party from 1997-2010: Labour, from 2010-2015 Coalition Government Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, 2015 onwards: Conservative Government. In this particular paper, the distinction between changing government and their differing ideologies is not made specifically.

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programmes or events such as the Dearing Review in 1997 in which the financial crisis in higher education of the 1990s were discussed in conjunction with the effects of underfunding and expansion (Watson and Taylor, 1998) and further discussed in the 2003 White Paper.

### 3.2 *The Policy Stream*

Policies emerge in the stream that Kingdon refers to as “*policy primeval soup*” (Kingdon 1995, p. 116). In this ‘soup’ all concepts and possible answers are designed, advanced, in some cases overruled and selected by government officials, politicians and other experts (Kingdon, 1995). When higher education policy experts came together in the late 1990s the most feasible options would have appeared on the agenda. In this case, philanthropic funding was one of the ideas that was put forward in the 2003 White Paper (DfES, 2003) and then further examined in the 2004 Task Force report (DfES, 2004). The finding from interviews with fundraisers, that government had used higher education institutions as a policy tool is one element of the ‘policy primeval soup’ that was created. In this ‘soup’ higher education was a driver for Labour policies from 1997 and in which philanthropy received its attention as part of their education objectives. However, in order for the policy stream to be working efficiently at the time, there were people involved at the policy level that must have been keen to support the idea of philanthropic support which interviews suggested. This was previously confirmed in other studies that their role is crucial as part of the process (Guldbrandsson and Fossum 2009; John 2003; Mintrom 1987; Béland 2005; Béland 2016; Petridou). What is nevertheless surprising to find is that, while these policies were implemented and attention been paid to philanthropy, it is uncertain whether government is fully engaged with philanthropy given the impression by fundraisers of policy makers not understanding the value and long-term work of implementing a philanthropic culture.

### 3.3 *The Politics Stream*

The politics stream forms the final stream and is referred to as where public opinion, ideas of interest groups and election results play a role (Kingdon, 1995). For example, the national mood swung towards finding solutions that would not burden the state further (Barr 2004; DfES 2003; Barr and Crawford 2002) that was evident in the policy documents but also in the 2004 practitioner led Task Force Report in which philanthropy was suggested to play an more important part. Further benefits were recognised in the Task Force report that enabled a good picture for the role of philanthropy which also fundraisers pointed toward. They suggested that policy makers understood philanthropy to be an additional source that could also enhance other areas and reputation of HEIs. The government in return developed together with the sector two particular noteworthy schemes, the earlier mentioned MFS and the CBS, which were seen as direct policy interventions but were perceived positively by the sector. These two schemes can certainly be argued to be seen as a reason why the policy window then stayed open during the duration

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of the schemes. However, having said that, government was then criticised as fundraisers and the sector felt that whilst the attention was created, the role of government in generally providing philanthropic support was uncertain as it was perceived to withdraw its attention and interest soon after the MFS finished in a concluding review in 2012 (HEFCE, 2012). What was criticised is the lack of understanding from government towards a long-term commitment toward philanthropy that required, if serious about, continuous effort and understanding that a cultural shift towards supporting universities in the UK would not be a quick fix.

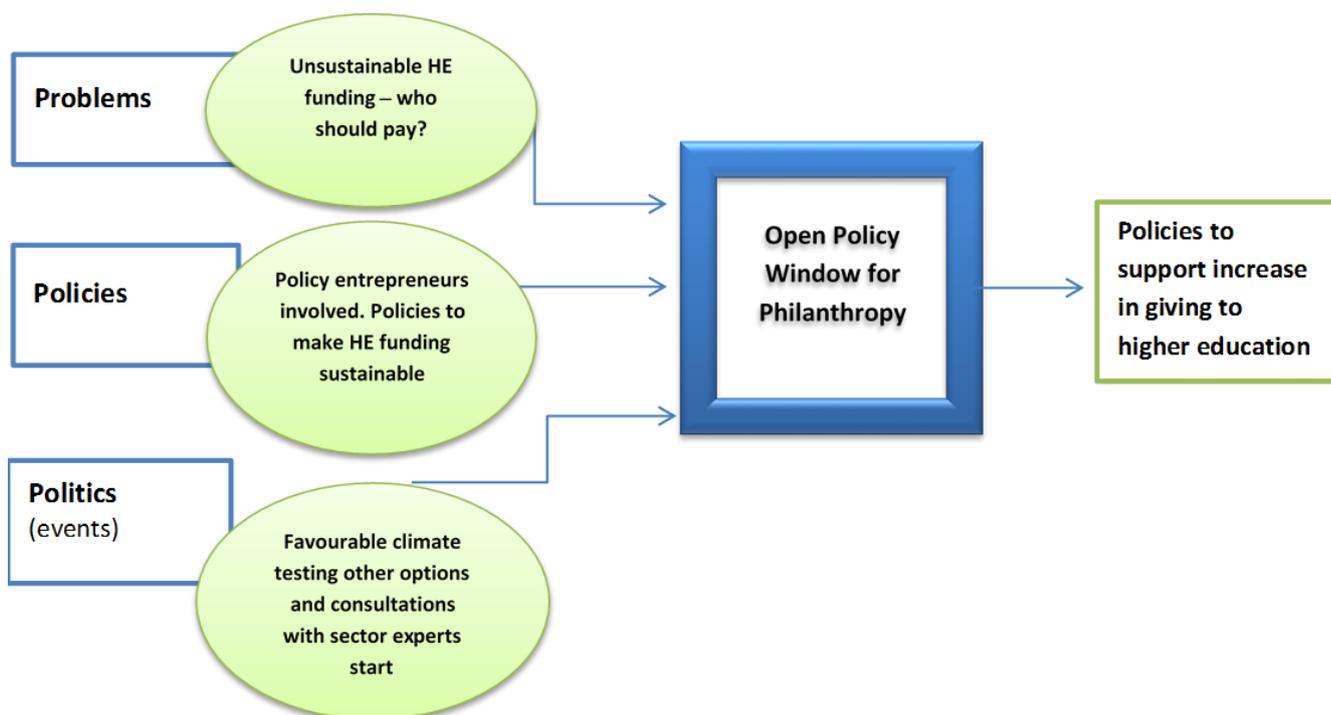
Having discussed the three streams, a policy window in higher education has been opened for philanthropy from the 2000s onwards because, according to findings from interviews, philanthropy was indicated in policy documents to be used as a solution to a funding problem in higher education during a time when higher education was changing profoundly. However, interview findings also suggest that another reason for policy attention is not because various senior people in government were considering philanthropy as a real contender to replace core funding with philanthropic income. Instead policy makers used it as opportunity to diversify funding streams and attempt to create a culture of philanthropic giving (DfES, 2004). The role of government is seen as a supportive, framework providing helping hand that does not interfere too much and needs further educating with regards to what the value of philanthropy is. Given the evidence, it is argued that the window opened in the 2000s with the government's announcement to fostering giving in higher education in the White Paper at which point it was actioned to the extent that all three streams of the MSA were coupled.

The idea of the coupling of the policy streams also helps explaining why then the attention declined after 2012, because the national mood and agenda changed and various supportive politicians had moved on remembering that *"the critical factor that explains the prominence of an item on the agenda is not its source, but instead the climate in government or the receptivity to ideas of a given type, regardless of source"*. This is true because *"nobody has a monopoly on ideas. They come from a plethora of different sources. Thus the key to understanding policy change is not where the idea came from but what made it take hold and grow"* (Béland 2016, p. 231) which would then according to the this quote mean to ignore the fact that government used philanthropy as a funding source and focus on what has been produced as part of the idea. There\ was enough 'noise' and push from policy makers to make it onto the agenda in line with the literature findings that policy entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the process (Zahariadis, 2014), even if it was for a short-time. As a result, the three windows, in accordance with Kingdon's model, as displayed for this scenario below, coupled and opened up the agenda for philanthropy based on the discussion above. It could also be argued that a benefit resulting from this happening is what fundraisers have pointed out; referring to the advantages and the encouragement for philanthropy provided by government which has produced a helped to acknowledge that philanthropy contributes toward an institution's prestige, reputation and engagement with their large alumni community that can enrich universities in many other ways than just add to income. This can be seen as a further step towards increasing the value of philanthropic

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donations to HEIs with help of the attention. What is nevertheless unhelpful is the drop in attention since the publication for the last government report engaging with philanthropy specifically in higher education.

Figure 1 - Kingdon's MSA applied to philanthropy in higher education



#### 4. Conclusion

This study has shed light on two important aspects of the policy windows and the role of government in charitable giving. Firstly, having applied Kingdon's MSA framework (1984, 1995, 2003), it found that that the attention by policy increased to the extent that formally policy shifted in this area in 2002-2012 and a policy window opened. The reasons for the increased attention are threefold. One is the shift of diversifying funding streams based on ideological, pragmatic and political foundations. A second reason is the positive influences by policy entrepreneurs enabling a shift. The third reason was the benefit that especially the Labour government could see using higher education as a key policy tool in which philanthropy featured at the right time to get recognised. Furthermore, it was also found that the important historic role of philanthropy does not receive enough credit in policy and as one reason the attention dropped again because philanthropy's role is not consistently supported. As a result,

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philanthropy's role should be more visible since some of the aforementioned incentives have increased the public awareness and contribution to HEIs from this source of funding. Leading on to the second main point discussed in this paper in relation to government's role where it was found policy makers should, according to fundraisers, provide a clear and consistent framework that enables fundraisers to their job better. This means for policy makers that they should be clear about their role and philanthropy's role in this process and promoting and understanding the value of philanthropy.

In this paper a first attempt was made to apply the MSA policy process theory which has proven to be a valuable theoretical as well as practical framework to examine philanthropy's role in the policy process. Future research should focus more on embedding philanthropy in social policy theory studies as it makes valuable contributions for policy makers, practitioners and the academic field. Another area that this paper could not focus on, but findings suggest there is valuable data to be studied, is the role of fundraisers as agents of policy who deliver the key policies but we do not know enough about their individual as well as communal role in this process.

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