ARE DOMESTIC POLICY ACTORS A POPULAR EXHIBIT IN THE FOREIGN POLICY ZOO?

Cain Roberts

School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne
Parkville, Victoria, 3010, Australia
cainr@student.unimelb.edu.au

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the content of Australian foreign policy; less has been written about how it is made and who actually makes it. Underpinning this paper is the question - who makes Australian foreign policy and how? Importantly, in attempting to deal with this question, this paper conceptualises foreign policy as a public policy and as such, draws from the policy science literature to put forward a hybrid framework suitable for finding out the domestic processes and actors that are important in Australian foreign policy making. In public policy parlance, this research seeks to explore who’s who in the foreign policy zoo and ascertain which exhibits are the most popular – who are the policy insiders and who are the policy outsiders?

On the surface, the question of who makes Australian foreign policy seems relatively easy to answer – the government makes foreign policy. Yet the government is not a singular unit, it is made up of structures, processes, institutions and actors, all playing a part in constructing, conceptualising and enacting Australian foreign policy. Indeed, a review of the literature would suggest a number of different groups have a role to play in Australia's system of foreign policy making – of particular note for this research is the government executive, the public service and myriad domestic policy actors (such as businesses, non-government organisations and think tanks) seeking to engage with and influence the outcomes of Australia’s foreign policy making processes.

Adding to the array of actors are a series of complex processes and multiple institutions that structure the space in which foreign policy making occurs. These processes and institutions impact which policy actors are permitted to participate in foreign policy making, what a given policy actor can and cannot do and the policy choices available to policy makers. By using a public policy lens, this paper begins to map an Australian foreign policy case study -
the ongoing Chinese free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations - to elucidate some of these processes and structures and examine how actors behave within them and are impacted by them.

This paper presents the mid-way point of a PhD project that explores the role public policy can play in helping to understand how Australia develops its foreign agenda. It is by no means a replacement for more typical theories of international relations and political science, but rather an approach that views foreign policy from a different angle. The thesis as a whole argues that a robust analysis of any policy simply cannot ignore the unique and idiosyncratic processes and policy actors through which a society makes its public policy - analysis of policy of the international should be no different.

I. THE CASE

Firstly, in order to examine policy of the international, a working definition of what precisely constitutes foreign policy is required. This is a much debated issue but Gyngell and Wesley provide a useful definition in arguing foreign policy is ‘all actions of state directed in whole or part outside of the boundaries of the state’ (2007:19). Indeed this view is shared by the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Dennis Richardson, who states that ‘foreign policy embraces all aspects of one country’s engagement with another… foreign policy should be seen in broad terms, not narrow terms’ (Richardson, 2012). Therefore, this research takes the viewpoint that foreign policy not only includes traditional issues such as geostrategic concerns, security and defence, but also so-called intermestic issues such as trade, immigration, the environment, human rights and international crime to name but a few. With this in mind, the potential Australia-China FTA therefore becomes a salient foreign policy issue as whilst being a trade negotiation with our largest trading partner by definition, it is a prospective treaty with a potential superpower and competitor to American hegemony in the Asia-Pacific.

In October 2003, Prime Minister Howard and Chinese President Hu Jintao signed the Australia-China Trade and Economic Framework, setting the agenda for the trade and economic relationship between Australia and China for the coming years. A key element of this framework was the commitment to undertake a feasibility study into a possible free trade
agreement between the two nations. This study was completed in March 2005 recommending that an agreement between the two nations ‘would substantially benefit both countries’ (DFAT, 2005:134) and in the following month, Australia and China launched official FTA negotiations (Zhang, 2007).

Despite the complex relationship between Australia and China, the study situated the proposed FTA almost solely in an economic context, ignoring other key areas of the relationship – notably geostrategic issues, human rights and environmental protection. This clear distinction did not last long, with then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, speaking at the Australia-China Free Trade Agreement Conference, clearly linking the FTA negotiations to the wider relationship stating ‘that an FTA would lend important strategic support to our efforts to be build and strengthen the broader bilateral relationship in the future’ (Downer, 2004). Indeed this sentiment is evident in the 2003 White Paper ‘Advancing the National Interest’ in which the Howard Government clearly links a deepening economic relationship with China as a mechanism for greater political and security connectedness (DFAT, 2003).

During the last years of the Howard Government, the negotiations continued through ten rounds of talks, coordinated at the Australian end by the Australia-China FTA Taskforce within DFAT. By the time the Rudd Government was elected in December 2007, the negotiations had slowed, with significant impediments to the drafting of the treaty across a variety of areas but notably regarding agriculture, rules of origin, import licencing and government procurement (DFAT, 2007). At a broad level, the future of preferential trade agreements such as the China FTA was examined by the Rudd Government when they launched a Productivity Commission investigation into bilateral and regional trade agreements in 2010. The Commission concluded that whilst such agreements may bring about increased trade, the benefits are often overstated, may be better achieved through other mechanisms and are often developed as ‘agreements for agreement’s sake’ (Productivity Commission, 2010). Nonetheless and in despite of Chinese displeasure at the 2009 defence white paper (see White, 2009), the China FTA negotiations continued for an additional four rounds.

With the eighteenth round of negotiations completed in March of this year, the talks continue under the auspices of the Gillard Government’s 2011 ‘Trading Our Way to More Jobs and Prosperity’ trade policy statement. Whilst declaring that multilateral trade arrangements
accrue the largest benefits to Australia, the policy statement reaffirms the Gillard Government’s commitment to bilateral trade agreements provided that ‘the final deal is in Australia’s national interest…the assessment of national interest should not include how much Australia has to give up, or “pay”, by way of domestic economic reform’ (DFAT, 2011:7). The policy statement also commits the government to resolving the impasse in the China FTA negotiations by committing the nations’ respective trade ministers to a series of high-level dialogues aimed at overcoming major differences – the first of which happened in mid-2012.

Despite the ongoing nature of this case, one of the reasons it was chosen for this research is that the domestic policy actors interested in the outcomes of the FTA negotiations, represent a useful cross-section of the usual domestic foreign policy actors identified in Gyngell and Wesley’s (2007) work on Australian foreign policy making. Of particular importance is the executive government including the prime minister, foreign minister and trade minister, along with other members of the cabinet that make subject matter contributions from time-to-time. The public service is also pivotal as it is through departmental structures that much of Australia’s foreign policy is designed and implemented – the traditional custodian of these processes, DFAT, along with an increasingly powerful Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet are of particular importance.

In terms of policy actors typically more focused on issues that are domestic in nature, business associations such as the Business Council of Australia (BCA), the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Australian Industry Group are active and powerful bodies acting in the foreign policy space. Individual large corporations such as the ANZ, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto are also active foreign policy participants through their advocacy and high-level relationships with governments. At the non-business end, numerous civil society groups seek to engage the process as well – unions, issue based non-government organisations and charities all pushing their causes across a variety of foreign policy issues. (see Gyngell and Wesley, 2007; also Evans and Grant, 1995).

Finally, the foreign policy epistemic community, incorporating both think tanks and academics, is the final major domestic policy actor highlighted by the literature (see Bercovitch et, al. 2005; Desker, 2005; Gyngell and Wesley, 2007; Wiarda, 2008). At a general level groups such as the Lowy Institute, the Australian Institute of International
Affairs and the Australia Strategic Policy Institute all play a role, but more specifically, the Australia-China Business Council and the China Studies Centre at the University of Sydney actively contribute to Australia-China foreign policy issues.

As March and Romelaer (1976) pointed out nearly 40 years ago, attention to an issue or a part of an issue is scarce – most of the domestic policy actors expanded upon below sit outside the formal government and as such, need to accept that opportunity, bias, perception of their organisation and the characteristics of the government of the day impact their ability to affect what is a multitude of issues facing government at any given time. Institutional structure strongly impacts attention rates by reducing ‘the number of issues to a manageable few and acts as a first step of sorting out available solutions’ (Zahariadis, 2007:75). What follows is an attempt to highlight some of these structures in an Australian foreign policy context and how domestic policy actors fit within them.

II. THE FRAMEWORK

In order to tease out the structures of foreign policy making, an analytical approach conducive to examining these structures along with the actors within the policy making system is required. As such, this research turns to the policy sciences to find such an approach and invokes the Laswellian view of the policy sciences that it is important to not only examine the details of a given policy, but also develop knowledge that can be applied to understand the structures, processes and contexts through which the policy came to exist (Laswell, 1951; Marinetto, 1999). Importantly, the approach elucidated below is not an attempt to replace traditional and well-tested approaches to international relations and political science inquiry, but rather, aimed at highlighting the role institutions, structures, processes and domestic policy actors have on how Australia’s foreign policy is constructed.

The framework utilised by this research is a hybrid of three well-tested public policy frameworks – Ostrom’s (2005; 2007) Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IAD), Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith’s (1988; 2007 with Weible) Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and finally, the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) advocated by, amongst others, Kingdon (1995) and Zahariadis (2003; 2007). These three frameworks have been tested widely across the public policy literature in areas such as international development assistance (Gibson et. al. 2005) and national environmental policy (Ellison and
Newmark, 2010) to name a few. Indeed there are also examples of these frameworks being used in a foreign policy context, such as Hirschi and Widmer’s comparative case study approach to analysing the usefulness in applying the ACF in helping to understand Swiss foreign policy decisions regarding sanctions towards Iraq and South Africa (2010).

In an attempt to synthesise the best elements of all three frameworks, the research draws heavily from a synthetic framework proposed by Real-Dato (2009). Real-Dato’s proposal for a Synthetic Explanatory Framework combines complementary elements of the three aforementioned frameworks to provide a structure that allows policy analysis whilst overcoming the well documented shortcomings of each approach if used individually. For example, using this hybrid approach overcomes how the ACF and MSF treat institutions, which is at best, a secondary concern for these two frameworks (Real-Dato, 2009:119). This is problematic in a foreign policy context given the extremely important role of institutions such as cabinet, ministers and the public service in foreign policy development, implementation and overall decision making. The IAD overcomes this issue by emphasising the ‘social explanation on actors’ interactions within the limits established by the relevant institutional structures’ (Real-Dato, 2009:122). Reflecting these advantages, the framework therefore consists of three distinct parts – a series of variables, an action arena and three streams. This section will provide a brief overview of the variables, with the action arena and streams covered in the subsequent part of this paper.

Firstly, the three variables are drawn from Ostrom’s IAD and consist of rules that order participant relationships; biophysical world attributes and; the attributes of the community in which the action arena is situated. In the context of this research, a good example of the rules in use variable is the confidentiality requirement that surrounds the draft text of an agreement whilst it is under negotiation. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) point out that this makes it very hard to contribute detailed comment and recommendation on the worthiness of a trade agreement when those outside the system are unaware of what is on the negotiating table (ACTU, 2012). Both the ACTU and Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) note that there are numerous precedents for providing text for comment

---

1 This paper will only touch on certain elements and benefits of the Real-Dato framework (for example, not covering the useful inclusion of the ACF’s three-tiered belief system in the synthetic framework), further information is contained in the author’s 2009 paper. It is noted that Real-Dato also includes elements of Baumgartner and Jones (1993) punctuated-equilibrium theory (PET). This research does not incorporate PET into this particular case study but further reading on this approach can be found in True et. al. (2007) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993).
by organisations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation when negotiations are being conducted under their jurisdiction (ACTU, 2012; AFTINET, 2012).

Secondly, the biophysical world attributes variable in a foreign policy context could conceivably be the geo-political and strategic realities that Australia needs to contend with in the international environment. It could also be international agreements to which Australia has agreed to abide. For example, intellectual property (IP) – a sensitive area in any negotiations with China – is explicitly dealt with by Australia’s obligations under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in that any expansion of IP standards expressed in a FTA between two states must be extended to all WTO member nations (Leahy et. al., 2007:19). A further example are Australia’s already significantly reduced tariff rates on a number of key products that are proving difficult in completing the negotiations, as not being able to reduce these further restricts the policy choices of Australian negotiators. Cheng, for example, points out that the zero import tariff on many of Australia’s agricultural imports limits the advantages possible to Chinese agricultural exporters in any FTA and makes it less likely they will be willing to reciprocate the rate of tariff as a part of the agreement (2008:37).

Finally, in terms of the community attributes variable, the results of the Lowy Institute’s 2012 poll into public opinion and foreign policy are a useful insight. The poll found that 56% of Australians felt that the government allowed too much investment from China (Lowy Institute, 2012:12). This rate was noticeably higher than that of respondents concerned with foreign investment regardless of the source country (46%) and noticeably higher than any other nation. Opposition Leader Tony Abbott’s recent speech in China on foreign investment and subsequent policy paper also received much attention for its populist roots with the perception expressed in the Lowy Poll and a lack of appreciation for the economic relationship (see Laurenceson, 2012; Taneja, 2012). The public perception of China’s investment in Australia will continue to be both a political and policy problem for governments of either persuasion given the inevitable increase in appetite for Chinese investment in key and often sensitive areas of the Australian economy (Shearer, 2010:7).
III. THE ACTION ARENA

The action arena is a complex conceptual unit composed of two sections - actors and an action situation. The IAD requires that both sections be present to ‘diagnose, explain, and predict actions and results’ (Ostrom, 2005:43). The action arena therefore becomes a social space in which individuals interact, goods are exchanged, decisions are made and problems are resolved. Within the action arena, policy actors may fill one of three major categories – public decision makers, insiders and outsiders (Real-Dato, 2009:122). These typologies are useful classifiers for the roles played by various groups in foreign policy making.

Again borrowing from Real-Dato, the action arena has three streams running through it – politics, policy and problems. Firstly, in the politics stream, the public mood and ideology are important influences on participants, usually elected officials. Secondly in the policy stream, policy specialists work to provide solutions to problems within a closed policy community (Robinson and Eller, 2010) dominated by policy insiders. Finally, the problems stream consists of various policy actors bringing attention to public problems (Kindgon, 1995), usually via a combination of engaging with public servants and political appointees and in some cases, public advocacy (Robison and Eller, 2010). Importantly, within each of the three different streams, actors can fulfil different roles to that they may undertake in other streams – for example, an insider in the policy stream maybe an outsider in the politics stream. The following provides a snapshot of how some domestic policy actors fit into the streams in the China FTA case study along with some of the restrictions they face.

a. The Political Stream

The political stream in this particular case study is quite complex given the negotiations span three different governments. Nonetheless, it is in the political stream where major decisions take place and the narrative as to the purported benefits of the FTA is controlled. The public decision makers described by Real-Dato are very important at this level. It is also at this level where the China FTA debate is tied to the government’s broader foreign policy aims. These features are largely a function of the position of foreign policy decision making at the highest levels of government - participation in this stream therefore, is particularly restrictive.
Firstly, the role of the prime minister is at the top of the foreign policy decision making tree. The prime minister, since the time of federation, has maintained a tradition of dominance vis-à-vis other cabinet members (Edwards, 1983; Trood, 1992). Despite immense changes to the international system since 1901, the constitutional context for this power has not been altered, with the prime minister capable of wielding significant power over foreign policy making should they so desire (Beaumont, 2003). Importantly, it is at the prime minister’s discretion as to how involved they decide to get in a given issue. Yet ultimately, it is their personal view as to Australia’s place in the world that sets the tone of Australia’s foreign policy, as well as the international community’s perception of Australia’s place in the world (Trood, 1992; Gyngell and Wesley, 2007).

With this role in mind, control of the narrative surrounding the FTA is an important element of this stream as it become indicative of Australia’s trading position and engagement with a rising power. For example, in April 2011, Gillard spoke at an Australia-China trade forum, declaring ‘a high quality Free Trade Agreement would deepen our relationship further and create long term benefit’, a key part of a speech linking the developing economic relationship with a deeper strategic one (Gillard, 2011).

Another key ability of strong actors in the political stream of foreign policy making is their ability to link developments to policy reforms in the domestic context or other policy initiatives. For example, the Gillard Government’s trade policy paper ‘Trading Our Way To More Jobs and Prosperity’ links trade negotiations to domestic economic reform, ensuring negotiations such as the China FTA are linked to the domestic political discourse around a growing economy. Furthering this, the decision by Julia Gillard to commission a white paper on Australia’s role in the Asian century and the inevitable inclusion of Australia’s trading relationship with China into this document, is again indicative of the role a prime minister can have in controlling a narrative surrounding foreign policy and linking it to a broader agenda.

It is not only the prime minister that is a key public decision maker at this level, both the trade and foreign ministers are also pivotal, not only as senior members of the cabinet, but also as they maintain direct links into DFAT as the responsible ministers. This is particularly so when either of these portfolios are filled by ministers capable of challenging the prime
minister’s discretionary power over foreign policy and hold sway with other members of cabinet – Rudd, Barwick, Evatt and McEwen all being particular noteworthy examples (see Beaumont, 2003). Both the ACCI and ACTU see using the trade minister as an important avenue to engage the processes of decision making in the politics stream (ACCI, 2012; ACTU, 2012) and so this portfolio is very influential in any trade negotiation.

A number of business groups also indicated that the Treasurer was exceptionally important at the political level. In the case of the China FTA, one such group indicated that the foreign investment oversight responsibility of the Treasurer meant his or her input into the China FTA debate was crucial, along with the work of the China Economic Group within the Treasury (Business Group A, 2012). Indeed the Treasury’s subject matter expertise over issues such as foreign direct investment make it a key conduit for business associations and corporations to influence the FTA negotiations – particularly given their standing relationship in the domestic economic context.

Participation by domestic policy actors in the politics stream is dependent on access to the structures that it dominates – the public decision makers within executive government and the cabinet. The ability to become a political insider at this level is therefore very difficult for those not already inside the system. As Real-Dato points out, this is a frequent problem as ‘newcomers usually find it difficult to get incorporated into the subsystem’s decisional core since their policy interests may not coincide with those of decision makers and insiders and/or because their incorporation may alter the existing power equilibrium’ (Real-Dato, 2009:131). For these reasons, certain groups enjoy better levels of access to decision makers in this stream more so than the other two. For example, business enjoys a particularly privileged level of access given the immense structural and instrumental power it wields within the policy making system and this power’s influence over government (see Brayman, 1967; Lindblom, 1977; Bell, 2006; Farnsworth, 2008). As a result and as Lindblom points out, business has a privileged position with public decision makers and this can be seen in this particular case study by structures such as the Australia-China CEO Roundtable and direct access to ministers for large corporations and business associations via personal face-to-face meetings (see Gyngell and Wesley, 2007; Business Association A, 2012).
b. The Policy Stream

The policy stream is dominated by the public service – in this case the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or as Gyngell and Wesley have deemed it ‘the essential core of the foreign policy making process in Australia’ (2007:58). The Department can at times be both a policy insider and a decision-maker, with certain operational decisions delegated from the political level. Kingdon’s description of the policy stream as being relatively stable, usually occupied by specialist policy communities (Kingdon, 2003) is apt in this context, with this community dominated by DFAT in the Australian case.

Internally, DFAT established a China FTA Taskforce within its Free Trade Agreement Division responsible for the day-to-day management of the FTA’s development. The organisational structure here is the key conduit to facilitating broader engagement with relevant parties. Indeed, a major part of the taskforce’s roll is to be the bridge between the FTA negotiators and domestic stakeholders for as the DFAT Secretary states, ‘you can’t go and negotiate a free trade agreement with any country without active consultation with your major domestic elements affected by a free trade agreement’ (Richardson, 2012). The mechanism for this engagement has largely been through the call for submissions from interested parties and via industry briefings, at which DFAT updates stakeholders as to where the talks are at. Whilst these briefings are useful, the ACCI makes the point that briefings over a seven year period make it difficult for industry to remain actively involved, let alone actively contribute to, given their business concerns more typically operate on an annual basis and are likely to change over a longer period (ACCI, 2012).

Importantly, federal line departments such as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), play key consultative roles for DFAT. DAFF, for example, has extensive relationships with the agricultural industry and supports a significant research effort through its Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences. It is also important in the context of providing expertise to the China FTA team in terms of the sanitary and phytosanitary negotiations that are an area still undergoing discussion between the two nation as at the last round of negotiations in March 2012 (DFAT, 2012). The domestic linkages of the line departments are important in this arrangement with Richardson claiming that you simply would not engage agricultural industries like beef, for example, without involving DAFF and using their networks (Richardson, 2012). This also allows stakeholders
such as agricultural groups through DAFF or financial groups through the Treasury, to engage DFAT via their more common domestic departmental linkages.

Outside of government institutions, certain civil society groups are prime examples of policy insiders. For example, Richardson states that any trade negotiation DFAT undertook needed to include consultation with the National Farmers Federation (Richardson, 2012). The ACTU’s role in advocating labour rights and the removal of investor state provisions are also important, particularly under the Rudd and Gillard led Labor governments.

Policy outsiders are numerous as well and in many cases struggle to engage with the process based on their permitted levels of access and the resources available to them. Civil society groups not representing the dominant world view reflected within DFAT or the government more generally, will always struggle to engage in the process in a meaningful way. Legitimacy is important if an organisation wants to be a policy insider for as Milbrath points out, their access into the foreign policy making process is directly linked to the level of legitimacy afforded to them by the government (Milbrath, 1967). Specific examples here of groups attempting to engage the FTA process via submissions but may suffer from both resources and legitimacy concerns include the Australia Tibet Council, Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group and the World Organisation to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong. Whilst undoubtedly experts with regard to their respective causes, the legitimacy afforded to them by both government and DFAT in the context of the FTA negotiations may be problematic for their access to the process.

Finally, impact assessments are another important mechanism used by DFAT to establish negotiating positions and opens up the process to experts in the relevant impact discipline. The Centre for Policy Studies at Monash University, for example, conducted independent modelling of the proposed FTA prior to the commencement of the negotiations (Mai et. al. 2005). Social impact studies are an example of assessments that are usually absent in trade negotiations but that are increasingly being asked for by civil society actors and may be a mechanism to incorporate such actors into the process more deeply. For example, in their submission to the FTA taskforce, the Australia Tibet Council requested that DFAT undertake consultation with civil society actors to ensure concerns around human rights and social justice were considered when negotiating the FTA (Australia Tibet Council, 2004:3). Importantly, the ability for DFAT to assess the information derived from impact assessment
and submissions depends largely on the analytical capacity of the Department, particularly the FTA taskforce. There is a growing literature concerning the analytical capacity of government departments and this is of concern given the lack of funding increases DFAT has received over a number of years (see Howlett, 2009).

c. The Problem Stream

The problem stream is the most accessible to domestic policy actors, particularly via making submissions to DFAT’s consultation processes. It is the stream in which they can push their cause through research, advocacy and lobbying, but also by engaging official consultation mechanisms controlled by the policy stream – such as the open submissions process managed by the China FTA taskforce. We see all categories of actors interacting here, with both insiders and outsiders afforded the opportunity to contribute. As Zahariadis points out, values are important in the problem stream, with policy actors guided by their values and beliefs placing varying degrees of importance on a given problem (2007:71).

In this case, we can see a number of varying problem definitions depending on the actor. For example, this stream allows business associations to elevate issues important to their constituent organisations on to the government agenda. For example, the BCA produces research papers on issues such as foreign investment needs (BCA, 2010) that highlights business concerns and directly relates them to the ongoing China FTA negotiations. Papers such as this have become important foreign policy making tools as it allows the public service and ministers ‘to prioritise issues and guide them on trade-offs in their policy making’ (Leahy et. al, 2007:4).

The choice of pursuing a preferential trade agreement over other trade mechanisms creates its own varying problems amongst differing groups. Fair trade and labour rights focused actors such as the ACTU and AFTINET argue that any agreement with China needs to elevate labour rights to the level of human rights (AFTINET, 2005; ACTU 2012). Conversely, the ACCI and other business organisations lament the Gillard Government’s position on removing investor state provisions from preferential trade agreements (ACCI, 2012). The problems stream allows a multitude of actors to promote their agenda to government – whilst this is a relatively open process the issue of whether government listens to the concerns depends on the legitimacy and power of the actor as described earlier.
IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided a snapshot of the complex structures and actors in play in contemporary Australian foreign policy making. It has provided an overview of a hybrid public policy framework that allows analysis of foreign policy making that is sympathetic to the structures and process underpinning foreign policy development and influencing how the policy actors within them interact.

Using the typology of public decision makers, insiders and outsiders, this paper has presented the view that it is difficult for domestic policy actors to be foreign policy insiders, let alone public decision makers. This is particularly so in both the politics and policy streams. Whilst there are exceptions to this, noticeably some large corporations and well-resourced national organisations attracting a sympathetic government ear, the closed nature of foreign policy reinforced by its highly concentrated structure and confidentiality requirements suggests this is unlikely to change.

Access to the politics and policy streams is also restricted by the level of legitimacy assigned to a policy actor by the government of the day. A domestic policy actor that is seen as a legitimate contributor to the China FTA debate by a public decision maker is more likely to be granted access to the stream than one that manifestly opposed to elements of the proposed agreement. The institutional structure of trade negotiations and foreign policy making in Australia more broadly reinforces this power, particularly when public decision makers are few and highly concentrated. Whilst policy outsiders have greater access to the problems stream, this paper has shown that an ability to present a point a view via formal submissions processes by no means guarantees greater access to the process or that the government will adopt the advice presented.

Whilst more work is required to continue to flesh out this case study and further studies are required to validate the assumptions, it does suggest that domestic policy actors may not be popular exhibits in the foreign policy zoo. Their limited resources, a closed policy system and the strict control of information means that whilst many domestic policy actors actively seek to engage Australia’s foreign and trade policy making processes, they are unlikely to make much headway.
V. REFERENCES

1. Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, personal communication, Monday May 28 2012
2. Australian Council of Trade Unions, personal communication, Tuesday 17 July 2012
3. Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network, Submission to the China Task Force from Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network, Sydney, AFTINET, 2005
5. Australia Tibet Council, Submission to the China FTA Study Taskforce on the Australia-China Joint Free Trade Agreement Feasibility Study, Sydney, Australia Tibet Council, 2004


42. Productivity Commission, Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements – Productivity Commission Research Report, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia, 2010

44. Richardson, Dennis, Secretary of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, interview, Wednesday 13 June 2012


48. Shearer, Andrew, *Sweet and Sour: Australian Public Attitudes Towards China*, Low Institute for International Policy, Sydney, 2010


