Political Parties and Power: A Multi-dimensional Analysis

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I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Abstract

Political parties are ideal subjects for the study of power because they are specific sites in which it is produced and organised, fought over, captured and lost. However, the literature on political parties largely lacks an explicit and systematic theorisation of power as it is exercised and operates in them. As a result, the study of parties has not kept up with developments in theoretical approaches to power and power relations. For example, the failure to recognise how power works through constituting subjects who are empowered as effective agents with appropriate skills and capacities is a major lacuna in the literature. Parties are not only electoral machines or vehicles for personal ambition: they are organisations, complex relations of individuals, rules and rituals. An approach to power in parties should reflect this.

To this end, I develop a five-dimensional framework of power which I use to account for political parties in all their complexity. My aim is to introduce some of the more nuanced and sophisticated insights of political theory to the analysis of political parties without dismissing the benefits of some of the more established ways of looking at power. Power is therefore approached as a rich, multi-dimensional concept, derived from diverse intellectual traditions, including behaviouralist, structuralist and Foucauldian accounts. My framework encapsulates individual agency, the strategic mobilisation of rules and norms, rationalisation and bureaucracy, the constitution of subjectivities and the micro-level discipline of bodies. Theory is employed in conjunction with original interview and archive research on the British Labour Party to construct an account of how power operates in party settings. This provides a unique and, I argue, much richer perspective on the exercise and operation of power in political parties than has been offered before.

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***Introduction*: Dimensions of Power**

All politics is in some sense a manifestation of power struggles. Max Weber argues that the importance of politics is that it strives 'to share power or… to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state' (Weber 1948 [PV], 78). In democratic states, the primary vehicle for these struggles is the political party. Therefore it is not surprising that, from the earliest studies of political parties, how power and organisation interact has been of major concern. For two early twentieth century pioneers of the study of parties, the very emergence of party organisation in the first place had problematic effects in terms of power: for Ostrogorski (1970 [1902]), the transformation of parliamentary parties into mass organisations, although a practical response to the expanding franchise, undermined the deliberative freedom of parliamentary elites, making them into mere agents of the organisation and its members (Ostrogorski 1970 [1902], 386). Conversely, Michels (1962 [1915]) argues that the growth of organised parties actually supported the power of elites at the *expense* of members, crushing the democratic hopes of the masses under the grinding wheel of oligarchy. Many other studies since then have sought to explain how, as parties have developed, power relations within them have changed: the 'mass party' of the twentieth century was naturally oligarchic according to Duverger (1959, 151). Kirchheimer (1966) and Epstein (1967) argued that professionalised media age parties had begun to throw off their memberships altogether, becoming even more centralised and elitist. More recently, Katz and Mair (1995) have suggested that the party at elite level has become interpenetrated with the state itself, whilst the relationship with the party on the ground has become one of virtual mutual autonomy.

The works I have briefly outlined above have all played an important role in the academic analysis of party organisation. However, whilst all these studies are concerned in some way with the 'distribution' of power in parties, particularly in terms of the relative power of members and leaders, the majority of these and other studies have failed to address explicitly or adequately the question of power as a dynamic force that has many different dimensions to it. Political parties are sites in which the exercise of power can be observed in conflicts over policy and preferences, and in the means that actors use to secure their interests and maintain dominant positions. But power also works in political parties in less observable, but highly effective ways. It *produces* and *constitutes* political actors through the rituals and practices of everyday party life and it *controls* and *disciplines* them through routinised organisational imperatives and the fine-grained disciplinary techniques of surveillance and normalisation. Illuminating the sheer variety of its modes of operation in political parties requires a sustained theoretical analysis of power in that context and its application to real-world examples. This is the task that I undertake in this thesis.

Summary of the Core Thesis

This thesis seeks to answer four questions. Firstly, in what different ways is power exercised in a political party? Secondly, how can it adequately be theorised? Thirdly, how best can this theory be tested? And fourthly, what contribution does this make to a) the understanding of power in political parties in particular; b) the debates about political power generally? I answer these questions as follows:

1. In what different ways is power exercised in a political party?

Power needs to be conceptualised in a way that accounts for the full complexity of its exercise in party organisation. My thesis is that, in theoretical terms, power in political parties needs to be understood not simply as a property of agents or a function of hierarchy but also as strategic, routinised, constitutive and disciplinary. I propose five dimensions to power's exercise in a political party, in which power can be understood in the following different ways:

    i.   as a capacity of individual agents which is exercised in interpersonal relations in the pursuit of specified interests;

    ii.   as a property mediated by organisational norms and rules, and amplified by instituting, reforming or reinforcing them in such a way that it limits the scope of conflict, thus securing the power of certain groups over others;

    iii.   as an impersonal, bureaucratic control which is engendered by parties as continuously administered organisations. Power becomes detached from agents whilst at the same time constraining, disciplining and excluding them through organisational imperatives;

    iv.   as a productive, empowering force that constitutes subjectivities through the day-to-day habits and rituals of party life, producing willing subjects who are effective party actors;

    v.   as micro-level discipline that is propagated and reproduces itself through fine-detailed techniques of control and normalisation, focused *inter alia* at the level of the body.

These five dimensions of power's exercise – agentic, strategic, bureaucratic, constitutive and disciplinary – are brought together by the thesis into a single framework that provides the basis for an analysis of power in political parties

2. How can power adequately be theorised?

In answering the second question, I draw on existing debates about power and its exercise in political contexts, especially the so-called 'community power debates' beginning with Dahl's critique of the ruling elite model of power (Dahl 1957; 1958), and Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) modifications of Dahl's approach, which are famously defined by Lukes (1974; 2005) as the first two of three 'faces' of power. From these and similar works I draw material which supports the agentic and strategic dimensions of power's exercise in political organisation. I then build on and extend the understanding of power beyond the concerns of these debates by drawing on a series of theoretical resources that enable me to develop a framework in which five dimensions of power interact. In particular, I use:

- theories that emphasise the more impersonal machine-like power of organisation, drawn from Weber's theory of bureaucratic power;

- theories that conceive power as structural and constitutive of subjectivity, inspired by Althusser's brand of structural Marxism;

- an understanding of power derived from Foucault that envisages it as dynamic, detailed and capillary force that operates independently of both structure and agents.

My aim is to show how these modes of power operate within not just the political as such, but within political parties specifically. I will contend, moreover, that it is impossible to appreciate how modern parties operate without taking all five of these dimensions into account. My framework therefore offers an important addition to the conventional analysis of the political party.

There is inevitably a tension that exists in a framework that seeks to bring together such diverse understandings of a concept like power. How, for example, can it be accepted that power is a property of autonomous agents on the one hand, whilst also agreeing that individual subjectivity is constituted *by* power on the other? In this case there is a danger of becoming entangled in debates about structure and agency. I do not wish to dwell on those debates in the abstract. Central to my argument is that one cannot fully comprehend power relations (especially in political parties) by rejecting or neglecting the capacities of agents, but nor can the full effect of power be understood without *also* considering the forces that bear upon and shape individuals *as* subjects with agency. Thus, whilst I do not expect to resolve the very deep controversies that underlie this theoretical debate, part of the task of this thesis is to use these tensions in a creative way. My purpose is to argue that power is a multi-dimensional concept in which the agentic and structural operate at different levels of power.

3. How best can this theory be tested?

Overall the thesis offers a theoretical analysis of power in political parties and my principal purpose is to add to the understanding of power in this specific context. I am therefore not only concerned with advancing coherent theoretical claims; I also want to test them. I do so through the examination of a particular case-study: the development of the British Labour Party during the 1980s and 1990s.

That a political party is a locus of power struggles and power relations in its own right is what makes it such a suitable site for a study of power and this is particularly so for labour and socialist parties because of their history of organisation. Socialist parties 'were the first to try and organise the masses, to give them a political education, and to recruit from them the working-class elites' (Duverger 1959, 24-25) as a means of countering the wealth and power of the established parties of the ruling classes. Thus parties of the left can be a fruitful source of analysis, as writers like Michels, Duverger, Panebianco (1988) and their successors have demonstrated. In this sense, then, I am continuing in their tradition.

The 1980s and 1990s is a period of the party's history which provides an opportunity to identify the key forces at work in the party's 'renewal'. It was a time during which Labour underwent a transition from what was regarded as a 'sick' party – divided, chaotic and apparently destined for oblivion (Whiteley 1983, 1) – to an apparently 'slick' and disciplined electoral machine. Drucker argued in 1979 that the Labour Party should be seen 'not simply an instrument for acquiring and using power – not simply a vote gathering machine designed for policy-making and implementation' but as an organisation with 'a life of its own' (Drucker 1979, vii). However, the problem for party leaders who *were* concerned with acquiring and using power was that the Party's 'life' and ethos, its culture of oppositionism (Ibid., 37) and distrust of leaders (Ibid., 92-5), was a barrier to making their ambitions political realities. Thus the history of the Labour Party is in large part a history of struggle between the requirements and logics of the pursuit of power and the practices, politics and traditions of a movement. The upheavals and struggles after defeat in 1979, and before eventual return to power in 1997, were to change the party fundamentally at many different levels: in terms of its organisation, its culture, its members and activists, its policies and practices. The result,

at least for a time, was to reorient the party away from being 'an opposition party' with 'a real stake … in remaining out [of office]' (Drucker 1979, 37) and becoming one with a taste and desire for power, with an ambition and determination to 'win, and win again.' (Gould 1999, xvii).

A crucial aspect of my research has therefore been to collect and analyse empirical material. This has been gathered from three main sources: interviews (with both grass roots activists and party elites), archival research, and biographical and contemporary accounts of politicians and journalists. This approach, which combines theory with qualitative empirical research, suits my overall aims because I want to examine how different conceptualisations of power can be applied in multiple dimensions to the same setting. The process of change and reform that the party and its members were subject to illuminates how different dimensions of power come into play, sometimes in tension, sometimes complementing or supporting one another. These dynamics allow me to explore the salience and effects of these different dimensions of power in specific situations. For example, reforms made to the party's decision-making processes (which I will discuss at different points later in the thesis) demonstrate how power works in multiple dimensions: decision-making in the party was characterised by antagonistic, public confrontation between activists and leaders, and changes in the rules were seen as crucial to short-circuiting that, thus demonstrating how power's strategic dimensions can be exercised in response to problematic exertions of individualistic power. Reform of policy-making led to greater centralisation and the routine exclusion of certain voices from the decision-making process, bringing a more bureaucratic dimension into play. Looked at yet another way, the practices of routines like policy-making have a constitutive quality, reinforcing particular norms and producing certain kinds of

activists. Therefore, altering them is likely to have some significance for the culture of the party and the attitudes and beliefs of those participating in it.

4. What contribution does this make to: a) the understanding of power in political parties in particular; b) the debates about political power generally?

To the understanding of power in political parties, I contribute an explicit theoretical focus on the nature and operation of power therein. A general problem in the existing literature is that the concept of power remains underdeveloped in the specific context of political parties. Underlying assumptions about power tend to emphasise it as a property of elites or a problem of agents and their preferences. As I demonstrate in the following chapter, although it is possible to elicit a number of different underlying approaches to power from an examination of the existing literature, an explicit theoretical reflection on the concept of power in the particular context of parties is lacking. This is probably because most of those who write about political parties are not theorists, whilst political theorists have very rarely focused their attention on political parties. The argument I have developed over time in response to these lacunae is that a more sophisticated and complex understanding is needed. This accommodates the way that power can also be discerned in the quiet corners, in mundane, everyday practices that breathe life into organisational dynamics and which are saturated with forms of power that operate below the radar of 'conventional' political science.

To do this, I bring together different approaches to power in a unique multi-dimensional framework that has been specifically designed for the analysis of power's exercise in party organisation. This focuses on action and strategic behaviour, but also on administration, the regular practices of party life, and more detailed methods of control that are rarely noticed in the mainstream party literature. Inversely, such an approach

also adds to the debate about power in general precisely because it focuses on organisational power. This is important for two reasons: firstly, because most of us are part of and interact with organisations every day of our lives. The world, Stewart Clegg (1989) has suggested, is 'increasingly dominated by large complex organisations' in which 'mechanisms of discipline, which are more mediated, more formalised and more routinised' have become increasingly important means of order and control (Clegg 1989, 35). Secondly, the struggle for power exists on two levels in party politics: the political party is at the same time both a locus of power and a vehicle for the *pursuit* of power. As von Beyme has put it, the main purpose of party organisation 'is and will remain to achieve power in the state' (von Beyme 1985, 73). It follows, therefore, that to understand how power works within political parties is itself vital for understanding how political power operates more generally and widely within and across the political apparatus.

Lukes' 'Three Dimensional' Approach

Before setting out the theoretical framework, it is important to address one of the most important previous attempts to approach power as a multi-dimensional concept: Steven Lukes' seminal work *Power: A Radical View* (Lukes 1974; 2005) [*PRV*]. Lukes was specifically engaged in what have become known as the 'community power debates' (Clegg 1989, 13). He entered into what was essentially a methodological discussion about power that had originated in Robert Dahl's behavioural conceptualisation (Dahl 1957; 1961; 1968). At the same time, however, Lukes' analysis was also a response to the debates within Marxism in the 1970s about structure and agency in which he sought to retain ideas of impersonal structures in the works of writers like Louis Althusser (2008 [1971]) and Nicos Poulantzas (1978) but without surrendering the idea of agency

that he saw as crucial to power. His approach, therefore, was to make a 'radical critique' of behaviouralist conceptualisations which provided the basis for a 'three-dimensional' approach to power.

Dahl's argument was that an exercise of power can only be said to have occurred when there is clear evidence of one actor securing interests over those of another, which is expressed in the formula: '*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do' (Dahl 1957, 202-3). Bachrach and Baratz (1970) later modified Dahl's theory, arguing that power had a 'second face' in which some (usually elite) actors exercise power in a less obviously visible or confrontational way to prevent the interests of others from being addressed, thus protecting their own position. This was the debate into which Lukes entered and took a step further. His 'radical view' argues that power has yet a 'third face' which is exercised by keeping potential issues out of politics altogether so that conflicts of interest do not even arise. This is achieved by

> shaping … [people's] perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial (Lukes 1974, 24).

The exercise of power may therefore be more indirect, identified in the *shaping* of preferences. Thus *A* 'also exercises power over *B* by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants' (Lukes 1974, 23). Lukes illustrates this by using an example of a steel company attributed with the decisive influence on 'clean air' policy in a U.S. city, despite not intervening publicly or privately, nor pronouncing upon the

subject (Lukes 1974, 42-45). In this example, local politicians fail to do anything about pollution despite it clearly being in their 'objective' interest to do so. This is because, for Lukes, interests are not entirely subjective: people's 'wants may themselves be a product of a system which works against their interests' (Ibid., 34). Therefore, although a conflict of interests is still a precondition of power's exercise, Lukes argues that it may be latent because this third dimension of power prevents conflict from becoming manifest in the first place by suppressing 'real' interests. That, for Lukes, is the genius of power's 'hidden face'.

There are many problems with the idea of 'real' interests in particular. Hay has argued that the process of ascribing 'real' interests is irredeemably a matter of perception (Hay 2002, 181) and Lukes himself, in the second edition of *PRV*, has acknowledged that the concept is problematic (Lukes 2005, 146-8). However, the real problem with Lukes' approach is that he failed to free his argument from the presuppositions of the debate initially set in train by Dahl's 'intuitive idea' about *A* affecting *B*, meaning his approach is not as radical as he claims, as Peter Morriss has argued (Morriss 2006, 128). For Lukes, the constraints under which individual agents operate may run insidiously deep and be more difficult to counter than some other approaches suggest, but power is still at its core centred on the relationship between two or more parties whose interests are opposed to one another (whether they are aware of it or not). Underlying his conception of power is the core idea that *A* affects *B* in some way (Lukes 1974, 33). Even in his own substantial criticisms of his earlier work in the second edition of *PRV*, Lukes retains the idea that power is ineluctably connected to personal responsibility (i.e. that the reason people are powerless is because they are dominated by other people). This very focus on the *exercise* of power is, for Morriss, representative of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of power and powerlessness, which might be more to do

with the way in which society itself is structured and not directly attributable to one person or another (Morriss 2002, 41-42). For Lukes, therefore, power is still a phenomenon of interests and conflict, even when interests are hidden and conflict is latent. But Lukes' moral concern with fixing responsibility means that he both confuses ideas of power as a capacity and power as domination and ignores the real effects of structural power, which 'unduly limit[s] the critical force of his theory' (Hayward 2006, 157).

In my framework, then, Dahl's work and Bachrach and Baratz's work are very influential on my analysis of the first two dimensions of power. From Lukes, I retain and employ a sense in which power operates to silence conflict and manipulate perceptions of self-interest, and the idea that power can operate simultaneously on a series of different levels. But I also depart from Lukes approach and instead move on from notions of interests, conflict and agency and open up not just one, but three additional dimensions of power that are relevant to organisational contexts: one which picks up on Weberian concerns regarding the anonymous power of rationalised organisation and the role it plays in structuring, defining and directing the actions of both the powerful and the powerless; another which identifies a constitutive power in the practices of everyday life in parties, like meetings; and a further dimension in which activity is controlled in fine detail through technologies of organisation, surveillance and normalisation. In the next section I set these out as a five-dimensional theoretical framework of power which lies at the heart of my thesis and underpins the analysis of political parties that follow.

Setting Out the Theoretical Framework

Below I set out a theoretical framework of power that will also act as a topographical 'map' allowing the reader to navigate the rest of the discussion. I have developed this framework with specific regard to the operation of power in an *organisational* context; specifically, political party organisation. It conceives of the exercise of power as operating in five distinctive 'dimensions' but it also suggests a trajectory in which power appears in increasingly subtle ways that are progressively less identifiable *as* modes of power as conventionally defined by mainstream political science. Beginning with a dimension that focuses on power as a property of agents, power in this grid becomes progressively more detached and impersonal, as it is turned upon individuals in more insidious ways. Thus it is mediated through rules and values which are subject to manipulation and control; it is inherent in the anonymous functioning of organisation; it is constitutive in shaping and producing subjectivity; it disciplines and controls bodies at a microscopic level of detail. This framework is summarised in Table 0.1 below. The table sets out a brief description of each dimension of power, its distinguishing characteristics, what kinds of questions need to be asked in order to identify it and examples of how it might be identified in a political party setting. In the rest of this section, following the table I summarise each dimension of power in more depth, in particular outlining its theoretical origins and characteristics.

Table 0.1: The Framework of Power

Dimension of Power	Description	Characteristics	Identification / Questions	Examples
Individualistic Power [*IP*]	Centred on individuals and their preferences, power is exercised when an actor is able to secure interests at the expense of those of others.	Agentic, rational, causal, decision-oriented, voluntarist, resource-dependent.	Identify key issue(s) over which there is clear conflict; examine parties involved and decision outcomes. Who was involved? Who prevailed? What resources did victors use?	Leaders rewarding and punishing through control of patronage; deploying resources to overcome a rival in conflict.
Strategic Power [*SP*]	Actions are mediated by rules and norms, power is exercised by their control and manipulation and by the ability to set and control the agenda. How rules used to gain and maintain advantage.	Conflict-oriented, subject to rules, mobilisation of bias (via norms, rules and their manipulation).	Identify unheard conflicts / grievances; use of process and rules to block or engineer defeat. Who is disfavoured? How is power perpetuated by rules and their manipulation?	Alteration of rules, manipulation of decision-making procedures, formal and informal barriers preventing access to influential positions.
Bureaucratic Control [*BC*]	Rational, impersonal, routinised power; works against agentic and strategic power by subsuming individuals *under* rules. Associated with control and obedience of an automated, mechanised kind.	Process-oriented; anonymous and routine; formal and conservative; constrains, disciplines and excludes; driven by organisational imperative.	Exploration of key party procedures: how do key party functions become formalised? How do bureaucratic responses to problems impose control and discipline? How does this impact on the freedom to act politically?	Formal centralisation and intervention; rule-based 'non-political' disciplinary mechanisms or decision-making processes with exclusionary effects; administrative jobs and routines.
Constitutive Power [*CP*]	A 'structural' force which constitutes subjectivity and reproduces power through the everyday material practices of party life.	Immanent in practices; constitutive, positive and empowering.	Examines practices and habits of party life. How do they constitute loyal political actors with appropriate skills and capacities?	Meetings as repetitive, structured rituals of communication; developing capacities through the 'career structure'; training potential representatives.
Disciplinary Control [*DC*]	Power as a micro-level phenomenon which works in detailed practices and knowledge and surveillance to discipline and control in fine detail.	A relation rather than a property; produces disciplined, effective agents through fine-grained control of conduct and normalisation.	What technical solutions are applied to problems of organised political action? How are bodies exposed to surveillance, inscribed and marked? What is the disciplinary effect of these processes?	Management of campaigning activity through timetables and audits etc.; application of marketing and presentational techniques.

The First Dimension: Individualistic Power [IP]

The first dimension of power, which I designate *Individualistic Power*, is predicated on the notion of individual actors, each with an independent and unified set of conscious preferences. It is exemplified by behaviouralist conceptions of power, most notably advanced by Robert Dahl (1957, 1961, 1968), who argued that the exercise of power should be understood as an inter-personal act. Power is exercised in this dimension when an actor is able, using whatever resources are available, to secure his or her interests at the expense of those of others. One subjected to power is forced, cajoled or otherwise convinced (through incentivisation or persuasion) to submit to that actor's interests. This form of power has seven characteristics:

1. It is agentic and rational. It is the property of a sovereign individual and it is exercised in pursuit of identifiable coherent interests translated into conscious (rational) goals.

2. It is a causal relation in that one individual (*A*) causes another (*B*) to act in a certain way. It cannot be exercised alone, but by one actor on another. It is therefore an interpersonal act.

3. It is conflict-oriented. For an exercise of this type of power to occur, the interests of one individual must prevail over those of another. In other words, '*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do' (Dahl 1957, 202-3).

4. Power is therefore decision-oriented (a conflict with a clear outcome) and thus observable, which makes it empirically available for the political scientist to identify.

5. Agents are autonomous individuals with the ability to make choices. The ability to choose whether to exercise power or not is essential to this notion. Power is therefore voluntarist in nature.

6. Power and resources which are used in its exercise should not be confused with each other. The possession and use of certain resources give some individuals the ability to get their way over others, but to equate them with power is to commit the 'vehicle fallacy' (Dowding 1996, 58).

7. Power is *episodic*. It is observable because it is absent and present at different times and thus distinguishable from non-power. Because it is possible to see that power has been exercised, it is also be possible to see that it has not been.

The Second Dimension: Strategic Power [SP]

The second dimension of power I identify in my framework draws on Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz's 'second face' of power (Bachrach and Baratz 1970) and E.E. Schattschneider's understanding of organisation as the 'mobilisation of bias' (Schattschneider 1960). This dimension of power employs these ideas as a way of recognising that agents are not entirely autonomous. Actions take place within, and are therefore mediated by, organisational contexts. In other words, individuals are subject to rules and norms of conflict. These rules and norms are not neutral, but a means by which some individuals or groups exercise power in more hidden ways. It suggests that power tends to be in the hands of those who set and control agendas and who can employ and manipulate rules and procedures in their own favour. Because it is concerned therefore with means rather than ends, I call this dimension of power

Strategic Power. It explains why some groups are able to *maintain* power and ensure that others are disfavoured. Its characteristics are as follows:

1. For power in this second dimension to be exercised, the interests of one group must prevail over another. Therefore, like Individualistic Power, it is conflict-oriented and associated with agents and identifiable interests.

2. However, this sort of power is mediated through organisation and so securing, or even expressing, those interests is subject to organisational rules and procedures.

3. The ability of an actor to secure interests is therefore dependent not just on prevailing in confrontation with others, but also on the ability to prevent others from being in a position to secure theirs at his or her expense.

4. Power is therefore dependent on the ability of actors to control or manipulate aspects of the decision-making process so as to suppress grievances, prevent conflict, or control the scope of conflict.

5. Identifying power's exercise therefore requires analysis to be focused on the structure of decision-making arenas, the formal and informal rules-of-the-game in which power is embedded and in whose favour they operate.

This second dimension of power therefore includes Bachrach and Baratz's 'second face' as an important tactic for exercising power before overt confrontation occurs, but it expands it to take into account extensive ways of using organisational structures and norms to foreclose oppositional manoeuvres. The structure and constitution of decision-making arenas, who designs them, what the rules are, who sets and controls them need to be analysed in order to identify modes of organisational advantage that can be used to institutionalise an actor's power. These mechanisms may be used in ways

that are not necessarily recognisable as a personal strategy and exercises of power are consequently more difficult to identify and challenge.

The Third Dimension: Bureaucratic Control [*BC*]

As permanent organisations with continuous administration, parties (like any other organisation) must be rationally organised and rule-governed in order to realise their goals. But the 'machine-like' functioning of bureaucracy exemplifies an impersonal, routinised form of power that subsumes individuals under rules. It is a form of power intimately associated with control and obedience, but of an automated, mechanised kind. This is the kind of bureaucratic power that Max Weber (1948; 1978) and his followers have described in considerable detail.

It is important to distinguish this third dimension of power, which I describe as *Bureaucratic Control* from the power associated with agents or strategy. Whilst Strategic Power is a means by which powerful actors can use organisation and thus *act* to secure and maintain their own position, Bureaucratic Control (once set in train) closes off such possibilities. It is about how decisions (and problems) become structured and determined by the relentless routines and imperatives of bureaucracy. It has the following characteristics:

1. Power is not a matter of conflict, but of process. It is exercised anonymously in the functions and routines of organisation (e.g. through disciplinary procedures, decision-making processes).

2. Power is unequal, constraining all but disadvantaging some more than others.

3. Power is conservative. It perpetuates inequality by giving considerable unequal power to elites whilst suppressing the ability for radical or novel positions to be advanced.

4. It is also, therefore, exclusionary, ruling out certain voices, ideas and interventions (often as a by-product of its procedures and routines).

5. Power stifles and restricts agency. Organisational imperatives, once set in train, take precedence over and overwhelm individual action.

The Fourth Dimension: Constitutive Power [*CP*]

While a certain kind of power closes off agency and constrains individuals, another is *constitutive* of them. The fourth dimension of power directs attention towards the party not at the level of agents or institutions, nor as a bureaucratic process, but rather as a means by which a 'dominant ideology' is reproduced and reinforced. This kind of power operates as a 'structural' force that shapes and produces the sort of subjectivity that is congenial to a certain project. In this context, it affects the party activist's sense of him or herself *as* such. This dimension draws on a particular aspect of Louis Althusser's work; in particular, *On Ideology* (Althusser 2008 [1971]), in which he argues that ideology is not just about ideas but also concerns everyday material rituals and practices. Through these the *status quo* is reproduced because it is embedded in familiar daily activities (this is an idea also taken up by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu regarding the habits and gestures sedimented in a bodily 'habitus'). Its characteristics are as follows:

1. Constitutive Power is immanent in conduct and patterns of behaviour in the everyday material practices of party life, in which subjectivities – different kinds of political actor – are constituted and the party structure is reproduced.

2. It is *positive* and *constitutive*. It *empowers* individuals, endowing them with skills and capacities to act within its scheme, reinforcing and reproducing the party structure but also acting as a subtle form of control.

Rituals and practices, including the performance of roles and shared repertoires, have ideology embedded in them which they reproduce at the level of everyday life in terms of what is familiar, taken for granted and repeated. Such rituals and repetitions are ideological in the sense, too, of reproducing the status quo; like Bureaucratic Control, this mode of power also therefore tends to privilege conservative forces by sedimenting 'the way things are done' beneath a level where they are reflected on or challenged. As far as I am aware, political parties have not previously been looked at from this particular point of view; yet, as my analysis shows, this can be an important way in which a party resists change and excludes mavericks.

The Fifth Dimension: Disciplinary Control [DC]

In the first four dimensions I have set out, power becomes increasingly pervasive yet invisible. It becomes gradually more anonymous and subtle as it moves away from overt confrontation between specific actors and towards a constitutive kind of empowerment. Michel Foucault, however, offers a vision of power that, whilst having some similarities with Althusser's ideas and, I will argue, some overlap with Weber's too, operates quite differently from the other dimensions of power. It is not a stable or fixed property of *any* kind (whether of individuals, organisation or structure), or

possessed according to institutional roles. Instead, it should be understood as a kind of 'strategic force' that flows freely and tactically (in this respect it is not unlike Machiavelli's view of power as a continuous negotiation by diverse actors within a complex and shifting field of forces). In works like *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *Power/Knowledge* (1980), power is construed as a complex field of forces where micro-powers work directly to constitute bodies and subjectivities at the quotidian level. It emerges in day-to-day relations, in specific detailed practices, in often banal events and routines. Discipline for Foucault develops in an *ad hoc* way in response to unpredictable exigencies, and operates in the minutiae of relations and behaviour in ways that might not ordinarily be noticed as power. Strictly speaking, what is being referred to here is not power as such, but power *relations*. Its characteristics are as follows:

1. Power produces disciplined actors who are effective and 'empowered' through detailed techniques and strategies of control, where it develops some capacities and dampens others.

2. Disciplinary strategies include the application of technical knowledge to problems of organising resources of time, space and people, for example in the coordination of a local election campaign.

3. The site and focus of power is the body and its conduct, which is trained and surveyed at a micro-level and its gestures and appearance carefully articulated and configured in accordance with the disciplinary strategies highlighted above.

4. Disciplinary power 'normalises' agents through surveillance, judgement, ranking and classification; because actors believe they are visible all the time,

they adjust their behaviour accordingly, meaning that discipline is conducted at a detailed level by subjects themselves upon themselves.

Having summarised the five dimensions of power in my framework, I will look more closely at how it should be used to research power in parties. However, before doing so, scholars of parties may be aware of some of the resonances aspects of the framework have with varieties of 'new institutionalism'. Given that institutionalism is an approach commonly applied to the study of parties and political institutions of all kinds, it is important to briefly address these theories.

Institutionalism and Power

Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor point out that the three 'new institutionalisms', especially the 'historical' and 'sociological' varieties (the third being 'rational choice' institutionalism), were (like Bachrach and Baratz's and Lukes' approaches to power) developed to some extent in response to behaviouralism. These independent but linked theories were, and remain, a means of explaining in different ways institutions and their relationship with behaviour and how institutions originate and change (Hall and Taylor 1996, 936). All institutionalists, 'see institutions as rules that structure behaviour' (Steinmo 2008, 126) and this has echoes of power in it. Indeed, they argue that 'all institutional studies have a direct bearing on power relations' and can be said in some way to be an attempt to explicate a multi-dimensional approach to power (Hall and Taylor 1996, 940-1). The emphasis, for example, in historical institutionalism on the effect of the standard operating procedures of a bureaucracy, on the asymmetries of power associated with institutions and the emphasis on path dependence that gives rise to unintended consequences (Ibid., 938) echo concerns addressed by Strategic Power

and Bureaucratic Control. Sociological institutionalism is more concerned with the role institutions play in framing how people see the world. According to this view, institutions transmit cultural practices, informal symbols, and scripts through habitual action (Steinmo 2008, 126-7). This has strong resonances with Constitutive Power, arguing that although people may be purposive or goal-oriented, rational action is itself socially constituted (Hall and Taylor 1996, 947-9).

Teresa Kulawik has more recently proposed a further development which integrates institutionalism and discursive analysis from a feminist viewpoint (Kulawik 2006, 263). She takes the view that institutions are 'constituted by discursive struggles and can be understood as sedimented discourses' (Ibid., 268). They should not be understood as structures imposed on political actors from without as much as 'constructs internal to actors which they change and create' (Ibid., 268). In other words, an institution is a process which actors perform and, in doing so produce identities. It is a process that demonstrates some similarities with Disciplinary Control since, according to Louise Chappell, it is a highly gendered process which is dominated by a masculinist 'logic of appropriateness' (Chappell 2006, 227) which shapes acceptable behavioural norms and identities.

However, despite these important resonances and echoes, my dimensions of power are performing a different task from these accounts of institutionalism. Whilst they focus in differing ways on rules and processes that explain the development of institutions and their relationship to behaviour, my objective is to understand how power operates within a context like a political party. Whilst rules and processes are in some sense constitutive of some of these dimensions of power (especially Strategic Power and

Bureaucratic Control), they are of interest to this thesis for what they constitute rather than for themselves. Nonetheless, I acknowledge the importance that these approaches can play in understanding political parties in general.

Using the Framework to Research Power: Strategies of Investigation

The five dimensions of power I have described comprise the framework of power I find operative within political parties. The framework acts as a topographical map in which power's contours and terrain can be explored. It provides a theoretical basis for tracing the different dimensional attributes of power I have identified through exploration of the party's activities, rules, functions and practices. The strategies with which I will investigate each of these dimensions of power will differ because the assumptions underlying a particular concept of power also dictate how that form of power is to be identified and located. Power ranges from the relatively straightforward and visible to the more obscured, and so the kinds of questions that need to be asked in order to identify it vary too.

The first dimension of power is relatively simple to investigate. *Individualistic Power* is associated with a behaviouralist approach that attempts to apply the observational methods of natural science to social and political phenomena. It requires the identification of a key issue over which there is a clear conflict of interest. From here, the parties involved can be examined and the decision outcomes identified. Power can be attributed by asking who prevailed and what resources they used to do so. An obvious example of this would be how leaders reward and punish through control of patronage.

The approach to uncovering *Strategic Power*, on the other hand, requires a deeper analysis of decisions by accumulating a list of who participates in decisions both openly and behind the scenes and by studying the rules-of-the-game and decision-making processes themselves. The purpose of this is to understand the prevailing mobilisation of bias that is reflected in them (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 47-48). This clearly involves more than simply taking decisions at, say, a party conference at face value. The analyst needs to understand the formal and informal *context* in which decisions are made. Following that, there are three routes that may be followed: the first is to identify conflicts or grievances that for one reason or another have been excluded or hidden from official channels or public view; the second is to try and identify how processes and rules have been used or altered either to deny all or some of those grievances an airing or to engineer their defeat; a third looks to identify where covert bargaining and negotiation have been used to prevent defeat or secure positions. The object here is to identify who has been put at a disadvantage and which voices fail to be heard in public arenas. In other words, how is power perpetuated by the norms and rules of decision-making and their manipulation? Examples include changing procedures to exclude certain voices, or using rules like referencing back, and compositing.

The investigation of *Bureaucratic Control* is associated with a Weberian organisational analysis. It means exploring a more impersonal, routinised power and adjusting the focus of attention towards the exploration of key party procedures and how formal rationality takes over the functions for which they were designed. The kinds of questions that will be helpful in guiding investigation include: how do key party functions, such as discipline and policy-making, become proceduralised and formalised? How does this impact on the freedom to act and take properly political (as

opposed to technical) decisions? How do bureaucratic responses to problems impose formally rational control and discipline?

The starting point for exploring *Constitutive Power* is the regular, repeated practices of party life, such as regular party meetings, practices of accountability and policy-making. These can all be described as rule-based and repetitive actions and structured rituals in which ideology is embedded, and through which subjectivities are formed and communicated. Analysis is concerned with how, through these rituals and practices, certain social and political ideals are transmitted, and how they shape beliefs and political subjectivities. This take on power is more abstract and associated with ideological critique, being somewhat less amenable to empirical investigation than other approaches.

Finally, to identify power as *Disciplinary Control*, the focus of analysis shifts again, this time to the micro-level technical problems of political organisation. Disciplinary power is traced by examining the techniques and knowledges applied to everyday, often mundane, problems.   What is their disciplinary effect; how do they create appropriately empowered subjects? It means examining how political actors are trained, surveyed and examined down to very fine detail. It includes things like how style of behaviour, gestures, dress, performances, especially in terms of ethnicity and gender, are adjusted. Thus individuals become 'normalised' and disciplined subjects of power.   This focus on detail requires a genealogical approach which eschews the idea of grand schemes or motive forces and focuses on the mundane, yet myriad and complex points at which power emerges.   Examples of where investigation should be focused include the regulation of activity through timetables and monitoring, or guidance on how to present oneself in public or on television.

Additional Methodological Issues: Analysing Empirical Data

As I have already mentioned in setting out the core thesis, I am not only concerned with advancing the theoretical claims, but with testing them. Following the development of the initial five-dimensional framework, a second stage of my research was to collect and analyse empirical data in order to test it (by data I do not mean a set or series of quantitative items, but refer instead to a 'body of experience' (Holliday 2002, 69)). The data has been gathered from three main sources: interviews, archival research, and biographical and contemporary accounts. Conducting data analysis is a process of making 'sense' of this body of experience: for example, by organising and sifting interview transcripts and notes and allowing common themes and patterns to emerge from the data, but also by examining the sub-texts of interviews through the interpretation of actions and performances, events, asides in interviews and so on. By use of coding techniques (Ryan and Bernard 2003), themes derived from the interviews were drawn together and used to elicit and interpret common experiences of power among activists and also among party elites. This approach is thus used as a kind of heuristic with which to enhance and strengthen the theoretical framework. The data gathered from these sources has also provided me with material and evidence to support and illustrate my theoretical claims.

Approach to Interviews

My approach to interviews lies between what Silverman (2001) calls an 'emotionalist' and a 'constructionist' one. That is, I accept that an interview is a unique situation in which a narrative and its meaning are constructed between interviewer and interviewee, whilst at the same time arguing that the experiences of the interviewee have meaning for him or her and require understanding and interpretation by the interviewer. In short, it

is a process in which questions are framed (consciously or otherwise) and in which answers are constructed around the narrative of the respondent, but within an overall framework set by the interviewer. In this context, it is the experience and the respondent's memory of it that I wish to examine. Two main types of interviews were carried out with two sets of subjects:

1. Extensive, detailed interviews with ten former party activists (of whom I initially knew very little). With these subjects, I conducted semi-structured interviews centred on general themes, which were designed to elicit stories of their experiences of party life. Where I did have some biographical information I prompted them. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

2. Shorter, more focused interviews with ten MPs or former MPs and three party officials of whom I had a great deal more advance knowledge. These interviews were also semi-structured but focused around specific events they were or may have been witness to. Interviews were not recorded but extensive detailed notes were taken.

The purpose of the interviews was to explore and test the five dimensions of power in my theoretical framework (as detailed in the grid below), thus the basic interview schedule [see Appendices] was built around these themes. I wanted to find out how effective it is to approach political parties from the perspective of these five interlocking modes of power by using them to identify the workings of power within the Labour Party. The first and second types of power, as I have suggested, are reasonably straightforward to identify in this way. The other three dimensions, however, do not so easily lend themselves to identification by such methods, at least not directly. The object here, then, was to look for clues and patterns that are then subjected to

interpretive work rather than any 'hard evidence'. In any case, the purpose of the interviews was not to produce 'scientific' evidence to prove or refute a conjecture, so much as to locate and identify empirical information that can shed further light on the theory of power in political parties that I have advanced. Thus a central function of the analysis of the interview data was the interpretation of experience in the light of my framework of power.

Interview subjects were not asked directly about power, since I wanted to avoid standard narratives about the concept. I also wanted as far as possible to circumvent the dangers associated with framing questions, and therefore their answers, in those particular terms. Themes and evidence about the exercise and operation of power would emerge from interviewees' own interpretation of situations, the stories they told, the experiences they recounted and opinions they expressed. For ease of identification, the quotation of interview material is indicated in the text by the use of italics.

Structure of the Thesis

The rest of this thesis is divided into seven chapters. In the first, I conduct a review of some of the key literature on political parties. The purpose of this is not to cover everything ever written on the subject. Such an undertaking would be impossible. Instead, I review some of the most influential texts on political parties using the five-dimensional framework of power I have set out in this introductory chapter; in so doing I draw out the key assumptions made about power in the literature and identify short-comings and lacunae in it. As well as establishing what the literature actually *says*, or at least implies, about power, I also draw attention to what it does *not* say. This then sets

the scene for the following five chapters, each of which is dedicated to one of the dimensions of power in the framework.

In each chapter, beginning with Individualistic Power, I conduct four tasks. Firstly, to discuss the key attributes or ingredients of that particular dimension (its component parts if you will) and where I have derived them from (it is important to be aware of the distinction between ontological and methodological concerns here) and highlight what is particularly important and useful in it as far as this thesis is concerned. Secondly, I examine more closely how it actually works: in what locations and functions of parties can it be identified; in what scenarios and situations? In answering these questions I also identify what further kinds of questions should be asked when seeking to identify the dimension of power in question, and point to work in which it may explicitly or implicitly have been used before. Thirdly, I test the dimension's explanatory scope by providing examples of it in operation. For each case I set out a brief description and then apply each of the key attributes as succinctly as possible. Then a brief analysis is conducted of its strengths and weaknesses as part of the framework of power, in other words, what it can do and cannot do. Finally, I will draw some interim conclusions and demonstrate how the aims of the chapter have been achieved. In the final, concluding chapter I demonstrate how I have achieved what I have set out to do and reflect back on my overall approach, its strengths and weaknesses. The main task of this chapter, however, is to demonstrate in detail how the framework supports the thesis, how it meets the shortcomings and gaps identified in the review and its implications for wider debates about power in parties and other contexts.

One: **Power in the Party Literature**

I have proposed that power should be understood in the context of party organisation as operating in five different 'dimensions' which I set out in the previous chapter and in the tabular representation of the framework [*Table 0.1*]. This framework can be used as a 'map' with which to navigate the argument that runs through this thesis: that power is a multi-dimensional concept that operates and is exercised in different ways and different levels at the same time. Power may be individualistic, a property of individual agents deployed in the pursuit of individual interests [*Individualistic Power*]; it may be mediated through rules and norms which are subject to strategic manipulation and control by powerful actors [*Strategic Power*]; it is an inherent property of the anonymous functioning of organisation that disciplines, excludes and controls [*Bureaucratic Control*]; it is constitutive, shaping and producing subjectivity through day-to-day rituals and practices [*Constitutive Power*]; it disciplines and controls bodies at a microscopic level of detail [*Disciplinary Control*]. I have also argued that this framework is necessary because power as it is understood in the context of the political party literature is under-theorised. It is incumbent upon me to demonstrate this last claim, and this is the key task of this chapter.

Overview

This chapter consists of an analysis of the key theoretical texts on parties. They have been selected on the basis of their influence on the study of political parties as organisations. Political scientists will therefore recognise the selection as something of a 'roll-call' of seminal texts on parties, which have 'had a profound impact on how political scientists talk about these institutions' (Ware 1996, 8). Some that scholars

might expect to see in such a roll-call, like Kirchheimer (1966) and Sartori (1976) are not included here because my specific concern is with those studies that have particularly useful things to say about the way in which parties are *organised*. My choice of literature is also guided in part by which contributions include decisive or distinctive approaches (both implicit and explicit) to the specific issue of how power operates within parties. Five authors in particular concern me here: the first is Robert Michels (1962 [1915]), whose study of the oligarchal tendencies of party organisation has never quite lost its significance to the academic study of parties; the second, Maurice Duverger (1959), whose fleshing out of the 'mass party' as an ideal-type is now almost mythical, spawned a still-ongoing project charting the development of party organisational types; the third, Angelo Panebianco (1988), developed a detailed model of a new type of party appearing in the late twentieth century which he dubbed the 'electoral-professional party'; the fourth (and in fact a pair), Katz and Mair (1995) have argued that the progression of party types has reached a new apogee with the appearance of the 'cartel party', elitist and dislocated from grass-roots activists and the population at large. These first four authors are all especially significant because they are amongst the main texts that are cited and used to structure and frame the study of party organisation in many detailed empirical studies (see, for example, Scarrow 1996, Chapter 1; Wolinetz 1998; Luther and Müller-Rommel 2002, 6; Montero and Gunther 2002; Hloušek and Kopeček 2010) to introductory texts for students (such as Webb 2000a, 152-154; Heffernan 2003, 125-134; Budge et al 2007, 373; Driver 2011, Chapter 2).

The fifth author on my list, von Beyme (1985), is most famous for his classification of parties into different *Familles Spirituelles* or ideological types. However, he also has distinctive things to say about party organisation and in particular about the role, loyalty

and discipline of members (von Beyme 1985, Chapter Three). In conjunction with the specific literature on party discipline, which addresses some similar concerns, this fills a gap in which reasons why voluntary members are willing to subordinate themselves to party discipline are addressed.

These five key authors have been chosen for three overlapping reasons: firstly, because of the great influence they have had (and still have) over research on parties and party organisation; secondly, because they are texts that have become a part of the 'firmament' that are often paid respect but rarely subject to close scrutiny, so they merit some re-examination; thirdly, because they are all texts that have become famous for one particular line of argument (e.g. the proposal of a certain party type), but they have been neglected for what else they might contribute to the understanding of parties. In different ways, they each say something directly or indirectly about how power operates in parties and this is where my particular focus will be, rather than what they say about party typology or development as such. My analysis reveals that each takes a more or less explicit understanding of power which I elicit and reflect upon below. But it also shows that each of these accounts of political parties is deficient in foregrounding some (and often just one) modes of power while neglecting others. A lot of this literature, explicitly or implicitly, applies political theory from elsewhere to parties, including elite theory, rational choice and cultural theories, for example. Part of my task here is to shed light on this through the lens of my five-dimensional framework of power, and test the validity of these theories as a means of exploring power in political parties.

The chapter deals with each on a broadly chronological basis. I begin with Michels, who wrote at the beginning of the twentieth century, because his is a foundational text in the study of political parties. I then consider Duverger, Panebianco and Katz and

Mair in that order because they represent the trajectory of the orthodox evolutionary approach to party organisational development (Koole 1996, 519). I deal with von Beyme outside of this chronology however because he is not normally included in this 'progression' of party types and I examine his work in conjunction with a specialist (and mostly quite recent) literature on party discipline. Von Beyme raises particular issues about power in relation to party loyalty and how it operates in different dimensions at different levels of the party which is reflected in this specific literature.

As I discuss each text, I draw out the main assumptions and assertions about power underlying them, and then analyse them in the light of my framework of power. I will argue that, although there are a range of helpful lessons that can be drawn about power from these texts, the concept of power in the context of political parties remains theoretically under-developed in its own right. This can be remedied by the application of the multi-dimensional framework I have proposed. Applying this framework to a real-world case, drawn from original research, will provide a unique perspective on the exercise of power in political parties in all its complexity.

Michels and the Iron Law of Oligarchy

One of the most influential theorists of political parties has been, and remains, Robert Michels. His book, *Political Parties* was first published in 1911 (and in English in 1915) and his theory of the Iron Law of Oligarchy still resonates strongly today. Michels was strongly influenced by Max Weber and the classical elite theory of Gaetano Mosca (whom he encountered in Turin) and Vilfredo Pareto. These three intellectual associations encouraged his interest in political elites and underlined a

growing disenchantment with his syndicalist beliefs, which informed his most important piece of work.

In this work, *Political Parties* (1962 [1915]), Michels recognised the emancipatory potential of organisation. Democracy and liberation is, he argues, impossible without it. If a democratic political party is to achieve its aims, it must be successful in winning power and maintaining it. This is unlikely without efficient organisation: indeed, Michels argued that it is absolutely necessary; it is 'the weapon of the weak in their struggle with the strong' (Michels 1962 [1915], 61) and 'an absolutely essential condition for the political struggle of the masses' (Ibid, 62). It is also inevitable, he said: the sheer number of tasks involved in running a successful democratic political party necessarily entails a strong bureaucracy. However, at the same time, the tragic logic of organisation is that it is the means by which the perpetual subjugation of the weak is guaranteed. Power 'is always conservative' Michels argued (Ibid., 333), and the product of organisation is always an elite, an oligarchy, concerned only with the perpetuation of its own position. For Michels, this was not a product of individual ambition, but structural. Oligarchy was a tendency inherent in organisation itself, rather than a product of who controls or originates it. Organisation is 'the source from which the conservative currents flow over the plain of democracy' (Ibid., 62); power in organisational terms 'proceeds in a natural cycle: issuing from the people, it ends by raising itself above the people' (Ibid., 75). For Michels, the fact that this tendency towards oligarchy has a hold over even the most democratic or radical political parties gives it the status of an 'Iron Law', because

> the appearance of oligarchal phenomena in the very bosom of the
> revolutionary parties is a conclusive proof of the existence of

immanent oligarchal tendencies in every kind of human organisation

which strives for the attainment of definite ends (Michels 1962 [1915],

50).

The key determinants underlying this process are, according to Michels, to be found in the interaction of the five elements inherent in the pursuit of power in democracies. Firstly, the mass party needs to develop a wide base of popular support which lends it legitimacy and sources of finance. This is particularly crucial, Michels recognised, for emancipatory and radical parties (like early socialist parties) since it is less likely (and perhaps less desirable) that they would benefit from access to wealthy patronage. Secondly, to play the game of democratic politics, the political party needs to be 'a fighting organisation … and must as such conform to the laws of tactics' (Ibid., 78). Consulting the rank and file over every question would be too slow and cumbersome process: a fighting organisation needs a hierarchical structure in order that it can respond speedily to the 'problems of the hour'. Democracy, Michels argues, is 'utterly incompatible with strategic promptness' (Ibid., 79). Thirdly, the party organisation is concerned with the goal of controlling of government, an even larger bureaucratic machine: to do so it needs to 'secure a sufficiently vast and solid organisation in order to triumph over the organisation of the state' (Ibid., 335). The party therefore needs to strengthen and extend its position and bureaucratic organisation. Fourthly, efficient administration requires the professionalisation and technical specialisation of roles. A bureaucratic division of labour means party experts have access to knowledge the rank and file find hard to challenge, and, through training, develop skills ordinary members do not have. As the party organisation grows and takes on more functions, rank and file members have to cede ever more authority to trained, salaried officials who have the requisite skills and capacities to give the job their full attention. Fifthly, in order control

and direct the growing bureaucracy, a (strong) professional leadership appointed by the membership of the party is needed. Though democratic in intent, the appearance of professional, specialist leadership at the head of a large bureaucratic political party is 'the beginning of the end' for democracy (Ibid., 73). It sets in train a dislocation between the directing minority and the ordinary member. The former becomes 'indispensable' (Ibid., 109-111) which begins to undermine the democratic control by the latter. Inequalities of power therefore grow between those at the top and the rest.

Michels' analysis, therefore, was that for mass parties of the working class, the development of bureaucratic organisation went hand-in-glove with the pursuit and the maintenance of power. At the same time, he argued, the very pursuit of its goals by such means makes it unlikely that its emancipatory purpose will ever be achieved because the dominance of an oligarchy is an inevitable outcome of the structural logic of organisation. The appearance of a professional, technocratic (and therefore increasingly middle-class) leadership elite at the head of a large bureaucracy means that the party becomes ever more remote from the concerns of working people: their chief concern becomes the defence and perpetuation of their own position in the party and elevation to government. The party bureaucrats meanwhile, as professionals themselves, are (like the leaders) dependent upon the party machine for their living. They are thus quite naturally inclined to be loyal to the organisation itself and its leadership rather than those it was meant to serve. Thus they become more interested in maintaining the status quo than in providing radical alternatives. The inherent conservatism that is produced by this process undermines freedom and radicalism and 'mechanism becomes an end in itself' (Ibid., 190). Bureaucracy thus reinforces the power of leaders at the expense of the rank-and-file (and the wider population): a process which is 'directly proportional with the extension of the organisation' (Ibid.,

71). This is why for Michels bureaucracy 'is the sworn enemy of individual liberty, and of all bold initiative in matters of internal policy' (Ibid., 191).

The Importance of Michels and Criticisms

Michels' theory, as I have mentioned above, is a foundational text on political parties and has been extremely influential in the century since it has been written. In his introduction to the Free Press edition, Seymour Lipset described it as 'one of the twentieth century's most influential books … a classic of Social Science' (Lipset 1962, 20). The Iron Law of Oligarchy 'has been absorbed by modern social science, even distinguished as a classic contribution, and it requires no detailed elaboration' (Scaff 1981, 1280). Indeed, it is not hard to find works on political parties that refer to the importance of Michels' arguments (see for example: Duverger 1959; Sartori 1976, 71; Minkin 1978, 4-5; Panebianco 1988; Shaw 1988; Scarrow 1996; Wolinetz 1988, 6; Müller and Strøm 1999), and there are others on which his ideas have been influential without explicit acknowledgement. At the very least it is regarded as a necessary text to engage with, even when its claims are treated with scepticism, as they often have been. Hands (1971), for example, has criticised Michels strongly for failing adequately to define fundamental terms like 'democracy', 'oligarchy' and 'organisation' or use them in a consistent manner. However, Michels understanding of 'democracy' was strongly influenced by his syndicalist beliefs at the time rather than liberalism, and his criticism of the German Social Democratic Party arose from scepticism as to its commitment to a socialist (and in particular syndicalist) transformation (Hands 1971, 169). Medding (1970) criticised his work for ignoring 'significant and fundamental counter-tendencies' in organisations which placed limitations on the power of leaders (Medding 1970, 1-2) which Michels seems not to recognise, something which even his most celebrated

adherents do not fully concur with. Robert McKenzie (1955), for example, in his famous study *British Political Parties*, argued that although 'there is ample evidence' of the oligarchal tendencies of party organisation, it is 'certainly not an "iron" law': parties may be content to be led, but leaders 'must carry their followers' and thus 'take into account the clearly defined currents of opinion within their party' (McKenzie 1955, 587). Kavanagh (1998) has made a similar argument suggesting that organisation does not inevitably move in one direction. In the years following McKenzie's observations that both Labour and Conservatives displayed similar oligarchal tendencies, Kavanagh argued that for Labour in the 1970s and 80s and the Conservatives in the 1990s, the trend reversed and the parties if anything became less oligarchal in these periods, although the Labour Party moved back in an elitist direction after 1983 in the search for votes (Kavanagh 1998, 29-30, 35).

Analysis

Despite the criticisms and caveats, Michels work remains an important one and therefore it is valuable to consider more directly his underlying understanding of power. For Michels power is structural: it has its own logic and it is elitist. He argues that even when intentions are democratic, the structural logic of organisation drives it towards oligarchy. In this respect his ideas clearly share common ground with Max Weber's. Indeed, not only does Michels' theory fit 'within the framework of Weberian social science' (Scaff 1981, 1274), the idea for the study was initially suggested by Weber (Ibid., 1274). Weber himself argued that parties are always oriented towards the acquisition of power (Weber 1948 [CSP], 194-5), and since in modern rational societies this means control of the bureaucracy, parties seeking to dominate the state, must also be bureaucratic organisations. Furthermore, parties in mass-franchise democratic

systems by necessity must organise on a grand scale in the pursuit of electoral victory (Weber 1948 [PV], 102). The political party is thus a locus of *organised domination* which 'calls for continuous administration [and] requires that human conduct be conditioned to obedience towards those masters who claim to be the bearers of legitimate power' (Ibid., 80). Even in democratic systems, then, parties are often organised in authoritarian fashion (Weber 1948 [CSP], 194-5). Scaff argues that Weber saw this as a more positive development than Michels did, since it facilitated the integration of socialist parties in particular into the established system of government. But Michels took a more 'ethical' approach to Weber's 'scientific' sociology (Scaff 1981, 1270): where Weber was concerned with tracing the conditions of legitimate domination, Michels was specifically troubled by what he saw as the diminishing prospects for democracy and socialist transformation.

That aside, there is a common understanding of power between Weber and Michels which has some relevance for my thesis. There are assumptions about power in Michels' work that clearly resembles Bureaucratic Control in that the substantively rational goals of parties (e.g. the emancipation of the working class) become overwhelmed in the very pursuit of them. Bureaucratic organisation grows in response to the need to organise campaigns and prepare for government. As it grows, the logic of organisation becomes increasingly powerful; constraining and disciplining political actors, particularly the rank-and-file, whilst by-passing or excluding others from the political process altogether. But although this is an important part of Michels' thesis, he focuses less on the controlling power that bureaucratic logic exerts over individuals, than on the distance it engenders between technically and socially superior leaders and bureaucrats on the one hand, and rank-and-file members on the other. Members are left, quite simply, with no power at all. They appear to have been cut adrift. This poses a

question: why do they put up with it? Parties are, after all, voluntary organisations and no one is compelled to remain a member. It may be that they want socialism to win and are prepared to submit to the logic of organisation in order to ensure it. However, in my view, this is where Michels' argument is weakest. He attributes the willing subjection of party members to such a regime to a 'need' for direction and guidance (Michels 1962 [1915], 88), a 'gratitude' for the sacrifice and service of leaders (Ibid., 92), and even a 'cult of veneration' for leadership on the part of the masses that borders on worship (Michels 1962 [1915], 93-6). Whilst this reflects Michels' status as an elite theorist alongside others like Mosca and Pareto, Scaff quite rightly dismisses such assertions as 'crude psychological reductionism' (Scaff 1981, 1280), of a kind that Weber would certainly never endorse. It is profoundly unsatisfactory and reveals a hole at the centre of Michels' assumptions about power. It shows that although he understands organisational power, he does not properly address complicity to it. The framework I have set out addresses and plugs that gap.

Duverger and the 'Intensification' of Power

Duverger's work *Political Parties* (1959) is another highly influential text in the study of political parties. This work is another that has been fully absorbed into the discipline: his characterisation of the mass party is the foundation on which many schemata of parties (Wolinetz 2002, 139-40), studies of party change (Harmel 2002, 119), and analyses of their rise and decline (Scarrow 2000) have been built. Indeed, Scarrow has argued that his work has become such a powerful mythology that it has obstructed a proper empirical analysis of parties (Ibid., 92-99).

Of more interest to me, however, is what Duverger has to say about power. Duverger broadly agrees with Michels' analysis that the growth of organisational power in parties is a rational outcome of democratic politics, and that the result is oligarchy. However, he produces a more sophisticated response to the question of why members appear to willingly subject themselves to this power. There are two main reasons that can be drawn from his discussion of the growth of power in parties (Duverger 1959 169-177): the first of these is a cultural explanation; the second is due to what he describes as a more subtle *intensification* of power that comes with the growth of the organisation.

1. Cultural Explanations of Power

Duverger argues that the first mass parties were working class and socialist parties and the working class are 'by their very nature given to communal institutions and discipline' (Ibid., 170). Indeed, he continues, in working-class culture the distinction between freedom and discipline has become meaningless because freedom has been a *collective* conquest. As far as Duverger is concerned, 'no serious social reform took place until the proletariat discovered the weapon of its liberation: common action' (Ibid., 170). Numbers are important because it is numbers that make discipline a necessary feature of mass political parties but, writes Duverger, 'the masses have been liberated *not* by numbers but by *discipline*' (Ibid., 170; emphasis added) which has, according to Duverger, its origins in a 'natural tendency' and 'mental attitude' (Ibid., 171).

This is problematic because it ascribes an essential characteristic to the working classes which, while not exactly accidental, seems more likely to be an outcome of necessity. One may choose to accept Duverger's argument that disciplined behaviour was part of working class culture, but his implication that it is an innate quality ignores the

argument that the only power the working class *had* in early twentieth-century Europe was numbers and organisation and thus it was a practical and rational response to inequality in a system which granted them few rights and no voice *as* a class. Indeed, he argues that organisation is 'contagious' and spreads to the middle class parties too (Ibid., 25) in response to the superior organisation of the working class parties, suggesting a certain amount expediency rather than innate class characteristics.

2. Organisational Growth and the Intensification of Power

A more promising explanation from the point of view of this thesis comes from another line of Duverger's argument: that power in political parties *intensifies* as the organisation grows and develops. This argument stresses the mechanical or technical reasons for power's growth, which is more closely aligned with Michels. The creation of socialist parties saw a strengthening of disciplinary power because there were large numbers of people to be organised. Furthermore, the 'intensity of power is necessarily proportional to the number of those who are subject to it' (Ibid., 170). Duverger argues that the problem of power as such does not arise in small groups, but it becomes vital in mass parties. Of course, the power of leaders in large organisations is strengthened through techniques of persuasion (e.g. appeals to unity) or coercion, including the use of quasi-judicial mechanisms (i.e. disciplinary committees) and coherent systems of sanctions (Ibid., 173-4). Bureaucratic responses to potential resistance, such as the establishment of new rules and structures, are also a means by which leaders might deploy the logic of organisation to obtain obedience.

However, as political parties grow and become mass organisations, Duverger argues that power intensifies even further than Michels envisaged (Ibid., 169):

ultimate perfection is achieved and the authority of leaders finds its

most certain foundation when *obedience becomes automatic*: this

anaesthesia of discipline supposes a very developed technique of

contact with the masses. By a series of perpetual actions and

reactions, closely intermingled, the centre knows in detail the positions

and influences at the base and at the same time modifies its tactics

accordingly (Ibid., 176).

As a result, it becomes hard to discern any obvious division of command and control.

There is, rather, a dialectic of listening and speaking, one building on and reinforcing

the other. The party adapts subtly to the people, adapting to their language and modes

of thought. In the end

[o]ne cannot really say either that the centre follows the base or that

the base follows the centre. Party leadership listens to the masses and

speaks to them at the same time, its speech being modelled perpetually

on what it hears (Ibid., 176).

According to Duverger, then, while the party is telling its members what they want to

hear, at the same time it is subtly shaping their response. This is a very effective means

of exercising power because it is barely noticed by those subject to it. Eventually, they

can no longer distinguish between their own thoughts and the party's voice; the more

this is the case, the less they are likely to resist it:

Thus it proceeds by light touches, by infinitely supple pressure: but the

less its influence gives offence to those who are subjected to it, and the

better it corresponds to their thought, the more profound and lasting it

is (Ibid., 176).

The masses are thus effectively implicated in their own subjection without really being aware of it. Obedience becomes automatic because it is embedded in the desires and behaviour of the members, where it is fostered by a more subtle, integrated relationship between them, the organisation and leaders than analyses of structural bureaucratic logics had recognised:

> Without being aware of it the mass is thus slowly orientated, directed,
> and transformed. Its attitude derives less from itself, from its own
> spontaneity, but from the initiative of the leaders: it still thinks it has
> freedom of choice, whereas it is more and more obedient. It can no
> longer distinguish between what is its own and what is whispered to it.
> Progressively there is more and more whispering but the mass is less
> and less conscious of it (Ibid., 176-177).

Analysis

In the passage quoted above, Duverger seems to point towards a more subtle form of power which is directed towards the obedience of party members. It is more satisfactory than both Michels' suggestion that followers follow because they are 'incompetent' or 'weak', and Duverger's argument that innate cultural characteristics make one class more likely to be 'obedient' than another. Firstly, what he describes is a *process*: one that moulds and shapes subjectivities. Secondly, it is continuous: it is not an episodic series of commands by leaders to which members respond, but is more akin to an ongoing 'state-of-affairs'. Thirdly, although it is hierarchical (the mass is being

directed by leadership initiative), it is not unidirectional: there is an element of reciprocation, or a back-and-forth between the 'centre' and the 'base' in which the former subtly adapts itself to the latter even as it influences and redirects it. Fourthly, it is incredibly subtle: the subjects of this power are no longer aware of being so. Rather than subject to command or repression, individuals have been moulded and shaped to the point where their desires and interests correspond with those of party elites. In such a way they willingly accept their own subjugation.

In summary, what can be elicited from Duverger's account is a view of power as akin to a mode of socialisation working through the organisation. If power grows in intensity it is because it has become less discernible and therefore less amenable to resistance. This introduces a new dimension of power to the analysis. Duverger's conceptualisation shares much common ground with Constitutive Power in that it constitutes subjectivities through everyday organisational practice. In this sense, it may even be conceived as something that empowers members by imbuing them with skills and capacities that the party needs. But the continuous action and reaction that Duverger refers to also points to the anonymous routine functioning characteristic of Bureaucratic Control, albeit with a more constitutive effect. It is a first indication of the value of a multi-dimensional approach to power. Rather than rejecting one explanation for another, the framework can be used to account for the different dimensions of power in play at any one time.

Panebianco and 'Unequal Exchange'

Panebianco draws attention to the conspicuous lack of a 'serious definition of power' in the literature on political parties, specifically organisational power (Panebianco 1988, 21). The failure adequately to define the concept creates what he sees as unnecessary

divisions between scholars about the nature of power. On the one hand, there are those who regard power as a property, possessed and exerted over followers by manipulative leaders (e.g. through plebiscites). These, he says, are supporters of Michels' 'iron law' thesis. On the other hand, there are those who regard it more as a relation of influence, characterised by reciprocity and agreement between leaders and followers on political strategy (Ibid., 21). The often <u>implicit</u> adoption of one or other of these definitions means that one of these 'dimensions of power *which coexist in every party*' is accentuated at the expense of the other (Ibid., 21-22 – my emphasis). He argues instead for 'an alternative definition of organisational power, one which can account for phenomena which are apparently contradictory' (Ibid., 22).

Rather than seeing these as two mutually exclusive approaches to power, Panebianco argues that power needs to be understood as both a property of elites *and* a relation of influence between them and the party membership: it is 'relational, asymmetrical, but also *reciprocal*'. In other words it is an 'unequal exchange relation' (Ibid., 22), in which leaders seek freedom of action and followers or members seek certain 'organisational incentives' (which may be collective incentives related to feelings of solidarity and identification with party goals, or may be selective incentives of status and material gain). In this relation, the power of leaders is 'never absolute' because it is limited by the interactions with followers necessary to its exercise, nor is it arbitrary: it can only be carried through 'by satisfying … needs and expectations' of members thereby paradoxically submitting leaders to the power of followers. Thus, although 'the leader gets more than the followers … [he] must nonetheless give something in return' (Ibid., 22). But the actual outcome of these exchanges depends on resources, based on control over 'zones of organisational uncertainty' and it is leaders that tend to control 'the crucial zones of uncertainty for the organisation, and can capitalise on these

resources in internal negotiations' (Ibid., 22). In sum, everyone controls at least a small zone of uncertainty, and in this sense a leader's power is limited. But it is the leaders that are invariably at an advantage in terms of the areas they control, and power is therefore unequal.

But, Panebianco continues, power games are not only played out 'vertically', i.e. between leaders and followers. The main benefit leaders seek in 'vertical' power games with members is freedom of action and movement. The purpose of this is that it provides them with advantages in the 'horizontal' power games between leaders themselves. The greater freedom won in the former, 'the greater their invulnerability to attacks made by internal adversaries' (Ibid., 23), thereby enhancing the security of their position *as* leaders. This underlines the fact that, for Panebianco, elites compete with each other too and they need the support and co-operation of members in order to maintain status. For this reason, oligarchy is tempered and the power of leaders in some sense is limited.

Analysis

At the heart of Panebianco's argument is a claim that a political party is a complex organisation that contains and accounts for different motivations, strategies, tactics, values and people. He is critical of Michels, but this criticism is only one of degree, because Michels does not take into account any limit to the power of leaders: his 'thesis on the power relations within the SPD of his epoch is merely exaggerated, not mistaken' he argues (Ibid., 31). There is, he says, a continuum between leader domination and reciprocal influence which means that two modes of power are existent in the party at one and the same time. Mapping Panebianco's understanding of organisational power onto my theoretical framework highlights two dimensions of power, Strategic and

Individualistic, in operation too. These also act as a brake on a third, Bureaucratic Control, which is an ever-present threat.

To elaborate, if the unequal exchange relation in 'vertical' power relations is regarded as being the result of a *structural* inequality, this may have arisen from an underlying Bureaucratic Control which supports the domination of elites. However, for Panebianco Bureaucratic Control is tempered by a direct relation of power between leaders and followers, in which the latter can extract incentives from the former. This therefore suggests a level of Individualistic Power, in which, although leaders control more powerful resources, members are not at a total disadvantage and do have control over certain resources (or 'zones of uncertainty') of their own which they can deploy to secure their own interests over those of leaders (thereby providing a check on the latter). However, this means a way needs to be found to describe the particular kinds of resources leaders control and the way in which they deploy them to their own advantage. The exchange relation between the two is unequal because of the advantage that leaders have in controlling the most *crucial* zones of uncertainty. Another way of looking at this is by recognising that leaders are more likely to be in a position to shape the context in which decisions are made and secure control over the agenda. In other words they deploy Strategic Power against members. However, the wise leader will use such powers carefully. The leader that provides followers with incentives from which they can benefit in some way will a) ensure that his or her position is maintained through support of the membership or a substantial enough proportion of it; and b) procure support on which he or she can call in horizontal power games with other leaders. The horizontal power games between leaders are conducted from a position of greater equality and may be more reasonably understood as being primarily

Individualistic Power. Leaders can, from this point of view, gain advantage over each other by possessing superior resources in terms of followers.

Panebianco, therefore, starts to point towards a more multi-dimensional view of power, although this is not fully realised. To his credit, he does not regard power in parties as a fixed entity, a frozen set of relations or hierarchy. He sees it instead as a changing and evolving resource, where different elements and combinations of the power of leaders and members may be in play at any particular time. This is a welcome advance. Ultimately, however, Panebianco does not take it far enough. Although his scheme provides for a dynamic relationship between leaders and members, he does not consider what other dimensions of power might be in operation. Power for him is a continuum between an individualistic dimension and oligarchy, but what of the detailed, shifting and complex dynamics internal to the organisation? What about power's constitutive side? These are dimensions of power that he does not consider.

Katz and Mair: Elites and Cartels

Panebianco's more sophisticated approach to power in parties appears at first glance to be echoed in Mair (1994) and Katz and Mair's (1995; 2002) work on the 'Cartel Party'. According to this view, as they are able to avail themselves of more state resources to secure their position (e.g. state subventions and regulation), party elites form 'cartels' with those of other dominant parliamentary parties, colluding to maintain their mutual interests in proximity to power. Thus they become interpenetrated with the state. What Katz and Mair seem to be pointing to, in essence, is the weakening of the party as an organisation altogether. Rather than an organised entity separate from the state that seeks to dominate it, the party becomes *absorbed into* it. This might be seen as

something of a return to the old fashioned cadre parties before universal suffrage which were simply semi-organised factions of a single ruling elite (Duverger 1959, 21-22). However, they are not exactly the same since parties need to maintain some form of organisation on the ground.

As established political parties have got closer to the state itself and even become absorbed by it, their internal power relations have been altered. They argue that these parties undergo an apparently contradictory development of both centralisation *and* democratisation. This development represents a kind of trade-off between leaders and members: in return for ceding power over policy and the direction of leaders, members are granted greater influence in other areas, like the selection of candidates (Mair 1994, 12-15). This results in what Katz and Mair refer to as a 'stratarchy' in which local and national organisations effectively allow each other a free hand in their respective areas of responsibility (Mair 1994, 18; Katz and Mair 1995, 21). Webb (2000) provides some support for this argument, suggesting that constitutional changes in the British Labour Party for example

> have almost certainly not been designed to enhance the power of individual members in making policy, though they have clearly boosted the membership's role in choosing candidates and leaders (Webb 2000, 201).

This 'ostensibly paradoxical' situation (Mair 1994, 16) in which democratisation 'on paper' is co-existent with powerful elite influence in practice (Ibid., 17) looks quite similar to the argument advanced by Panebianco that conceding some power to followers is a condition of maintaining leadership positions. This argument has, again,

found some support in the research. For example, Scarrow, Webb and Farrell (2000) have argued that

> it is reasonable to conclude that there are now many instances in the democratic world where party leaders operate a coalition of power in which grass-roots members are significant junior partners (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell 2000, 149).

However, the process that Katz and Mair describe also seems to mean that the two parts of the party are becoming increasingly autonomous from one another: the leadership moves closer to and becomes enmeshed with the power structures of the state itself whilst the party on the ground becomes increasingly dislocated (Katz and Mair 2002, 133). This suggests that any influence the party membership may have had over leaders diminishes as the two parts of the party drift away from each other. At the same time, it also suggests a mutual autonomy which allows local parties to pursue their own policies and programmes at a local level, free from the interference of the national leadership (Ibid., 129). However, in other respects, I would argue it looks more like a rehearsal of the oligarchy that Michels describes: the process of devolving power to members in certain respects and centralising it in others in fact represents a dual movement of power away from the *organised* party towards the leadership on the one hand and the broad mass of individual members on the other. Increasing the role of less active members (who are considered to be more moderate) is a way to 'dilute the influence of the most ideologically radical members' who may be a major irritant or even a threat to leaders (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell 2000, 133). Indeed, as Mair himself argued, this simultaneous centralisation and devolution suits leaders since the broader, non-active membership is, they argue, easier to dominate and likely to be

at once more docile and more likely to endorse the policies (and candidates) proposed by the party leadership and by the party in public office (Mair 1994, 16).

Analysis

Katz and Mair's work has been an interesting and important development in the classification of party types and their organisational development, but what conclusions can be drawn from it about power? Their work has some parallels with Panebianco, in that they acknowledge a (highly unequal) relationship between elite power and the power of members. However, there is an important distinction between the two approaches which is relevant to my thesis. For Panebianco, the power relation between members and leaders is a *check* on elite domination. Elites need to some extent to submit to members in order to achieve and maintain their own position because their support is an essential component of the 'horizontal power games' played out between the elites themselves. For Katz and Mair, however, democratisation is a tool elites use in order to monopolise power for themselves over policy and government itself. Elites retain a link with the party on the ground because it provides both democratic legitimacy (Katz and Mair 2002, 128) and the campaigning resources needed for elections.   This represents a more firmly elitist view of power in which ordinary members are relatively helpless to resist: leaders have a firm grip over the organisation as a whole and are in a position to restructure it in their favour. It is possible to argue that there is an element of Strategic Power in play here, in which leaders are able to exploit their advantageous position and manipulate organisational rules and structures in their own favour. However, I would argue that their account of interpenetration of party and state is closer to Michels' claim that the party organisation begins to imitate that

which it seeks to dominate (Michels 1962 [1915], 335). Bureaucratic Control is driven by the party's ever closer relationship with the state and supports the strengthening of power at the elite level of the party. Members in this account seem to be little more than tools for legitimisation and resources for campaigning; the apparent 'democratisation' of aspects of party life is just the means by which these functions are managed.

Party Discipline and the Puzzle of Loyalty

So far the party literature I have considered has been strongly influenced by the elite theory of writers like Pareto and Mosca, focusing mainly on the power of leaders over members. But a particular puzzle associated with the exercise of power in political parties and one that has not been adequately appreciated or addressed by the party literature I have discussed thus far, is why members remain loyal to them. The framework of power I laid out in my introduction suggests some possible answers to this question. The important point I want to start with is that each dimension seems logically to suggest a different reason for complicity or loyalty:

1. Individualistic Power would suggest that the application of incentives or sanctions by party whips or leaders stimulates self-interested agents to adjust their behaviour in a loyal direction;

2. Strategic Power highlights circumstances in which potential rebels are denied opportunities to express disloyalty or a disagreement in the first place;

3. Bureaucratic Control would emphasise that loyalty comes through automatic obedience as the behaviour of agents is controlled and structured by the power of the organisation itself;

4. Constitutive Power proposes that the loyal political subject is constituted by the daily rituals and activities of party life and its underlying values;

5. Disciplinary Control sheds light on how obedient subjects are produced through the detailed application of refined disciplinary techniques of organisation.

The debates in the academic literature that deal with questions of loyalty and how parties maintain discipline and cohesion touch on some, but by no means all, of these ideas. In this section, I discuss and assess some of this literature: particularly the work of von Beyme (1985) and the wider literature on party discipline and cohesion. Drawing out implications for my framework of power, I will argue that although plausible accounts are put forward for why party members and representatives remain loyal, they do not fully take up the challenge posed by a truly multi-dimensional approach to power, and therefore offer only partial explanations.

In *Political Parties in Western Democracies* von Beyme supports Michels' basic assertion that organisation is 'always necessary for new political movements' that wish to challenge the 'natural strength of the elite who hold power' (von Beyme 1985, 159). But he also argues that the 'inevitability' of oligarchy should not be overstated. He underlines the fact that that both Michels and Weber were writing at a time when democratisation had not fully flowered in the west and that their view that undemocratic party structures were an outcome of democratic development at state level was one

particular to their time and place (i.e. early twentieth century Germany[1]). In more
recent times, for example, factionalism and the presence of different internal pressure
groups in parties is

> one indication that parties are not monolithic units, tightly disciplined
>
> by their own bureaucracy, with an elite leadership holding aloft the
>
> banner of democracy in the political arena but authoritarian towards its
>
> own rank and file (Ibid, 232).

Indeed, von Beyme (1985) argues that power relations in parties vary according to
which *level* of the party is being examined. He suggests that at the party organisational
level (i.e. the party outside of parliament), oligarchy is unlikely and that material
incentives and sanctions are largely ineffective instruments of power. Instead, he
argues, more 'subtle' instruments like ideology can be deployed to inspire the loyalty of
rank-and-file party members. I will examine this point below. However, before that I
will turn my attention to the elite, parliamentary level, where von Beyme argues that the
direct application of incentives and sanctions *can* be more effective. This argument is
reflected in ongoing debates in the literature on party discipline that are of interest and
relevance to my thesis, and which will form part of my discussion.

Parliamentary Discipline

The level of the 'political power system', von Beyme argues, is one at which tight party
discipline operates because representatives in parliament are more likely to respond to
incentives and sanctions designed to procure obedience. He argues that in the twentieth
century, 'the parties have increasingly strengthened the mechanisms whereby they can

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[1] For accounts of German political conditions and the development of the Sozialdemokratische Partei
Deutschlands (SPD) at the time, see Guttsman 1981 and Roth 1963.

exercise social control on their members of parliament' (von Beyme 1985, 313); so much so, in fact, that party discipline should form 'an essential part of any consistent theory of the party state' (Ibid., 313):

> in the modern democracy party discipline in parliament is now such that only in exceptional cases do members have a free vote … on all other issues party discipline is so tight that it is … (the) parliamentary party which should be analysed and not parliament itself (Ibid., 314-315).

There is today a fairly large body of writers who have taken up von Beyme's challenge and focused on the question of party discipline and cohesion. A significant strand of this literature on party discipline understands loyalty to be a product of the strategic behaviour of rational actors within party organisations and legislatures. In these approaches, the political actor trades some of his or her own immediate personal interests for longer-term goals and in so doing benefits the whole group. In return, longer-term benefits can be expected, including reward through preferment, the ability to secure policy preferences with the support of colleagues, or increasing the party's popularity which helps secure re-election. Thus in the long term, it is in the interests of the politician to co-operate because of the incentive structures provided by legislative assemblies and the party itself.

Louise K. Davidson-Schmich (2006) provides an example of this in the context of state legislatures in eastern Germany. She argues that the way legislatures are structured provides a strong incentive for co-operative behaviour amongst legislators even where

there is a strong tradition of anti-party norms.[2] For example, members require state resources that are provided to *Fraktionen* (party groups); electoral processes (like the German list system) tend to favour parties, as does the need to provide predictability for voters via identifiable party labels; parliamentary committees tend to be allocated on a party basis; influencing the agenda-setting process is very difficult without some kind of organised collective action. Indeed, any kind of patronage or favour in a legislative arena requires organisation in order to capture such privileges (Davidson-Schmich 2006, 90-1). This 'institutional logic', she argues, therefore overrides norms and culture, driving members to co-operate ever more closely (Ibid., 100).

Other writers, such as Bowler (2002) and Heidar and Koole (2000), emphasise more strongly the role of the party itself in shaping the co-operative incentives of political actors. Bowler (2002) argues that the institutional drivers for collective action in the legislature might explain why legislators co-operate with each other but they do not explain 'why individual legislators remain members of the *same legislative bloc* throughout their careers' (Bowler 2002, 157; emphasis added)[3]. Stability and *continuity* in group membership, he argues, can only be explained by the extra-parliamentary party's (EPP) powers of nomination[4] which is the chief power of 'parties as

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[2] Although non-communist parties were officially allowed, neither elections nor political activity could be described as being in any way 'free' and from its declaration in 1949, to its first free elections and reabsorption into Germany in 1990, the GDR was an effective one party state under the control of the Socialist Unity Party. It is not therefore surprising that a strong democratic party culture had not developed.

[3] This classification characterises 'one arena' models as those having an almost exclusive focus on incentives within the legislature, decoupling or weakening electoral and legislative arenas, whilst 'two arena' models consider the importance of both of these. Cox and McCubbins (1993) is an example of the former, whereas the most renowned examples of the latter are Anthony Downs (1957) and David Mayhew (1974).

[4] In some case, of course, national party leaders have directly – sometimes notoriously – interfered in local party selections. Examples include the imposition by the Labour leadership of Shaun Woodward (a relatively rare example of an MP 'crossing the floor', on this occasion from Conservative to Labour), on St. Helen's South in time for the 2001 General Election. The more indirect influence of devices like all-women shortlists caused notable controversy for the party in Blaenau Gwent in 2005 where the party lost its seat to protesting former Labour members, despite it being regarded as one of the party's safest.

organisations' outside of parliament. Heidar and Koole also emphasise the importance of the EPP, and 'subordinated staff' in the rise of a 'parliamentary-party complex' (Heidar and Koole 2000, 1-14). They note that the party's functions and constitution help determine the nature of policy-making and candidate selection, and that this means there is a strong relationship of external pressure between the EPP and legislators. Without this, they say, 'a high degree of discipline within the parliamentary party group is unlikely to exist' (Ibid., 14).

What follows from this is that leaders, as the senior authority in both the party organisation and the parliamentary party, have significant resources in their hands that representatives want. In particular, this includes significant influence or control over the agenda-setting process and powers of patronage, including ministries, shadow ministries and committee memberships. The prospects of gaining such rewards, or the fear of losing them, are key drivers of loyalty and discipline.

Cohesion and the Power of Norms and Values

A second strand of the party discipline literature emphasises how individuals sacrifice self-interest for the party because they share common ideology or values. Although the interests and ambitions of legislators make the application of incentives effective, in the wider party they are likely to be less so. A very simple reason for this is that parties are *voluntary* organisations, and people can always leave or refuse to obey. This affects the nature of power relationships that are even *possible* in democratic political parties. At least at the grass-roots level, parties have little in the way of recourse to positive and negative sanctions that might induce people to join or obey (von Beyme 1985, 167). This has two effects on the conditions under which power can be exercised in the party, he argues: firstly, parties are much less tightly structured than other organisations like

unions or bureaucracies and its boundaries are much more fluid and unstable (Ibid., 168); secondly, it means that patronage cannot explain loyalty to the party on a mass scale (Ibid., 172). Negative sanctions are minimal and the only positive sanction available is office in the party itself (Ibid., 172), which may work for some but by no means all. Scarrow argues that other incentives available for members include things like socialising opportunities and pathways to office or candidacies (Scarrow 2000, 84), but if an individual is not interested in the latter, the former is the kind of opportunity easily available elsewhere. It suggests that direct force or inducement will rarely if ever work and thus more subtle modes of power need to come into play. Von Beyme argues that rather than material incentives like patronage and office allocation, it is *ideology* that explains loyalty to parties on the part of members (von Beyme 1985, 173-4). This is a point that Pizzorno (1981) picks up on. Ideology, he says, is a 'principle of identification' in which the party takes a view on 'a future state of affairs to be achieved through political action' (Pizzorno 1981, 250). He argues that in political parties 'ideology itself can be seen as a technique for reinforcing organisation' equivalent to techniques of participation, training and so on. It supports organisational power because it

> reinforces the solidarity of those who belong to the organisation by generating the feeling that all of them share certain goals towards which *durable* collective action can be oriented. Furthermore, it can coordinate the specific action of various centres of decision, because from the general principles contained in the ideology it is possible to deduce rules for action to be applied in particular occasions, thus avoiding the burden of detailed prescriptions from the centre. Finally, ideology offers a criterion by which to check the performance of the

leaders, even when their action *does not produce immediate satisfaction of interests* (Ibid., 253; emphasis in original).

In other words, in a voluntary setting ideology can bring about a disciplined organisation without the need for the application of sanctions and material incentives. This is especially important at times when the party is in opposition and material interests are harder to satisfy (Ibid., 253). It provides the basic link between the party at grass-roots level and the party in parliament and, according to a second strand of approaches to party discipline, provides the necessary foundation for discipline to work.

In this second strand of party discipline literature, a distinction is made between 'discipline' *per se* and 'cohesion'. Party discipline, i.e. the tools, incentives and constraints at work in the legislature, 'begin[s] to function only after the successful candidates have reached parliament' (Hazan 2006, 6). Cohesion in contrast refers to a consensus between those with shared outlooks, values and attitudes that develops out of a social context (Ibid., 6). It includes norms of party solidarity, ideology and attitudes towards teamwork that begin *prior* to the representative's arrival in the legislative chamber. This process was explained in more detail in Kornberg's (1967) much older study of MPs in the Canadian parliament which emphasised socialisation and acculturation rather than the application of incentives. He argued that expectations of behaviour on the legislator are assimilated through the internalisation of formal and informal 'rules of the game'. During this process, the political party acts as reference group, structuring individual values and perspectives (Kornberg 1967, 8-9). Before entering parliament, pre-legislative political experience (for example through years of party membership and activism) is crucial in shaping 'party-relevant values' which the legislator brings to parliament. It is the means by which

an individual acquires political values, attitudes, interest in and

knowledge of the political community, the regime and its institutions

and incumbent leaders (Ibid., 49).

In political cultures (such as that in Canada at the time) with a favourable, even proud, attitude towards party, the majority of MPs acted cohesively because they wanted to, 'not from fear of sanctions or hope of reward, but from willing acceptance of that influence' (Ibid., 134).

More recent studies come to similar conclusions. Owens (2006), for example, argues that

the reality of legislative decision-making and therefore intra-party

cohesion is much more complex than constitutional and institutional

formalities and appears to depend more on the extent to which values

are shared among co-partisans (Owens 2006, 28).

Shared values (or norms), he says, allows for negotiation and a willingness to compromise among party group members when specific preferences are not shared. Discipline therefore needs *cohesion* which is a product of these values and which is reinforced through institutional mechanisms. Jensen (2000) (examining Nordic parliamentary systems) argues that party unity is often voluntary and consensual rather than forced. Discipline, he says, should 'rather be seen as a set of norms that group members follow' (Jensen 2000, 213-14) and that formal sanctions and other such mechanisms are 'seldom necessary to secure group loyalty' (Ibid., 215), because norms of loyalty have largely been internalised through a process of socialisation. This process, he says, is apparent in the fact that whereby newer MPs act more out of a sense

of 'duty', longer-standing ones[5] have more likely fully internalised norms of loyalty, and so act more out of agreement than anything else. Similarly to Owens, he argues that although institutional and structural factors are important, it must be underpinned by a 'supportive normative system' among MPs in order to work (Ibid., 233).

Analysis

What I have related in this section is a more complex series of arguments about how power is exercised at different levels of the party. In particular, these contributions to the party literature begin to address an issue I found absent from much of the specific literature on party organisation: why voluntary members are willing to subordinate themselves to party discipline and how their loyalty and fidelity to the party comes about. I have suggested throughout my analysis that different dimensions of power may be more appropriate and effective at different levels of the party organisation, and it now appears that the complicity of the membership may also be explained in a similar way.

At the elite level, Individualistic Power is an effective means for leaders to control their parliamentary party. Amongst elite groups such as the parliamentary party, power can be understood as a material relation between leaders and rest of the parliamentary party. The exercise of power is based on the interests of individual political actors. The obedience of representatives is secured, and the collective action of the group is maintained, through the direct application of material incentives by leaders, based on resources secured by the latter as a result of their position. This has the effect of securing the interests of leaders by persuading representatives to act in favour of those interests.

[5] Which he designates as having been in parliament for four years or more.

At the party organisational level, a more subtle form of power provides the glue through which party cohesion and loyalty is maintained. Shared values and broad ideological agreement are cohesive forces that provide the basis for willing submission to power and, furthermore, the conditions under which agentic dimensions of power can *be* effective. There are, however, two alternative ways of looking at this in terms of the framework of power: on the one hand, just as Pizzorno argues that ideology is best seen as one particular technique for reinforcing organisation, it could be understood as a form of Bureaucratic Control, a means by which 'automatic' obedience is secured through attachment to a series of abstract goals that provide a cognitive framework for action; on the other hand, these norms and ideologies can be seen as embedded in the day-to-day rituals of party life (like meetings, campaigning and so on), emerging in the performance and practice of those rituals and constituting subjects who believe in them. Whilst they both have some explanatory utility, I would argue that the latter, Constitutive Power, can provide a more satisfactory explanation of how, especially in voluntary organisations like parties, loyalty and obedience comes through *belief* (which is constituted in participation), rather than by the imposition of rules and the application of techniques from the 'outside'. Many of these arguments are not new, and the comparative merits of rational, cultural and sociological explanations in explaining political behaviour have been rehearsed elsewhere, for example over questions why people bother to vote (see for example Denver 2003). However, drawing out these kinds of assumptions about power in the literature demonstrates strengths and weaknesses in the analysis of power in parties that set the scene for my deeper analysis.

Conclusion

I have by no means covered all the great wealth of literature that is available about political parties. Such a task would be impossible in one chapter of a thesis. I have sought, instead, to survey some of the most influential texts in the study of political party organisation: including Michels work on oligarchy; Duverger, Panebianco and Katz and Mair's party organisational evolution; and von Beyme's comprehensive study of parties at different 'levels' of organisation. My choice has also been guided by which contributions have decisive or distinctive views on the specific issue of how power operates within parties. In conjunction with the last of these, I have also discussed some of the specific literature on party discipline and cohesion because it is a literature that specifically addresses some of my concerns about the different means by which power may be exercised in parties. In the rest of this concluding section, I present a summary and overall analysis of what I have discussed in the light of my framework of power.

Summary

Michels' work quite clearly shows strong parallels with Bureaucratic Control, in which the logic of organisation exerts a repressive, disciplinary and sometimes exclusionary power over individuals. The ultimate logic of this power drives the organisation towards oligarchy. Where Michels' argument is weakest, however, is his account of obedience. He puts the fact of people's submission to such a regime down to 'need' and 'incompetence' without really explaining or justifying it satisfactorily.[6] In democracies, political parties are voluntary organisations and individuals are not compelled to be members of them or to submit to them. It follows that if leaders wish to retain power

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[6] Although acquiescence and deference have been routinely used in the past to explain working-class Conservative voters in the UK for example. See Nordlinger (1967).

and obedience, they must be more subtle about how they do so. Duverger provides a more plausible explanation. Whilst he argues that there are cultural reasons why ordinary working class people were prepared to submit to oligarchal organisation, he makes a stronger, more compelling argument that I would contend has a greater contemporary relevance too. He states that there is an *intensification* of power in political organisation which is at once subtle and more effective than an explicit relationship of command and obedience. Furthermore, it brings additional dimensions of power into play by introducing something of a constitutive element to Bureaucratic Control.

There is a more explicitly materialistic way of explaining loyalty and obedience too: party leaders, if they wish to retain the support and legitimacy that is provided by members, must to some degree satisfy their needs and interests. For Panebianco, Bureaucratic Control is tempered by the Individualistic Power of members who control some resources that they can use to extract benefits and incentives from leaders. Leaders comply because satisfied members provide support for them in their own 'horizontal' power games (also agentic in nature). However, the unequal relationship that exists between leaders and followers, suggest that Strategic Power may also be present: that is, inequality of power is not just a matter of superior resources held by leaders, but their specific *strategic* qualities (e.g. party rules and agenda-setting processes) which give them the ability to exclude threats and avoid confrontation and defeat. Panebianco's is a dynamic understanding of power. It is very clearly a *relation*, but one which is mediated by hierarchy and bureaucracy. However, ultimately power is, for him, more of a continuum running between individualism and oligarchy than a truly multi-dimensional concept.

Katz and Mair provide a neat kind of circularity which goes back to Michels. For them, power in parties is elitist, although that elitism has a different source and partly comes about by granting some powers to the grass roots. It comes from a mixture of Strategic Power and Bureaucratic Control, with the emphasis firmly on the latter. Rather than the iron control over the whole party organisation that is found in Michels, the power of elites comes instead from a kind of strategic dislocation between them and the grass-roots. Leaders concede a certain amount of 'democratisation' at the bottom, but this belies an iron grip over policy and an interpenetration of the party at elite level and the state. This appears to be the product of a bureaucratic logic that disempowers activists and takes Michels' idea of the party imitating the state in its organisational structure to its full conclusion.

Finally, the relationship between members and the party is not purely mechanical, nor is it purely about command and obedience. The more subtle ways in which power works must therefore be identified. Von Beyme points towards how different dimensions of power might be more effective at different levels of the party. Thus, although Individualistic Power works well as an explanation for loyalty at the parliamentary level because relationships can be more clearly understood as 'materialistic' (i.e. material incentives and sanctions are provided through internal party and parliamentary patronage), this is not as effective when considering loyalty in the wider party. Here, a Constitutive Power that produces party subjects who are *voluntarily* loyal because they share the same norms and ideas about the world is more helpful. This kind of power is transmitted and produced in the rituals and practices of everyday party life, socialising activists into its culture. Moreover, this is also something that representatives at the elite level are subject to in their own pre-parliamentary life. The shared values and

ideological common-ground between party representatives is an important condition for their submission to more explicitly 'agentic' disciplinary regimes.

Analysis

The main task of this chapter has been to apply my framework of power to the task of extracting assumptions about power that underlie some of the principal texts on political parties. I have shown that there is a wide range of approaches to power in this literature. Sometimes power is explicitly discussed, a particularly good example of this being Panebianco who devotes a whole chapter to setting out his theoretical approach to the concept (Panebianco 1988, 21-32). However, references are often oblique and the explicit conceptual development of power as, say, a force with certain properties, or attached to certain locations, is distinctly lacking. This analysis has demonstrated that in much of the literature there is a continued engagement with the concerns about elitism and oligarchy that were first raised by Michels. However, Michels' account of oligarchy is subject to an ongoing critique which tempers his ideas with elements of Individualistic, Strategic and even Constitutive Power. Nonetheless, authors still feel a need to engage with Michels' argument, suggesting that oligarchy and elitist domination remains a concern. Thus Bureaucratic Control remains a significant theme, whilst at the same time the claims of 'iron laws' and the like are, at best, treated with scepticism and usually rejected. Even the more 'elitist' of modern accounts (such as Katz and Mair's) do not argue that activists are simply repressed into needy submission, but given some power of their own. Indeed, most accounts suggest that, to differing degrees, Bureaucratic Control is tempered by Individualistic Power. Drawing on the first strand of party discipline literature, it is also possible to see how party leaders can use the institutional resources available to them to support their own Individualistic Power as a

countervailing force. To that, I might add, that Strategic Power is a tool by which leaders can ensure that the Individualistic Power of members is curtailed. What the literature is lacking, however, is an explicit and systematic development of these different ideas about power and of how they work together as different but interactive *dimensions* of power in the context of a political party.

The connection is not adequately recognised or explored either between power derived from *potestas,* that is in its more negative sense of 'power over' and power in its more positive sense, derived from *potentia* (from Spinoza's distinction), that is between coercion and empowerment. In the context of this thesis, the latter refers to the constitution of new capacities that are engendered both by developing party organisation and by constructing new modes of subjectivity in terms of new political skills, as well as compliance with a party's public ideology, message and image (or 'brand'). It is important, as my framework of power shows, to recognise how these two senses of positive and negative, coercive and productive power are interwoven and inseparable in the building of modern party machines with a loyal members and a (mainly) complicit, helpful and useful rank-and-file

Furthermore, there are other aspects of power which are not fully recognised as such and thus not properly exploited as explanations for loyalty to parties. There are in some works (such as von Beyme and the second strand of party discipline literature) a recognition that the loyalty of party members, even (or perhaps especially) in an age of apparently declining memberships, cannot be explained simply by force, manipulation or 'weakness' but also by the values and common ideas that people share. Power's constitutive side is therefore hinted at but never fully developed. This is partly because these 'cohesive' elements are not recognised *as* power in these texts, even though their

effects are power-like. At best, they are recognised as conditions *for* power's exercise. I would argue that they need instead to be seen as aspects of a dimension of power in their own right: that is, Constitutive Power. The failure to recognise how power works through such means in modern parties is, I would argue, is a major shortcoming in the literature. The modern party, with its far weaker and more pragmatic, electorate-oriented ideology, brings its members into line in terms of conduct, style and message (as more or less competent and centrist) by reconstructing them in its image as willing subjects of, and useful resources for, a party regime.

Finally, there is a dimension of power's operation that appears to be neglected entirely. Whilst Bureaucratic Control is a prominent idea in much of the literature I have discussed it does not fully express a sense of *how* power works on individuals to produce such disciplined subjects. This means having to look elsewhere: to explanations based on incentives and agents and also, as I have argued, norms and ideologies. However, as helpful as these explanations are, they still do not explain how parties are able to exploit members and activists so as to fashion them into *useful*, disciplined resources. Constitutive Power provides some sense of how power produces subjectivities, but it can be rather abstract in the way that it expresses this. This is where my fifth dimension of power's exercise comes into view. Disciplinary Control pays attention to the tactics and strategies of power at the most detailed level. It provides detail of *how* the party is rationalised and bureaucratised and how it operates as a machine through techniques of control and organisation that function at an individual level like timetables and training. Secondly, it shows how surveillance and normalisation discipline members as subjects aligned with the party's brand and political priorities.

Over recent years, political theorists have developed increasingly rich, complex and sophisticated analyses of power in terms of power relations. The literature on political parties, however, has tended to get stuck with a rather truncated account of power derived from older theories that were mainly developed in an age when mass parties were only beginning to modernise. Behaviouralist accounts of individual conduct (i.e. who gets what, when and how), elite models that focus on leaders versus led and Weberian models of bureaucratic rationalisation have remained the dominant underlying views of power despite being developed initially in the early to mid-twentieth century. In essence, the challenge is therefore to bring more recent theoretical developments to bear on questions of loyalty, obedience and cohesion that testify to the persistence and complexity of power relations in political parties. Furthermore, the application of these newer approaches to power to a period of significant change in the organisational structure and practices of the Labour Party underlines their importance in explaining modern political organisation.

In the following chapters, then, I will examine each one of the dimensions of power in my framework – Individualistic Power, Strategic Power, Bureaucratic Control, Constitutive Power and Disciplinary Control – setting out its assumptions in detail and applying them to aspects, events and stories gathered from my original research on the British Labour Party in the 1980s and 1990s. The purpose of this is to demonstrate how each one of these dimensions operates in the party at grass-roots and elite levels and how each dimension contributes towards a fully rounded explanation of how power is exercised in political parties to procure and maintain loyalty, cohesion and discipline.

Two: **Individualistic Power**

In the previous two chapters I have set out the framework of power and applied it to some of the relevant literature on political parties in order to examine the assumptions about power that are contained within it. I have argued that power should be understood as operating in five different dimensions which relate to different modes in which power operates. It may be understood as a property of individual agents, as behaviouralists and rational choice theorists suggest, but it may also be strategic, mediated through manipulated rules and norms. Its repressive effects are apparent in the anonymous routines of organisation, but its constitutive and empowering characteristics are also a feature of day-to-day organisational life. This is further demonstrated by its fine-grained disciplinary operation through techniques of organisation.

This chapter is devoted to fleshing out this first dimension in my framework. In it, I will set out the key component characteristics of Individualistic Power that distinguish it from the other dimensions. As I will show, this dimension of power is derived from a reading of behaviouralist approaches and uses of rational choice theory. Power here is episodic (that is, it is identifiable by presences and absences) and understood as a dispositional property of agents which is rational in that it is interest driven and decision-oriented, and behavioural in that it is conflict-centred, interpersonal and causal. Its exercise is resource-dependent and it is binary in its outcomes.

Once I have fleshed out these chief characteristics and acknowledged where I have drawn them from, I will point to the kinds of locations and situations in which Individualistic Power can be identified, the specific means by which it might be exercised in them and, most importantly, I will set out some basic questions that will

guide the subsequent analysis. Following that I will conduct an initial test of the explanatory efficacy of Individualistic Power using two examples drawn from my own research amongst Labour Party activists and MPs.

What my analysis will demonstrate is the strengths and utility of this dimension of power as part of an overall framework. Power in parties cannot be fully understood without accounting for the actions of individuals and I will show that this first dimension of power is a helpful perspective for understanding power relations between specific actors. It helps explain the behaviour of agents in situations of direct conflict with other agents. For this reason, it occupies a unique and important place in the framework. However, it will also become apparent that there is much that Individualistic Power by itself cannot fully explain. In other words, it is able to explain *one dimension* of power's exercise. More theoretical development will be needed in order to illuminate the full multi-dimensional scope of power in political parties.

What is Individualistic Power?

My understanding of Individualistic Power is drawn from behaviouralist ideas that originated with Robert Dahl (1957; 1961) and aspects of rational choice theory, especially as set out by Anthony Downs (1957) and, more recently, Keith Dowding (1991; 1996). These approaches, in different ways, originated in an attempt to explain and examine power empirically, by observing the behaviour of actors and the outcomes of conflicts. What can be gathered from these approaches is that the exercise of power consists of a relation between two actors in which one is able to change the behaviour of another. As such, these theories owe much to Max Weber's elaboration of *Macht*, a particular form of power rooted in social action which he defines as

the chance of a man or a number of men to realise their own will in a

social action even against the resistance of others who are participating

in the action (Weber 1978, 926).

Some years after Weber originally wrote this, Robert Dahl described an 'intuitive idea of power' which can be represented in the statement that

A has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that

B would not otherwise do (Dahl 1957, 202-3).

Dahl's particular purpose in formulating power in this way was to provide a means by which power could be observed and measured. It was his response to elite theories of power such as that of Wright Mills (1956) which he felt to be 'cast in a form that makes it virtually impossible to disprove' (Dahl 1958, 463). They are, he says

a type of quasi-metaphysical theory made up of what might be called an

infinite regress of explanations … if the overt leaders of community do not

appear to constitute a ruling elite, then the theory can be saved by arguing

that behind the overt leaders there is a set of covert leaders who do. If

subsequent evidence shows that this covert group does not make a ruling

elite, then the theory can be saved by arguing that behind the first covert

group there is another, and so on (Dahl 1958, 463).

Dahl's argument was that, rather than focusing on small groups of (sometimes elusive) elites, political analysts need to observe actual relations of conflict between actors in the political system in order to determine in whose hands power lies and on whom it has been exercised. These conflicts therefore need to be visible in some way, for example

as a matter of public record (such as minutes or verbatim reports), by direct observation on the part of the analyst, or as reported by participants.

However, Dahl's 'intuitive' definition is not complete. Firstly, behaviouralism is flawed, argues Keith Dowding (1991), because it lacks a coherent theory of action. Secondly, and related, the concept of Individualistic Power is intimately associated with the *interests* of individual actors. The relationship between *A* and *B* is exercised in such a way as to *secure* those interests, otherwise it cannot properly be called power in an individualistic sense. Therefore, any fully functioning concept of Individualistic Power needs to account for the formulation of those interests. This is where rational choice theory becomes helpful.

Rational Choice Theory

As another individualistic approach, based on the conflicts between agents and their preferences, rational choice theory is able to specify the limits of individual action by modelling the structure of individual decision-making:

> studying behaviour requires an explicit theory of action and an
> understanding of the structure of the choice situations within which
> individuals make their choices. Rational choice modelling is the best
> way of attempting this process (Dowding 1991, 29).

Rational choice theory deals with this by working on the assumption that people are goal-oriented and choose optimal means to achieve them (Tsebelis 1990, 235). It supplements and complements theories of behaviouralism because it provides tools for deductive reasoning that is more reliable than intuitive reasoning (Ibid., 236):

both the methodological sophistication of the behaviouralist programme and the deductive rigour of formal models can help contemporary researchers reach conclusions that only the most powerful minds reach without such tools (Ibid., 237).

This was first applied in a party political context by Anthony Downs in 1957. He theorised a *Homo Politicus* (an adaptation of the concept of the utility-maximising *Homo Economicus*) who is characterised by a conscious process of calculated, rational thought and action in which choices or decisions are made according to what would deliver the most satisfaction in relation to the expenditure required (of money, physical or mental effort etc.) to get it. The concept assumes that in any given situation an individual actor ranks alternative courses of action in a transitive order of preference (i.e. in any rank of, say, three alternatives, that ranked first is preferable to that ranked second, second is preferable to third, and so on). This actor can always make a clear decision when selecting from these alternatives because rational individuals always choose that which ranks the highest on their list. Furthermore, such actors will *always* make the same decision each time they is confronted with the same alternatives (Downs 1957). The assumption of 'selfishness', that *Homo Politicus* is primarily concerned with his (or her) own welfare, satisfaction and pleasure, is absolutely central to this model. Rational behaviour is 'directed primarily towards selfish ends' (Downs 1957, 27). Hence, although *Homo Politicus* does interact with others and participate in groups or organisations like political parties, it is simply a means of efficiently achieving these private ends. Any social 'product' or function (whether in terms of collective goals or presumably also social satisfaction) must be regarded as a by-product of this, rather than an intentional goal (Ibid., 29). Members of political parties in other words 'act solely in

order to attain the income, prestige and power which come from being in office' (Ibid., 28) rather than for any collective, social, political or even ideological reasons.

Although Downs was the first to apply rational choice theory to political parties, he sidesteps the question of how it can be applied to parties internally, treating them as 'a coalition whose members agree on *all* their goals instead of just part of them' (Downs 1957, 25). However, there have been a number of attempts since to apply rational choice ideas to the internal power relations in parties. Despite its U.S. legislative context, Cox and McCubbins (1993), for example, make an interesting application of game-theoretical approaches to argue that parties are 'invented, structured and restructured in order to solve a variety of collective dilemmas that legislators face' (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 83). From a rational choice point of view, analysis must begin at the level of individuals and their diverse preferences, 'explaining why it is in each one's interests to support a particular pattern of organisation and activity for the party' (Ibid., 108). It is, they argue, because parties create a structure of incentives that solve collective action problems. For example, the record of a party in government, or as an effective opposition, affects its (re)election probabilities (Ibid., 121), and sufficient organisation can help capture potential collective benefits the legislature makes available to its members. Thus the rewards the legislator can gain (in terms of committee memberships for example) are enhanced if his or her party wins a majority at an election. These rewards might include, for example, preferment in terms of committee memberships, some control over the legislative agenda and so forth (Ibid., 121-135).

Although party formation may be a response to collective action problems, the relationship between activists and party leaders is an ongoing one. Thomas Quinn

(2004) advances arguments about how leaders balance their own interests and those of activists by applying rational choice theory to exchanges between 'intra-party actors' in the Labour Party between 1983 and the early 2000s. He argues that the internal organisation of parties can be usefully comprehended in terms of the 'political exchange' of resources for policy promises. That is, party members provide resources to the party 'in the hope (at minimum) or expectation (at best) that certain benefits will be delivered in return' in terms of policy preferences (Quinn 2004, 21-22). This relationship, Quinn argues, is mediated by electoral exchange. In this process, leaders, understood as vote-seekers, require the autonomy that institutions provide them with to attract votes. However activists, understood as policy-seekers, wish to constrain them (Ibid., 171-177). There is thus a trade-off between leaders and activists in which the latter attempt to achieve policy preferences whilst the former seek to appeal to the wider electorate.

Party reform is purposive and reflects these preferences. Quinn argues that 'specific changes are undertaken for reasons, and the actors who implement them are motivated by self-interest' (Ibid., 43): doctrinal purity on the part of activists would be irrational because policy cannot be implemented whilst in opposition. Labour Party reform in the 1980s and 1990s, he argues, can therefore be understood as reflecting the dual necessities of winning votes and maintaining activists. The particular depth and tenor of reforms, he says, reflect the party's continual electoral failure between 1979 and 1997. Successive defeats had the effect of stimulating more organisational change and a rebalancing of political exchange between members and leaders in favour of the latter because 'the longer a party is out of office, more policies must be changed' and 'organisational change is often a prerequisite for policy change as the power-bases of those groups that cling to the old policies are undermined' (Ibid., 172).

In what follows, then, I will draw on the insights of behaviouralism and rational choice theory to detail the key components of Individualistic Power. Following that, I will identify the different means by which it may be exercised in parties. Before proceeding, however, a note of caution should be sounded. Whilst my concern is to focus on the ontological character of Individualistic Power, the primary concern of behaviouralists and rational choice theorists has been methodological: that is, to introduce the methods of natural science into the social sciences and thereby to develop ways of thinking about power that are empirically researchable and measurable. Hence it is argued that *A* has power over *B* because it can clearly be *observed* that a particular decision has been made in *A*'s interests thanks to the latter's intervention. Indeed, Dowding points out that behaviour<u>al</u>ism should never be confused with psychological theory of behaviourism. Whereas the former is a methodological thesis, he says, the latter is an ontological doctrine 'which reduces all mental concepts to publicly observable behaviour' (Dowding 1991, 24). Whilst I accept that behaviouralism and rational choice theory do not necessarily promote such a narrow ontology (although Dowding continues that the former has often fallen into this because of its lack of a theory of action), the methodological priorities with which they are concerned nonetheless have ontological implications from which I initially draw the components of Individualistic Power.

The Key Components of Individualistic Power

My analysis elicits seven characteristic components of this first dimension of power:

1. It is *agentic* and *rational*. That is, it is the property of an individual actor and is exercised in pursuit of identifiable coherent interests. Interests are taken to be concomitant with preferences, and action 'is efficiently designed to achieve the

consciously selected political or economic ends of the actor' (Downs 1957, 20). Power can be enhanced through co-operative action (Dowding 1996, 10), but groups themselves are not conscious actors. They are simply collections of individuals, each with their own interests. This fact gives rise to collective action problems, which must be solved in order for the group to achieve its objectives, as Olson (1971) has argued. It is therefore intimately bound up with a methodologically individualist understanding of agency, i.e. the (exclusive) ability of individuals to have interests and to act according to them. It follows, therefore, that individual actors are and must function as agents in order to exercise or respond to this type of power.

2. Although power belongs to individuals, it cannot be exercised alone. To be manifest, power requires the participation of more than one individual, because it is a *causal relation* in which the behaviour of 'responsive units' is dependent on the behaviour of 'controlling units' (Dahl 1968, 407), or it is at least closely related to cause (I will deal with this distinction below). It is therefore an *interpersonal act*. This is a basic premise of Dahl's formula, referred to above, in which *A* gets *B* to do something *B* would otherwise not do.

3. The exercise of power comes about in a situation of preference- or interest-driven *conflict* between at least two individuals. For an exercise of power to occur, the interests of one must prevail over those of the other, or in which one agent is forced, persuaded or otherwise cajoled into doing something he or she would not otherwise do.

4. Power is *decision-oriented* and associated with observable human behaviour. This is central both to behaviouralist theories of power and to rational choice

approaches, because power must be measurable. To be measurable, power must be visible by the pursuit of conflicting interests over concrete decisions in publicly visible arenas (Dahl 1958, 464) and apparent in observable human behaviour. It follows, therefore, that it must also be *binary* in its outcome. There must be victory and defeat, in which the interests of one prevail over those of another for an exercise of power to be attributed.

5. Power is *dispositional* (Dowding 1996, 4). Since agents are autonomous individuals with the ability to make choices, the ability to choose whether to exercise power or not is essential. Power therefore does not necessarily need to be exercised in order to be evident, or for the interests of one to prevail over another (Dahl 1968, 412-13; Dowding 1996, 4), although it does need to be evident to be exercised. Power's dispositional nature underlines its explicitly *voluntarist* character, related closely to autonomy and free-will. This is why although it is also closely related to *cause* it is not the same: the latter does not require intention, whereas power does. This in particular underlines the fact that power is a property of conscious agents, to be exercised at will.

6. Power is based on possession of or access to certain *resources* which are unequally distributed between individuals. These resources may include things like: specialist knowledge, information and know-how; the legitimacy that comes from social standing, authority or shared beliefs; incentives like money, jobs, or access to networks that some actors may be able to offer and so on. The use of these 'resources' is central to Individualistic Power because they are the material means by which certain individuals have the ability to get their way over others. However, although possession of resources can *support* the

exercise of power, it is not the same as the possession of power itself and the relationship is not automatic.

7. Finally, power is *episodic*. In other words, if power is observable, then it follows that power must be absent and present at different times i.e. it must be distinguishable from latent or dormant power. If it is possible to see that power has been exercised, it must also be possible to see that it has *not* been. An object or a person in an original 'power-free' state must be observed to change in response to certain stimuli. If this happens in a (pre-determined) direction, it may then be said that the stimulus has been effective, i.e. power has been exercised. If not, then power has *not* been exercised.

Ontologically, therefore, this dimension of power is committed to individual agents, freely acting on their preferences in competition with others. From the point of view of this dimension of power, it is the only meaningful point of analysis and power is a redundant term if applied elsewhere (Dowding 1991, 8). I argue in this thesis that this rather narrow view puts up unnecessary barriers to a fuller understanding of power, especially in organisational contexts. However, for the time being I focus on Individualistic Power which is built on these ideas.

Identifying Individualistic Power: Conditions and Locations

Now that the key components of Individualistic Power [henceforth *IP*] have been ascertained, I will consider how it can be identified in parties: in what kinds of locations, situations or functions is it likely to be found? What questions should be asked in order to identify it? In order to access this dimension of power, situations must be structured in a certain, formal way. Borrowing Dahl's '*A*' and '*B*' shorthand, the

identification of *IP* requires the following four conditions: firstly, that there are (at least) two individuals (*A* and *B*) in a decision-making situation; secondly, that the decision-making situation consists of a given issue to be resolved, and an arena in which to resolve it (such as a conference, meeting or debate); thirdly, that *A* and *B* each has an interest in a different resolution or outcome; and fourthly, that victory may be achieved by *A* or *B* using whatever resources available to win, or to cause their rival to change their mind. In this formulation, individual *A* can be said to have exercised power over individual *B* to the extent that *A*'s interests prevail over *B*'s (or *vice versa*). The specific detailed means by which *IP* is exercised is set out in Table 2.1 and discussed below.

Table 2.1: The Specific Means by which Individualistic Power is Exercised

Means / Actions	Examples / Resources used
Force: direct hostile intervention, threat or application of sanctions. *A* directly threatening *B* with sanctions that outstrip any benefit *B* would receive from getting his or her own way	Use of conditional incentives: (*threat of*) *withdrawal of funding or power and privileges, access to party leaders etc.*
Persuasion: rather than threatening sanctions or offering particular incentives, *A* persuades or demonstrates to *B* that *A*'s preference is in *B*'s best interests.	Use of knowledge: *information and know-how, ability to persuade / argue*
Direct Manipulation: *A* intervenes to offer incentives to *B* that outweighs *B*'s own preference or desire to exercise it.	Use of conditional incentives: *funding, recommendations for jobs, use of influential networks*
Indirect Manipulation: *A* restructures *B*'s incentives, making it in *B*'s interests to support *A* over *B*'s own original preference.	Use of conditional incentives: *altering choice architecture, making new resources available, combining measures*
Authority: *B* becomes convinced that *A*'s preference is in his or her best interests because *A*'s opinion is highly respected.	Use of legitimacy: *Expertise, authority, social standing e.g. of a former cabinet minister*
Reputation: *B*'s fear of *potential* sanction outweighs *B*'s own preference or desire to exercise it. (i.e. there has been no explicit threat).	Use of reputation: *having demonstrated a reputation for applying sanctions*

The exercise of power to secure interests may take different forms, including persuasion, force, or changing the incentive structures of others (Dowding 1996, 5-6). There are several possible means by which the power of one individual over another can be successfully exercised. Power may be exercised simply by *force*: one individual is able effectively to threaten another with sanctions if compliance is not forthcoming. It may more subtly be carried by *persuasion*: that is, by convincing another that one's own preference is also in their interest.

On the other hand power may be exercised by *manipulating* someone's incentive structure, either by making offers directly or indirectly altering the choice architecture by introducing new resources.[1] *Authority* that comes from experience and from social standing, for example a former party leader or cabinet member, can be an effective way of exercising power over others because it can have a persuasive effect. Thus, as well as with what *A* does to *B* in order to get his or her own way, the analyst should also pay attention to who *A* is. This also applies to *reputation*, although it is a more 'slippery' concept. Depending on what kind of reputation an individual has, the actual exercise of power may become unnecessary. One whose reputation leads him or her to be feared may be obeyed in order to stave off even the threat or the possibility of harsh sanctions. One who has a reputation for wisdom may be followed because it is assumed that person will most likely be right, and so on. Therefore a reputation may mean that none of the other means of exercising *IP* will need to come into operation in order for an actor to get his or her own way.[2] It is questionable, therefore, whether it would be

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[1] It is possible that manipulation may also be inadvertent, but this would not be understood as an exercise of Individualistic Power because it lacks intention.

[2] Conversely, I would suppose that a reputation for vacillation or errors of judgement can *close off* options, ensuring that threats, offers and persuasion may be ineffective even where they are exercised.

possible to observe such an exercise of power. Nonetheless, it is a means by which one gets one's way over another, and is a factor that supports the dispositional nature of power mentioned above.

Guide Questions for Analysis

In summary, then, *IP* is an individual property that is manifested in episodic social actions. It is a mechanism by which an actor in a concrete decision-making situation may exploit available resources to secure his or her interests over those of another by means of force, persuasion, manipulation or reputation. Once a decision-situation has been identified, the salience of *IP* can be determined by asking four sets of questions, each relating to a stage of analysis and based on the key components, conditions and means of exercise that I set out earlier:

Stage One: Visible Conflicts of Interest Between Agents

a) Which individuals were involved (who was *A*, who was *B*)?

b) What were their identifiable interests / preferences (in this particular scenario)? What ends did they want to achieve?

Stage Two: Open Confrontation and Clear Outcomes.

a) How and where was the conflict manifested? How did it play out?

b) Was the conflict direct or indirect?

Stage Three: Analysis of Outcomes

a) Who won? Who lost? Was the latter a direct result of the former?

b) Were the outcomes as intended by the winner? If not, why not? If so, how?

c) What were the causal relationships / directions of causation? How did the actions of a 'controlling' *A* cause those of a 'dependent' *B*?

Stage Four: Deployment of Resources

a) What resources have been used by actors in the pursuit of their interests / preferences? How were they used? What resources did they not use?

Application: Testing Individualistic Power's Explanatory Scope

The analysis presented above sets out what I take to be the key components and conditions of *IP* as identified in my five-dimensional framework of power. Since part of my argument in this thesis is that all five dimensions are useful for understanding how power operates within political parties, it is now necessary to apply the *IP* paradigm in order to see just how illuminating it is. My own application of this dimension will test its analytical capacities against actual events within the Labour Party drawn from interviews I have conducted with party activists and MPs. Conversely, inasmuch as this dimension withstands the test, it is also part of my thesis to demonstrate how appreciation of the way power works within political parties is enhanced by paying attention to each of its dimensions. From this point of view, it enriches the understanding of how power works in political parties, with the Labour Party taken here as an indicative case. This part of the analysis refers to some salient events in the Party's history but it mainly draws on my own empirical work among party members. Because it is equally part of my argument to claim that no dimension of power is sufficient in isolation, my analysis also explores the limitations of this approach and of its understanding of power. Using the questions I set out above, I will examine the utility of the concept of *IP* for explaining the exercise of power in real-

world situations. I will also support the discussion by providing relevant illustrations and examples from contemporary accounts.

From interviews conducted both with members of the Parliamentary Labour Party and with local activists in London, I identified two situations that allowed me to test the efficacy and limits of *IP*. The first concerns patronage: an MP, newly elected in 1987 and with a strong interest in miscarriages of justice, wanted to become a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons that dealt with such issues. The difficulty he had was that he was dependent on leadership patronage, a key resource party leaders have in their favour. Yet this MP's reputation and background were such that the party leadership was at best nervous of, and at worst strongly disapproving of him. The second situation concerns a struggle between two rivals for the leadership of the Labour Group on a London Borough Council in 1995: one regarded as moderate and pro-establishment, the other a left-wing figure at the head of an alliance between left-wing and Bangladeshi councillors. The importance of both these cases to the party's reform programme was that they had implications for the public perception (and the reality) of the Labour Party as a 'mainstream' and 'moderate' party of government.

Example 1: Patronage

Chris Mullin's prospects for preferment in 1987 were not strong: he had a long association with the left (he had been a member of Tony Benn's 'Sunday Group')[3] ; he was subject to hostility from moderate MPs for his stance on the mandatory reselection of MPs[4]; furthermore, he had upset the legal establishment and the press as a result of

[3] See Panitch and Leys 2001, 190; Benn 1994, 24, 35, 38

[4] A constitutional amendment passed in 1979 required that Labour MPs subject themselves to a mandatory competitive reselection process at least once in each Parliament. This was, for him, a crucial division within the party, and a prerequisite for renewal (Interview, Chris Mullin); he even published a

his campaign to free the Birmingham Six amongst other miscarriages of justice.[5]

Against this background, he became a Labour MP in 1987, which was greeted with

antipathy from the Party Leader, Neil Kinnock and Deputy Leader, Roy Hattersley:

'*they didn't exactly carry me shoulder-high into the tea room*' he told me.[6] His interest

in miscarriages of justice led him to seek a place on the Home Affairs Select

Committee, which was effectively in the gift of the Party Leader.[7] However, he was

denied that place despite making representations to the Chief Whip (responsible for

making nominations on the leader's behalf) and to the Shadow Home Secretary:

> *Three or four times I tried and failed. I went to see Derek Foster, the*
>
> *Chief Whip, and he said 'Talk to Roy'. So I went to see Roy*
>
> *Hattersley, who was then the Shadow Home Secretary. He stared at*
>
> *the floor and said ambiguously, "I'll see what can be done". I know*
>
> *exactly what was done. Derek received a message from the leader's*
>
> *office to say that the leader, Neil Kinnock, had one or two names in*
>
> *mind for the latest vacancy on the Home Affairs Committee and would*
>
> *Derek kindly call on him to discuss the matter. When Derek got there*

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guide to support local parties wanting to make use of their new powers. See Chris Mullin, *How to Select or Reselect Your MP* (CLPD, 1981). Also see Kogan and Kogan (1983) for an account of its rather bumpy journey into the Labour Party constitution.

[5] A group of six men who were, it turned out, wrongly convicted for a 1974 terrorist attack on two city centre pubs in Birmingham. For a full account see Chris Mullin, *Error of Judgement: The Truth About the Birmingham Bombings*, Revised Edition (Poolbeg Press, 1990)

[6] Interview, Chris Mullin

[7] Membership of a Select Committee was at the time effectively in the gift of thee party leader. Names of prospective select committee members were 'brought up in the Committee of Selection by the individual party whips to fill the party "quota" on committees. … It is up to each party how it decides who is to be put forward by its whips in the Committee of Selection and the process is not transparent.' (House of Commons 2009, 18-19).

he found that the leader had no names in mind for who might fill the

vacancy, but one name in mind for who might not.[8]

In short, Mullin failed to get on to the Committee because Neil Kinnock made use of the resources of patronage available to the Party Leader to deny him a place. Certainly that is the most straightforward conclusion that can be drawn from Mullin's account and it fits well with a simple individualistic approach in which *A* has power over *B*. However, this story needs to be used to approach the question of power's exercise more *analytically*, using the conditions I have set out above.

Strengths of Individualistic Power as an Explanation

There are undoubtedly some aspects of this situation that exhibit, and are illuminated by the application of *IP*. I begin by using the questions set out in the stages of analysis above to examine these aspects before moving on to highlight the way in which *IP* falls short as an explanation.

Stage One: Visible Conflicts of Interest Between Agents

a) Which individuals were involved (who was *A*, who was *B*)?

b) What were their identifiable interests / preferences (in this particular scenario)? What ends did they want to achieve?

On one level, there is a simple, identifiable conflict of interest between two parties: Chris Mullin (CM) and the Party Leader Neil Kinnock (NK). CM sought membership of the Committee and the leader opposed him (i.e. NK's preference was that CM should

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[8] Interview, Chris Mullin

not be appointed to the Committee). However, this is not the only way of looking at this situation, as I will discuss further later.

Stage Two: Open Confrontation and Clear Outcomes.

  a) How and where was the conflict manifested? How did it play out?

  b) Was the conflict direct or indirect?

There was a clear identifiable point at which a confrontation occurred and an observable result. The confrontation occurred in a series of requests CM put to NK (via Roy Hattersley and the Chief Whip). Although it may be argued that this process is slightly less open than a truly 'public' decision would be, it could still be seen as a direct confrontation with a clear outcome, which was that CM was not considered for membership of the Committee.

Stage Three: Analysis of Outcomes

  a) Who won? Who lost? Was the latter a direct result of the former?

  b) Were the outcomes as intended by the winner? If not, why not? If so, how?

  c) What were the causal relationships / directions of causation? How did the actions of a 'controlling' *A* cause those of a 'dependent' *B*?

The answers to the first two questions at this stage of analysis are clear. Firstly, it can be said that NK 'won', in that he achieved his goal and CM did not achieve his. Furthermore, the latter was a result of the former (indeed, it would have been impossible for both actors to achieve their goal in this situation). Secondly, on the basis that NK's intention was simply to thwart CM, it can be assumed that the outcome was as intended by him. The answer to the third question, however, is less clear-cut: *IP*

seems to require a more active *response* on the part of the 'responsive unit' to the actions of the 'controlling unit'. Does NK thwarting the ambitions of CM count? I would argue yes: it does not fundamentally challenge the notion of *IP* to say that just as one may be forced to *do* something against one's will, one may also be prevented *from doing* something one desires. Thus if CM could do so, he would become a member of the Committee, but NK's ability to prevent him from doing so constitutes an exercise of power by NK over CM. The key point is that NK gets what he wants and CM is prevented from getting what he wants, or fails to prevent NK from getting what he wants (which in this case is the same thing). Thus it can be said can say that NK demonstrated power over CM by denying him his desire.

Stage Four: Deployment of Resources

a) What resources have been used by actors in the pursuit of their interests / preferences? How were they used? What resources did they not use?

The preferences of NK prevailed over those of CM because his wishes were backed up by superior resources, namely the powers of patronage available to him. CM, in these terms, was relatively weak. He had no power to decide or persuade. He was more or less entirely at the mercy of the leader. All he could do was ask. Indeed, it could be argued that Mullin's central problem was that such resources as he did have were negative ones: his radical associations would have immediately made the leadership leery of him; his support for mandatory selection is unlikely to have found him much support in the mainstream of the Parliamentary Party; and most of all, his public profile was controversial in respect of some of the very issues for which the Home Affairs Select Committee was responsible. However, perhaps the most powerful resource he could have had was the support of Roy Hattersley, which he evidently did not.

Hattersley was Deputy Leader, a senior member of the Shadow Cabinet and responsible in particular for Home Affairs. He was thus in a strong position to wield influence over appointments to the Home Affairs Select Committee, which is precisely why CM was directed by CW to speak to him. Had CM had his support, there was a much stronger likelihood of appointment. Since he clearly did not, he failed to achieve his goal. Kinnock, on the other hand, had the strongest trump card that any leader has to play: solid conditional incentives in the form of power of patronage, which he used to exercise power over Mullin.

To summarise, the analysis of this situation suggests some important strengths of *IP* as a dimension of power. Firstly, by focusing on particular decisions in which conflicts of interest between actors can be identified, it is possible to pinpoint where confrontations over preferences may arise. Secondly, by analysing these conflicts and struggles and interrogating their outcomes it can be categorically stated whether or not there has been an exercise of power, by whom and in what direction. Because the analyst is aware of each actor's preferences, and therefore their intentions, it can be determined whether the 'controlling unit' altered the choices of the 'responsive unit' in the direction intended. Thirdly, examining the resources that were used reveals *how* that exercise of power was carried out. Fourthly, the model is parsimonious and has great clarity: it allows the observer to pare down the situation and reduce its complexity by translating interactions into formal positions and roles between individuals. This is one of the specific benefits of rational choice based approaches like game theory. Despite these strengths, however, each stage of the analysis throws up some particular problems which I will discuss below.

Weaknesses of Individualistic Power as an Explanation

Stage One: When applied to a clear conflict between two actors, the analysis of a situation from the point of view of *IP* is relatively straightforward, as demonstrated above. Indeed, the situation in question was selected because it is one that is particularly amenable to such an analysis. However, one of the difficulties with this approach is that party conflicts are rarely just between two actors: other players are usually involved and their role may muddy the situation in which power is exercised. For example, there are two additional players in this situation: Roy Hattersley who was the Shadow Home Secretary, and also Deputy Leader of the party (RH) and the Chief Whip, Derek Foster (CW).

To deal with the latter first, there are two functions that the Chief Whip will play in a situation like this. Firstly, whips play a vital role as an important channel of communication between the leadership and the rank-and-file (Crowe 1983, 912; Bowler, Farrell and Katz 1999, 16): CW was such a conduit in this situation. He was the means by which the preferences and will – in the form of a request and a response – of NK and CM were conveyed. Secondly, although ultimately he would seek to carry out the leader's wishes, CW, as the Chief Whip, would also have had a role in advising the leader on who might be suitable and in ensuring that spaces on Committees were allocated in the best interests of the party more widely. An unknown here is what advice he (and indeed others) may have given to NK in respect of CM. This is an important issue because it introduces an unobserved element into the situation, which raises problems for this model and what it reveals about the exercise of power. What were CW's motivations and preferences? Did he try to influence the situation in favour of either actor or to serve his own interests?

RH, or his support, is treated in the initial analysis as a potential resource to be used for or against CM. However, just as CW may be understood as more than merely a channel of communication but as an agent in his own right, so RH may be regarded as more than just a 'resource'. What the simple *A-B* (or NK-CM) model does not easily account for is the extent to which RH's own preferences and motivations may have been in play in this situation. What were they? Did he exert influence over NK by persuading him that CM should not be appointed because of the likely embarrassment it would cause him as Shadow Home Secretary? Assuming there was such an intervention (and Mullin certainly implies that there was), did this have the effect of changing NK's mind or was the Leader already in agreement with RH anyway?

Stage Two: Whether this truly qualifies as an open confrontation is a further question that needs to be addressed. If not, can its status as an exercise of power be clarified? The fact that this has not taken place in 'public' as an on-the-record process means there is a behind-the-scenes element to it. Furthermore, the roles of both RH and CW indicate a more *indirect* confrontation between NK and CM. Does this challenge its status as a clear exercise of power by NK on CM? In my initial analysis, I assumed that CW is neutral and has merely acted to convey information between CM and NK and that RH's support is a potential resource that CM is denied. Given Kinnock's antipathy towards Mullin it might be reasonable for me to assume that RH's representations made little difference to NK's view and that CW would not have had much scope for changing NK's mind either. But what if he tried? What if NK had to persuade CW that this was the correct course of action? Alternatively, what if both RH and CW acted to strengthen NK's resolve that it was correct? In all these kinds of confrontations there is the possibility of an 'unknown' element, which might affect decisions about where analytically to locate the conflict: is it really between CM and NK and not CM and RH

for example? Or perhaps it is between NK and RH, or NK and CW; or even between NK and other advisors? This particular problem may be resolved by a little further research, but would even that be enough?   Is more information needed on the background to the conflict in question? What are the underlying causes? What other players are involved in it? These are the kinds of contextual questions which pose serious problems for the condition of direct and open confrontation and expose shortcomings in *IP*'s ability to illuminate power's exercise in parties.

Stage Three: As I have argued, one of the benefits of these accounts is a parsimonious neatness and clarity: the exercise of power is conceived as an isolated conflict between two individuals, which aids the clear identification of those with power and those without it in a given situation (subject to some of the caveats I have mentioned above). But how helpful is individualisation of conflicts really? The answer to the question of where power lies can depend on where one chooses to locate the conflict. The focus at present is very narrow. If it is widened a little, new questions and possibilities open up. What does it say for party democracy if leadership possesses such a powerful resource in the form of patronage, for example? What, alternatively, does it say about party power that the Leader of the Opposition could not allow an individual with such expertise in justice issues to join a body designed to scrutinise the Government on such matters? To what extent does it in fact display a weakness in the leadership itself? Did it reflect the balance of power between RH, NK and other elements in the party? Is it possible that NK felt unable to make an appointment like this because of the anticipated reaction of Conservatives and the sections of the press that supported them? Should the analysis extend beyond this isolated conflict to identify from where else pressure, real or imagined, explicit or implicit, might have been exerted on NK? A slightly different answer is also forthcoming if the focus is shifted from the direct conflict over

membership of the committee to more strategic concerns. Looked at in this way, NK exerts a more *strategic* kind of power in blocking CM's membership: by denying CM the opportunity to raise inconvenient issues in such an arena. In other words, the parsimony that modelling conflicts along these lines can bring becomes detrimental to providing an adequate explanation of power.

Stage Four: The way in which *IP* needs to be modelled means that participants are either understood as agents, acting independently on their own preferences, or as resources to be used by other agents. However, this closes off other explanatory possibilities. For example, since the Chief Whip plays the formal role in putting forward members for selection, it could be argued that in order to get what he wants NK would also need to exercise power over CW whether by means of manipulation, persuasion, or force. However, this assumes that CW *has* a choice (i.e. makes a rational decision, even if it is a result of manipulation). But does he? The role of Chief Whip, and its relationship to the role of Party Leader is a feature of organisation and hierarchy rather than necessarily personal loyalty or an individual exercise of power.[9] One might say that CW makes the 'choice' to obey NK's commands. However, this does not account for the extent to which 'obedience' is a matter of fulfilling tasks and following rules and formal practice. In the present dimension of analysis the only alternative is to treat CW as a resource: a channel by which the leader's wishes are communicated to the Committee of Selection. But given CW's role in the party machine, organisation and rules may have an important role in shaping and stimulating responses too. To be effective, any understanding of power in parties needs to account for these kinds of formal roles and functions that shape individual behaviour.

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[9] Labour Chief Whips were elected by the Parliamentary Party. However, it would be a difficult job to do without the leader's confidence and later preferment for other jobs that are in the gift of the leader need to be taken into account.

To summarise, when it comes to illuminating the exercise of power, the weaknesses of *IP* are fourfold: firstly, it does not and cannot account for additional, unobserved elements, whether that means individuals who are unaccounted for, or agents failing to act to resist or defend their interests; secondly, it isolates conflicts and treats them as unique, ignoring possible underlying causes in other conflicts, in hidden tensions, in differing social and cultural attributes; thirdly, its parsimony, though a helpful tool, also makes it too simplistic by ignoring the nuances and multi-faceted nature of conflict; fourthly, it cannot always distinguish easily between a resource and what actually might be another potential source of *power*, e.g. another actor or the organisational context in which the confrontation takes place.

Example 1 Conclusion

Analysis of the struggle between CM and NK highlights how *IP* can illuminate some particular aspects of power's exercise, whilst falling short in others.   It provides insight into the power relationship between the leader and a backbencher in a very direct sense, including the resources they each have access to and how they use them, but it fails to illuminate the more contextual dimensions of power: for instance, what was the role of outside forces like the press, the legal establishment and the government in forcing NK's hand? What role did organisational rules or conventions regarding the leader's role in these kinds of appointments play? A shortcoming of *IP* as a dimension of power is that it is unable to accommodate these factors in its explanation. They may at times appear as resources used by actors in power games, but they are not themselves regarded as sources of power. The picture presented of power so far is therefore only partial: one-dimensional, in fact.

Example 2: A Coup in Tower Hamlets

My second test situation concerns a major split within the Labour Group on Tower Hamlets Council that began just five months after the Labour Party re-took control in 1994 after eight years in opposition to the Liberals / Liberal Democrats.[10] The conflict apparently arose because of a profound disagreement over reversing the controversial decentralisation programme of the previous administration.[11,12] John Biggs, the new council leader, wanted to include guarantees that existing senior officers would be automatically considered for new posts in the restructured council, but Bangladeshi and left-wing members of the Group, including Dennis Twomey, combined forces to argue that they should only be guaranteed an interview, thus facilitating opportunities for ethnic minority candidates who, it was felt, were under-represented at this level.[13] This was a sensitive issue given the Borough's recent political history.[14] The rebel amendment was passed by 20 votes to 16, to the fury of Biggs and the executive and the concern of local trade union representatives, not to mention the party regionally and nationally. Moreover, it sharpened the divisions in the Labour Group and precipitated a tussle over the leadership of the council between Biggs (backed broadly by the right and centre of the party) and Twomey (backed by the left-faction and Bangladeshi

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[10] The Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party had merged in 1988 to form the Liberal Democrats, thus the administration began in 1986 as a Liberal one and ended in 1994 as Liberal Democrat one.

[11] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[12] The previous administration had reorganised the borough into smaller 'neighbourhoods', devolving much of the administration and management of council services. The new council saw as one of its primary tasks to reverse decentralisation and restore Tower Hamlets council as a single bureaucracy.

[13] Edward Pilkington, 'Jobs Row Splits Labour Council.' *The Guardian* October 7, 1994.

[14] Tower Hamlets had come to national prominence in 1993 when a far-right British National Party candidate was elected at council by-election on the Isle of Dogs (he was defeated in the 1994 borough-wide elections). Controversy also surrounded allegedly racist literature being distributed by the Liberal Democrats during the 1994 elections, in which the party's national leader, Paddy Ashdown, had seen fit to intervene to the chagrin of some local activists ('BNP "Racists of Millwall" Are Routed' *Evening Standard*, May 6 1994).

members).[15] The party's annual general meeting that followed was a difficult, fractious affair that *'went on for three weeks, which must be something like the longest on record between the beginning and the end, with the Greater London Labour Party being very active in-between.'*[16] At this meeting, Twomey had directly challenged Biggs for the leadership, but the result was a dead-heat. Since neither candidate was prepared to back down, the Greater London Labour Party (GLLP) was forced to intervene.   The initial nature of the intervention was to mediate between Twomey and Biggs in an attempt to resolve the matter peacefully. However, this changed when

> *having recognised that this wasn't going to happen, they were fairly brutal about removing him as the favoured candidate. I went along to this meeting ... expecting to be put under pressure to stand down in John's favour and there was some pressure towards that, but they had obviously decided that John couldn't win and they effectively told him he would have to stand down. Pretty bluntly. Which he did.*[17]

As a result, Biggs was forced to relinquish his post after only a year and Twomey became leader of the Labour Group (and thus the Council) in May 1995.[18] The immediate interpretation of this situation in terms of *IP* is that it was a successful exercise of power by Twomey (DT) over Biggs (JB), which is demonstrated by the fact that the former achieved the goal of taking over the leadership of the Group from the latter against his will and therefore was in a position to advance his policy on

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[15] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[16] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[17] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[18] See Will Bennet, 'Whiff of Scandal Haunts Troubled Council Victors Rulers.' *The Independent* May 27, 1995.

recruitment to the restructured administration. I will test the strength of this assertion by analysing the situation more closely using the guide questions.

Strengths of Individualistic Power as an Explanation

<u>*Stage One: Visible Conflicts of Interest Between Agents*</u>

   a) Which individuals were involved (who was *A*, who was *B*)?

   b) What were their identifiable interests / preferences (in this particular scenario)?
      What ends did they want to achieve?

A visible conflict can clearly be identified in this situation between two individuals, JB and DT, for the leadership in the Labour Group. There were two parts to this conflict: the first one was based on a particular policy towards the recruitment of senior staff; however this precipitated a more significant conflict from the point of view of the party between JB and DT for the leadership of the Group itself. The preferences of each actor are therefore straightforward in the light of *IP*: DT wished to become leader of the Group in place of JB, whilst JB's preference was to remain in position.

<u>*Stage Two: Open Confrontation and Clear Outcomes*</u>.

   a) How and where was the conflict manifested? How did it play out?

   b) Was the conflict direct or indirect?

There was an open and direct confrontation which took place initially at the Labour Group's annual general meeting. The conflict came out into the open in the form of a challenge by DT to JB's leadership. However, there was *not* a clear outcome initially since the result of the vote was a dead heat. Thus the intervention of a third party, the GLLP, was needed to break the impasse. Does this mean that the confrontation could

still be regarded as 'open'? It had, after all, moved out of the local party's formal decision-making structures, into negotiations led by the GLLP. I would argue yes it was still open, especially since regional parties like the GLLP have an important formal role in the resolution of conflicts in the Labour Party. Because the confrontation could not be resolved at local level, the next, natural step was for it to be dealt with at regional level. In other words, this should not necessarily be regarded as an attempt to exercise power in a clandestine way. The involvement of a third party, however, opens a question as to whether the conflict could still be seen as a direct conflict between two actors. I will deal with this question in more detail when I discuss some of the shortcomings *IP* displays in explaining this situation below.

Stage Three: Analysis of Outcomes

a) Who won? Who lost? Was the latter a direct result of the former?

b) Were the outcomes as intended by the winner? If not, why not? If so, how?

c) What were the causal relationships / directions of causation? How did the actions of a 'controlling' *A* cause those of a 'dependent' *B*?

Whatever the setting, viewed as a direct conflict between DT and JB, the eventual outcome is clear: DT won because he became Leader of the Labour Group, and JB lost because he was forced to step down from that position. Thus the latter was a direct result of the former. Given that DT openly challenged JB in a contest, it is clear that this outcome was the intended one. However, whether it was DT's *original* intention to challenge for the leadership (the initial conflict was over a matter of policy), and whether the *means* by which the eventual outcome came about (i.e. with the intervention of the GLLP) was as intended is a different question. In the first case, it is possible to see how a dispute about one issue (over council restructuring in this case)

might trigger a clash over another (the leadership itself), and lead to an adjustment in the preferences or interests driving the conflict between two agents. In the second, DT may have hoped to achieve a decisive victory in the initial vote, which may have provided DT's leadership with stronger legitimacy. As it was, it may appear to his opponents that he got his way at least partly by surreptitious back-room methods and this puts a question mark over whether it could really be called a clear outcome, except in a formal sense. Again, I will tackle this problem among others below.

Stage Four: Deployment of Resources

a) What resources have been used by actors in the pursuit of their interests / preferences? How were they used? What resources did they not use?

DT's resources were: firstly, an issue which provided a motivation for organised opposition to the existing leadership (the appointment of ethnic minorities to senior posts); secondly, as a result he had enough numbers to damage JB irrevocably, even though he did not have enough votes to win outright; thirdly, as a result of this, I would suggest he had 'momentum', that is, in inflicting such a wound he was able to undermine the legitimacy of the existing leadership even if he was not necessarily able to provide decisively for his own. JB's story, as with so many in his situation, is one of lost or diminished resources. He was the incumbent and current leader and as such had legitimacy and authority. However, as I have suggested, this was fatally damaged by the vote. Consequently, he lost a further asset that may have been in his favour initially: the support of the GLLP. DT subsequently gained their endorsement in his place.

To summarise, then, a clear conflict between two actors over the leadership of the Labour Group is identified, which is the key strength of *IP* as a dimension of power.

This was directly manifested in a challenge at the Group's Annual General Meeting. There was a clear result eventually, but some potential difficulties for *IP* are posed by the protracted nature of the conflict, its progression from a specific issue to the broader question of leadership, its transition into less public arenas and the involvement of a third party in the form of the GLLP. Moreover, there are some particular problems with the last point that I deal with in more detail below. An interesting point about resources in this case is that, for DT, they seemed to be relatively small to begin with but grew in value as the confrontation went on. Momentum seems to be particularly important in strengthening an actor's position and opportunities for victory. Overall, *IP* once again shows its value in pinpointing conflicts in preferences and therefore where power relations between individuals come into play, but there are ambiguities in its ability to explain some of the complexities of power's exercise in parties, as I will discuss next.

Weaknesses of Individualistic Power as an Explanation

Stage One: The first question that can be asked about the above analysis is: can this conflict really be characterised as one between two individuals? There are two reasons why this is may be in doubt. Firstly, the conflict between DT and JB in fact has its roots in the ideological and political preferences of two groups: the left faction and the Bengali contingent (both backing DT) shared the aim of changing the representative make-up of the council administration so that it a) better reflected the local population, which was around 30 per cent Bangladeshi in origin (thus benefitting the latter's community), and b) was more likely to be in tune with the council's political priorities (i.e. more left-leaning) particularly if it was run predominantly by members of the left-

wing faction.[19] JB's support, on the other hand, came from the pragmatic centre and right of the party.[20] In some ways the parsimonious quality of *IP*, in which a conflict which may be quite complex can be boiled down to '*A*' versus '*B*' for analytical convenience, can be seen as a strength. It can illuminate very effectively *one* dimension of power's exercise (that is between agents). But it falls short in other ways. It would be oversimplifying this situation, for example, to present it as simply a stand-off between two demagogues and their acolytes. Beneath the surface is a complex series of battles and struggles and sometimes complex alliances between groups and factions.

Secondly, there was a third player: this time in the form of the Greater London Labour Party (GLLP), with a key mediating role to play. The GLLP was not just a resource to be deployed as the initial analysis suggests but had a clear set of interests and preferences of its own and a status and legitimacy that gave it the potential to intervene decisively in the dispute to secure those interests. The GLLP was effectively an agent of the national party organisation. As such, it had an interest in the good image of the party locally and nationally, and in maintaining stability and order. Officers had the power and responsibility to intervene in such disputes and would have had an interest in making sure that the party did not split or collapse into chaos. Furthermore, party leaders were on constant vigilance for anything that might feed the seemingly endless appetite of the press for stories about 'loony left' Labour councils in London and elsewhere.[21] Although adding a third player complicates the analysis somewhat as I have argued, it satisfies some of the prerequisites of *IP* as a dimension of power, in that it treats the GLLP as an agent, an actor with a set of desires that it seeks to satisfy in

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[19] Concerns had been expressed in some Labour quarters (whether justified or not) that the Liberal / Liberal Democrat administrations had conducted a politically motivated recruitment strategy (Interview, Mike Tyrrell).

[20] Interview, Mark Taylor

[21] Interview, Mark Taylor; Interview, Frank Dobson.

competitive situations with other actors. However, this highlights further weaknesses in the approach which I will discuss further under '*Stage Four*' below.

Stage Two: There were in fact (at least) two stages to this conflict, which is significant to the efficacy of *IP*. The initial conflict and the rebels' victory over the leadership precipitated a further struggle over the control of the Labour Group. In other words, DT's victory in the first conflict generated resources (authority, organisation, momentum, confidence) that made a further, more fundamental, challenge viable. At the same time, JB's apparent opposition to the amendment and reluctance to concede damaged his legitimacy and failed to close down the confrontation that had begun. A wider rift opened up, leading to a leadership challenge. Therefore, one conflict can act as a trigger for others. What is observed is part of a chain of events rather than the simple, one-off conflict that this dimension of power will tend to prefer. Examining just the initial conflict, DT got what he wanted by decisively winning the vote on the policy matter in dispute. However, the events that followed suggest that this may have been either a) part of an intended strategy, or b) an unintended outcome of the initial conflict. Either way it highlights the problems in treating conflicts as isolated incidents in a closed system. It means the full extent of power's exercise cannot be properly understood. One conflict can change the landscape or widen the scope of existing conflicts. These were not, then, two separate incidents and two separate 'victories' but part of the same struggle, whether intended or otherwise.

Stage Three: As I have already argued, one of the main problems that the formulation of *IP* has is that it does not easily accommodate third parties with independent interests or preferences. This creates problems for understanding the outcomes of more complex conflict situations because the result is not necessarily binary. Causal relations are more

difficult to establish. A potential way of using the formulations of *IP* to understand this three-way conflict might be to conceptualise it as two separate conflicts: one between JB and the GLLP and one between DT and the GLLP. The GLLP's primary interest was in stability, ideally by maintaining the status quo. However, DT's successful resistance to the GLLP in one conflict forced the latter down its hierarchy of preferences in the other. Thus, a weakened JB was effectively *forced* to stand down by the GLLP and the latter's interests prevailed (although not necessarily first choice). In this case, then, it might be more accurate to argue that it was not DT, but the *GLLP* that successfully exercised power over JB by persuading or forcing him to stand down. However, although this meant that the GLLP's interests were met to some extent (by maintaining peace and stability), it was on DT's terms, because he was able successfully to resist being asked to stand down himself and this outcome was undoubtedly not the GLLP's first preference given DT's association with the left and the party's concern with maintaining a moderate image. As Dowding argues 'changing the choice situation of people is … an important way of altering their individual and collective power' (Dowding 1996, 24). This is arguably precisely what DT (with the backing of an alliance of factions) did to regional party officials, effectively leaving the latter little choice but to act in his favour. Quite apart from the fact that this once again treats the GLLP as an agent (which I will discuss further below), breaking multiple conflicts into a series of analytically separate incidents is problematic. Whilst it may be a convenient way of simplifying investigation, does it really enrich the understanding of power? How far should it be taken? Should the relationships each actor has with each of his or her supporters be included, for example?

George Tsebelis (1990) has attempted to deal with this problem of complexity by arguing that context matters and *can* be accounted for in a rational choice context. He

proposes the idea of 'nested games' as 'a way of transplanting context into game theory' (Tsebelis 1990, 245). He argues that accounting for the various other conflicts at different levels of the party is important because crucial to the strategies that actors choose is the pay-offs they receive as a result. The other conflicts in which those under analysis may be nested influence the payoffs of different actors in nested games, 'and the payoffs influence the choice of strategies' (Ibid., 246). Thus, he would argue, isolating the conflict between DT and JB without understanding how pay-offs are affected by other ongoing conflicts in which it is 'nested' (e.g. between rival leadership groups or factions, or the electoral competition between Labour and the Liberal Democrats in Tower Hamlets), means the picture of power's exercise is incomplete. The danger is that the attempt to include every actor that might appear to be influential in some way on a situation may result in an unmanageable series of intricate relationships and incidents that have no clearly theorised connection with one another. In other words, it treats the party as no more than an aggregate collection of individual actors, each with their own interests or preferences, rather than as a *party*, that is, as a collectivity with a shared interest in exercising power within a wider political system. Therefore, Tsebelis does not fully address the problem of context, but simply extends the number of conflicts to be included or acknowledged in the analysis.

Stage Four: The problems raised by treating the GLLP as a third actor could arguably be simply dealt with within the framework of *IP* by treating the GLLP instead as a *resource* deployed by DT against JB as the initial analysis suggests. In that case, it could be argued that there was a form of indirect manipulation in which DT made use of available resources (including the GLLP) to restructure JB's incentives, thus making it in JB's interest to back down in favour of DT. However, this does not ring true because the GLLP was not simply a resource that DT was free to use or not to use, but an entity

with apparent interests of its own and a crucially important influence on the outcome. The GLLP was arguably able to 'persuade' JB to step down, because of the authority regional party officers held in the party hierarchy. Given the GLLP's interests and role, it might be better to argue that DT's 'victory' was in part a by-product of the pursuit of the party's wider interests, i.e. it was an indirect result of the GLLP's 'desire' for stability. The GLLP is therefore conceived as an agent (rather than an aggregate of individuals who may themselves have conflicts to resolve). But this is also problematic: it demonstrates neither an adequate understanding of the GLLP's role nor its relationship to power. Regional party organisations like the GLLP have an *organisational* status and function, in other words a bureaucratic role. The 'preference' it appears to have for settlement is better understood as an imperative towards order that is inherent in its functioning. That is, the GLLP has a bureaucratic 'self-interest' in upholding its own position and reputation and its role within the broader party, indicating a more bureaucratic dimension of organisational power that needs to be accounted for. *IP* has no means of explaining this and so has to conceptualise it either as a resource or as an 'agent'. Neither of these is satisfactory in my opinion and I would argue that the result was in fact partly an outcome of the GLLP's *function*. From this point of view, it can be argued that both DT and JB were subject to an organisational discipline that was more routine and anonymous than it was an expression of agentically centred desire. In other words, there was an entirely different dimension of power at work here.

In summary, the discussion above demonstrates that focusing the analysis of power around individual actors (agents), their preferences and the conflicts they give rise to can be a helpful simplification tool in the study of power's exercise. It allows the analyst to cut through complexities and get to the 'essence': a struggle between agents,

resulting in the victory of one set of interests or preferences over another. However, the first danger of this is that by 'cutting through' the complexity of a given situation, one may actually be ignoring important aspects of power's operation in parties. In this case, the intervention of a third party indicates difficulties, not just for the simplicity of the two-way conflict as a point of analysis, but for the very conceptualisation of 'actors' or 'agents' as the only meaningful vehicle for power's exercise. Second, by focusing on agents, *IP* can oversimplify things by ignoring the complexity of the relationships between individuals, the groups to which they belong and the alliances they form with others. These kinds of problems suggest that explanatory power of *IP* is limited and should be complemented with theoretical perspectives that *can* account for these complexities. The agency that is accorded ontologically to individual actors endows them with foresight, intent and interests which in practice are often more ambiguous, complex or obscure. They may in any case be relatively impotent in relation to more anonymous, impersonal forces associated with collective action and bureaucratic imperatives.

Example 2 Conclusion

Overall, the discussion above illustrates the shortcomings of a one-dimensional approach to the analysis of power in parties. There is a twofold problem: on the one hand, there is likely to be more than one relationship behind any conflict, which *IP* finds it hard to account for; on the other hand, there are structures that *IP* ignores completely. A purely individualised understanding of power cannot really account for the complexities of how – or even, where – power really works. In this situation, for example, as well as differing balances of power and resources between JB and DT, there is also that between JB and the GLLP, and between the GLLP and DT to consider, at a

minimum. There is also a problem with conceptualising power solely as property of agents. Although it is possible to acknowledge the power of organisational units or collectives by treating them as agents for analytical purposes, it means that powerful parts of the organisation become anthropomorphised which, to my mind, means that the nature of their power is misunderstood. The GLLP is not an agent with a desire for order and unity but a part of the party with an organisational imperative *towards* order. Furthermore, in any scenario, there is context, background and preceding exercises of power that changes the landscape. For example, further research reveals that the most likely alternative leader to Biggs was not in fact Twomey, but Rajan Jalal Uddin. However, he had been suspended (for allegedly sending forged, racist faxes to other councillors) and the intervention of the party nationally in the person of Frank Dobson ensured that the suspension was extended to cover the period of the leadership election.[22] Moreover, all of this has to be understood in the context of the ongoing process of party reform. Tony Blair had become leader of the Party the year before and 'New Labour' with its image of moderation and discipline as a responsible, moderate, united, governing party, was becoming well established in the public mind. Surely this had some bearing on the GLLP's eventual support for Twomey, thus preventing further potentially high profile political bloodshed (although ideologically JB may have been preferred).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on Individualistic Power, the first dimension of power in my framework. I began by laying out its principal methodological and ontological claims and identified a series of questions to operationalise the analysis of its strengths

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[22] 'Tower Hamlets Leadership Contender Ruled Out', *Local Government Chronicle* 3 April 1995.

and weaknesses as a means of understanding how power operates within political parties. Following that, I then examined two situations from the Labour Party's recent history, both of which drew on the accounts of participants whom I interviewed. Looking at these events through the lens of Individualistic Power is helpful, I concluded, inasmuch as it can draw attention to conflicts between individuals and explicate them in clear, parsimonious terms as a struggle whose ingredients and outcomes are clearly observable. But Individualistic Power is a *relational* concept. It is a property of individuals and is exercised by altering the behaviour or choices or other individuals. In order to uncover this dimension of power's exercise, an analysis of particular situations of confrontation between individual actors needs to take place. It requires that the analyst accounts for the intentions and preferences with which individuals enter a conflict. This is why they are *agents* and not merely individuals. As a result, it can be calculated on the basis of the outcomes of that conflict who has exercised power over whom.

This approach, then, can highlight certain kinds of power relationship in a political party. My examples show that it does have utility in helping the analyst identify when a certain kind of power is being exercised and it therefore contributes to an appreciation of where and how power operates within political parties. However, because Individualistic Power focuses directly on individual actors and their preferences or interests, it is not particularly effective at addressing the wider causes of that conflict. My analysis suggested that in order to apply this model, complex situations between a number of actors had to be considerably simplified. This was not very satisfactory: applying the analysis to actual cases seemed to leave a lot of relationships and power relations invisible or ambiguous. Although Tsebelis' 'nested games' approach offers some response to this because it means that contexts and other involved parties are not

as easily ignored as they might be in Individualistic Power situations, it does not deal with the central problem in my view. Conducting numerous bilateral exchanges in order to build up a fuller picture does not amount to a proper understanding of contextual, structural and narrative dimensions of power that the actual history, especially as it is recounted by my interviewees, suggests. The strength of the approach in terms of analytical clarity was also therefore its weakness in failing to identify or locate these dimensions of power. In short, to gain a fuller sense of how power operates in political parties, it is necessary to include additional dimensions of analysis.

To summarise the discussion so far, then, if the purpose of an analysis is simply to explain an isolated, unique situation and compare the *relative power* of two individuals, then Individualistic Power can be highly informative. However, if the purpose is to uncover the operation and exercise of power in an organisational context, such as in a democratic political party, then it cannot provide enough explanatory power. My conclusion is therefore that although it illuminates very effectively one dimension of power's exercise, Individualistic Power is seriously lacking on its own and requires supplementary analysis if the kind of power operating in political parties is to be identified, located and assessed.

***Three*: Strategic Power**

The previous chapter set out the first dimension of power in my framework, Individualistic Power. It conceptualised power as an agentic capacity exercised in the confrontations that arise when the interests or preferences of two (or more) actors conflict. To say someone has 'exercised power' is to say that they have been able to secure their interests or preferences over and above those of others. The parsimony of this approach means it is possible to elicit who powerful party actors are by observing the frequency with which they are able to secure their preferences over others. That it facilitates this kind of straightforward analysis makes it a very attractive approach, particularly effective at illuminating the power relations between agents in specific situations. However, I concluded that it is a rather narrow definition of power that requires a level of simplification that may sometimes conceal more than it reveals. In short, it is literally one-dimensional. In this and the following chapters I will introduce additional dimensions of analysis that will provide a fuller picture of power's exercise in parties. This chapter will concentrate on Strategic Power, the second dimension in my framework.

What is Strategic Power?

Max Weber argues that when it comes to competitive struggles those who have more of the personal qualities required to succeed will typically do so (give or take accident and luck). However, he qualifies this by adding that 'what qualities are important depends on the *conditions* in which the conflict or competition takes place', including 'the systems of order to which the behaviour of the parties is oriented' (Weber 1978, 38-9; emphasis added). In other words, individuals or groups may gain ascendancy not only

because they are personally superior, but because 'social relationships may be influenced by the creation of differential advantages which favour one type over another' (Ibid., 40). In other words, the actions of individuals and the resources they have are not the only indicators of power. The *conditions* under which they pursue those interests; the rules that govern social and political relationships; who designs, controls, directs and arbitrates them, are all crucial advantages that underpin the condition of the powerful. These are the kind of concerns underlying Strategic Power. To explain further, it is helpful to turn to E.E. Schattschneider.

Schattschneider argues that a purely individualistic understanding of politics (and thus power) is naïve. He is explicit about the limits of rational choice and similar models based on economic assumptions like Downs' *Homo Politicus*, arguing that

> the economic interpretation of politics has always appealed to those
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> political philosophers who have sought a single prime mover … The
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> logic of economic determinism is to identify the origins of conflict and
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> to assume the conclusion. This kind of thought has some of the
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> earmarks of an illusion (Schattschneider 1960, 36).

Power, Schattschneider argues, can also be regarded as a more 'strategic' phenomenon that is found in *procedure*, and which is concerned with *means* rather than ends (Schattschneider 1960, 70). According to his analysis, there is a limit to how often an individual can continuously take on opponent after opponent in gladiatorial confrontations. If there were not, it would demonstrate a kind of power, but the grip on it would be tenuous and continually under threat. Much more effective would be to conserve energy and resources by controlling the likelihood of conflict arising in the first place. This view is illustrated by Neil Kinnock's reflection on his time as leader of

the Labour Party. He recognised that 'leadership will-power is not an adequate engine of reform' (Kinnock 1994, 536). In other words, to exercise power successfully in political contexts, will, intention and action are helpful but by no means enough. Individualistic Power might demonstrate who is more 'powerful' in one or a series of isolated incidents, but it does not reveal much about how power is secured by dominant actors. In other words, how does *A* not only secure victory over *B*, but maintain ongoing supremacy? The answer to this question lies in the ability to influence, define and shape the *conditions* under which power is exercised and control the *means* by which it is exercised; to exercise power of a more *strategic* kind in other words. In sum, the analysis requires the addition of a second dimension of power that accounts for this.

The Key Components of Strategic Power

My understanding of Strategic Power is drawn chiefly from two sources. The first of these is Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) argument (in response to Dahl) that power has a second face in which what they call 'nondecisions' are as important as observable decisions. This is where I share some common ground with Lukes, who recognises this 'second face' as representing a 'two-dimensional' approach to power which he seeks to build on (see Lukes 1974, 16-20). Bachrach and Baratz's concept of nondecision is in part an operationalisation of Schattschneider's concept of the 'mobilisation of bias', my second source. It is because of my emphasis on this latter work, which is more specifically centred on how the scope of conflict is controlled in political organisations, that my approach differs from that of Lukes.

Schattschneider draws attention to 'the ancient observation that the battle is not necessarily won by the strong nor the race by the swift' (Schattschneider 1960, 5-6): controlling the *scope* of conflict is far more effective than wasting precious resources in

open conflict. The effects of the political process need to be understood because 'everything changes once a conflict gets into the political arena' (Ibid., 36). The most decisive way of preventing conflict, he says, is 'simply to provide no arena for it or to create no public agency with power to do anything about it' (Ibid., 69). Political organisation, he argues, is always biased in some form or another, exploiting certain kinds of conflict and suppressing others, because 'organisation is the mobilisation of bias'. Therefore 'some issues are organised into politics while others are organised out' (Ibid, 69). These are themes built on by Bachrach and Baratz who argue that the underlying biases built into the system of decision-making means that power is not exercised only when *A* gets *B* to do something that *B* would otherwise not do, but

> when *A* devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to *A*. To the extent that *A* succeeds in doing this, *B* is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to *A*'s set of preferences (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 7)

In other words, procedures, institutions and rules can govern what questions are considered in the first place and leaders might seek to use these to their advantage in a number of ways: by seeking to reorder decision-making norms so as to exclude certain issues and voices; by manipulating existing rules and procedures in order to block challenges and engineer victories; by exercising control over access to decision-making processes in the first place, ensuring that certain voices are excluded more or less permanently.

It is possible to identify five characteristic components of this dimension of power:

1. Conflict and power are intimately related. As with Individualistic Power it requires a *conflict of interest*, or a *grievance* for an exercise of Strategic Power to be possible.

2. Strategic Power focuses on the process and scope decision-making, rather than decisions per se. Thus, although power and conflict are closely related and power is exercised in a situation of interest driven conflict, it is *mediated by organisational rules and norms*. Thus, conflicts may not become visible because they are ruled out, excluded or go unrecognised as genuinely admissible grievances.

3. Power is *strategic* in that it is focused on the means by which conflicts are managed. The ability of an actor to secure his or her interests is dependent not just on prevailing in confrontation, but on an ability to prevent others from being able to secure their interests over him or her. One actor can therefore exercise power over another by manipulation of rules or norms to *avoid* or short-circuit confrontation.

4. Inequalities in power are *amplified* by organisation. Strategic Power is dependent on the ability of certain actors to control aspects of the decision-making process. In other words, there is an inequality embedded in the organisational norms and rules of the political party that means some voices are more likely to be heard than others.

5. This exercise of power is therefore obscured behind legitimate rules, procedures and norms. Identifying an exercise of power centres on how particular

individuals or groups predominate and control the agenda whilst others go unheard. The objects of analysis are formal and informal rules and norms, in whose favour they operate and what people, in what roles and positions, are disfavoured by them.

I will now turn to the question of how to identify this dimension of power. Its identification is less straightforward than *IP* since surface appearances cannot be taken for granted. Where there appears to be peace there may be conflict beneath the surface, and where there is conflict its full extent may be obscured.

Identifying Strategic Power

My analysis suggests that there are three stages to the analysis of Strategic Power [henceforth *SP*]. The first stage is to a) examine the prevailing norms of decision-making and participation and the kinds of voices and issues that are and are not heard; b) determine which individuals or groups are seeking to reorganise and alter those norms in their favour; and c) which individuals or groups are seeking to defend the prevailing system. The second stage of analysis looks to establish the existence of grievances that have somehow not been addressed, or potential confrontations that have been by-passed or short-circuited in some way by a) identifying what opportunities exist to express preferences; and b) at what point and how they have been thwarted. The third stage of analysis will identify how the scope of decision-making may have been affected by the exploitation or reordering of norms, or the reform of procedures and rules. How are certain voices and issues excluded from the decision-making process, and how does this secure the power of certain individuals or groups?

In summary, *SP* is deployed by agents in pursuit of their interests, but it is mediated and can be amplified by organisation. This dimension of power widens the scope of analysis, focusing on how power is exercised by using organisation strategically to circumvent confrontation. Powerful actors can maintain dominance by engineering the exclusion or dilution of threats by using the bureaucratic resources of organisation as instruments of power. The three stages of analysis set out above gives rise to a series of questions which are used to guide the analysis:

Stage One: Prevailing Norms

  a) What are the prevailing decision-making norms of the organisation and what is their effect on the access of certain voices to decision-making arenas and the airing of certain issues?
  b) What people or groups are there seeking to reorganise these prevailing norms?
  c) What people or groups are committed to defending prevailing norms?

Stage Two: Blocking Preferences and Demands

  a) What opportunities do members have to express grievances or preferences or make demands?
  b) How and when are they thwarted?

Stage Three: The Scope of Decision-Making

  a) How do actors use organisational rules and procedures to silence certain voices, and preclude certain issues from getting a hearing?

b) How does their exploitation secure the dominant positions of particular individuals or groups?

Application: Testing Strategic Power's Explanatory Scope

So far in this chapter, I have set out what I understand to be the main components and conditions of *SP*. It now remains for me to apply it and to test its effectiveness as a dimension of power in the context of the research I have undertaken amongst Labour Party activists and elites. There are some challenges to be cognisant of here. An exercise of *SP* may be hard to identify since it is unlikely to be recorded in minutes, say, or accounted for in official records. Also, those who have lost out may not understand clearly *how* they were actually excluded. After all, those who benefit may want to conceal their intentions, if indeed they are aware of the full implications of their actions (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970, 47). Whilst acknowledging these potential difficulties, then, the rest of this chapter focuses on three examples which illuminate different aspects of *SP*. Using the questions as a guide, I will determine what this dimension adds to the understanding of power in parties and assess what limitations need to be addressed.

Firstly, I examine changes to the Labour Party's policy-making structures that were consolidated under the banner of *Partnership in Power* in 1997 and ask how they have affected the kinds of issues and voices that get a hearing. Secondly, I look at a specific example of reform: the introduction of One Member One Vote in 1993. Of particular interest here is how the rule changes themselves were secured by exploiting decision-making rules and norms. Thirdly, I will look at the different ways in which local parties

have been able to put up barriers against *people*, excluding voices from important centres of local influence putting up barriers to membership or office.

Example 1: The 'Partnership in Power' Reforms

The Labour Party Conference was for many years the key 'public forum within the Party in which all sections and elements could contribute' and 'an arena in which the contending forces identified themselves and their opponents and obtained the 'feel' of strengths and weaknesses' (Minkin 1978, 241). The culture of resolutions, composites and debates all centred on conference was, for many activists, the highlight of the year:

> *I used to enjoy it. It was really full on. A massive fringe, there was always a dozen meetings to choose from. And you'd do loads of networking; meet people from up and down the country. On the conference floor there was always a bit of an edge, a little bit of unpredictability.*[1]

By 1997, despite many piecemeal reforms, the National Executive Committee (NEC) and Annual Conference were still the party's key policy-making bodies. Traditionally, resolutions came from all sectors of the organisation to the Conference, where they were composited (see below) and then discussed on the Conference floor. Those adopted became party policy. The process of policy-making was long and convoluted, but it allowed the smallest of local branches a small chance of influencing policy. They could debate and submit motions to the General Management Committee (GC) for consideration as a potential constituency party (CLP) submission to Party Conference. It was also a means by which local activists could, in some small way, challenge

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[1] Interview, Mike Davis

leaders, perhaps even defeat them. Indeed, this seemed to be the primary purpose for some, since the preliminary agenda of the conference was 'dominated by the resolutions and amendments of the affiliated organisations' which were characterised by 'criticism of the Party's official policy or by proposals for its change' (Minkin 1978, 64). For many activists, these powers were greatly valued: '*you did feel in control*', said one, '*and rightly or wrongly, we thought we could influence the government through the conference. Getting resolutions to conference seemed incredibly important at the time*'.[2]

But for leaders, the existing arrangements were embarrassing and damaging to the party's image and therefore its electoral prospects:

> *The party conference was bloody useless. It was bad presentationally*
> *– we must have been the only party in the Western world who got all*
> *that exposure on television, for a week of conference and actually went*
> *down in the polls as a result – and it was bad for policy formation.*[3]

There were concerns that the policy-making process as it stood was too confrontational for the TV age. The adversarial nature of the process characterised by set-piece battles between 'left' and 'right' or activists and leaders was regarded as damaging. Yet there were tools available for ensuring unwanted proposals were defeated, especially the process of compositing.[4] One former Cabinet minister told me that this was a process leaders in fact relied on to some extent:

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[2] Interview, Jan Burnell

[3] Interview, Frank Dobson

[4] Compositing was designed to reduce the huge number of resolutions by amalgamating duplicates and those with overlapping wording and themes. On the surface 'it was a purely technical process' but it was also highly political, with 'a subterranean pattern of politics with its own tactics and skills' (Minkin

the machine would always sort things out in the compositing process.

If there was a proposal that we didn't want then it would machinate

one loony proposal into the composite and it wouldn't go through.[5]

However, these processes were not one hundred per cent reliable and '*it had got the*

point where the proposals we didn't want did *go through!*'[6] Even where they did not,

the Conference had become a means by which internal tensions were unnecessarily

publicly exposed and often dominated by

a great divide between the Parliamentary Labour Party [PLP] and the

rest of the Party, where the Party saw what the PLP were saying as a

betrayal of the true cause of socialism and the PLP saw the NEC and

the Conference as the albatross around our necks.[7]

The *Partnership in Power* reforms changed all that. Blair 'launched a remarkable

overhaul of Labour's constitution' (Reid and Pelling 2005, 185) in which a new

National Policy Forum became 'the summit body of an ongoing series of policy

commissions' and open regional and local discussions, but 'in practice the process was

largely controlled from above' (Ibid., 185-6). [8] Although Conference would remain

sovereign, from now on it would only consider policy after a two year gestation period

during which it would be shaped in four internal forums: Joint Policy Committees

(JPCs), the National Policy Forum (NPF), Policy Commissions and a reformed NEC.

1978, 137). Much of it was conducted through timetabled meetings where two or more sets of delegates (party National Executive members could not formally participate) sought to draw up a streamlined series of motions called 'composites'.

[5] Interview, Frank Dobson

[6] Interview, Frank Dobson

[7] Interview, David Blunkett

[8] The NPF had existed informally since 1993, but the Partnership in Power proposals formalised its status. See Russell (2005), 141

Although the NEC had once (with its labyrinthine network of subcommittees) been the most significant policy-making body in the party, it now became an adjunct to a process rendering it, 'a largely administrative forum' (Wring 2005, 155).

Subsequently, the NPF became the main arena of policy debate, but it was the JPCs that became the really significant policy-making body. JPCs set the agenda, deciding which policies should be discussed, and were placed firmly under the control of the leadership team: they were chaired by the Party Leader, and populated by members of the NEC and Shadow Cabinet, along with representation from the European Parliamentary Party and local government. JPCs set the parameters for six Policy Commissions, with memberships drawn from the front-bench, the NEC and the NPF. Reports were then submitted for consideration by the NPF, which was the first stage of consultation after the Policy Commissions had done their work, and the last point of ratification before submission to Conference. Here, representatives of ordinary members did become more significant. The NPF's membership included representatives from constituencies, regions and affiliated bodies. However, it also counted MPs, MEPs, councillors and NEC members among its number. In fact, only 54 out of 175 NPF delegates were representatives of ordinary members, and all were appointed by Conference rather than membership ballot (Fielding 2003, 135). The NPF was not given the power to originate policy but it could amend it or propose alternatives to be put to Conference. Only once this cycle was complete was policy discussed by the NEC (with a membership expanded to include more elite representation) and finally submitted to Annual Conference for endorsement as official policy (Seyd 1998, 67; Fielding 2003, 131-2).

The *Partnership in Power* reforms in one sense provided for a wider and more balanced input from the different sections of the party in the policy process. There were a

number of ways in which the ordinary activist was disadvantaged by the old system. For example, at the Conference, even if a grass-roots activist proposal made it through the preliminary stages unscathed, trade union delegations dominated the vote:

> *the way the party was structured, ordinary members had no say at all*
> *and the trade unions ruled the roost. It was the union delegations*
> *where the decisions were really made, once an issue was up for vote,*
> *the deal was already done.*[9]

At the same time, however, the new procedure was much more controlled and restricted in terms of what could be discussed. Because of the extended gestation period of policy, debate at Conference would be more predictable and open to direction than before (Taylor 1999, 17-19). On the other hand, policy proposals would be more fully considered and worked out in advance. From the point of view of party leaders, the system as a whole was more planned, reflective and methodical and, crucially, controllable. But for many activists, the inability to submit resolutions to Annual Conference as before closed off an important route to democratic participation. Some blame the emasculation of the policy-making powers of Annual Conference for declining membership and diminished local activism:

> *The rooms emptied around the time the party conference became less*
> *important and there was more central control. The various reforms to*
> *the party structures that meant you couldn't really do anything*
> *locally.*[10]

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[9] Interview, Hilary Armstrong

[10] Interview, John Burnell

Even those not so nostalgic recognise a problem for participation. As a former party official and Labour Party historian told me,

> *a lot of people look back with rose-tinted spectacles at these things, the*
> *kind of participation where parties would send resolutions through to*
> *conference and of course they would get voted down by the trade*
> *unions anyway! But at the centre, I think we underestimated how*
> *important these things were to people.*[11]

Whatever the truth of it, reform certainly diminished the opportunities for members or groups within the party to express preferences through the policy process by closing off the 'traditional' avenues of participation. As one activist in Nottinghamshire succinctly put it: '*there's no point in making a resolution if there's nowhere to send it!*'[12]

In short, the new institutions were – and were intended to be – a more effective tool for 'blocking' unsafe issues. As one former Cabinet Minister told me,

> *I would say that provided the NPF process is carried out in good faith*
> *and capable of modification at conference then it's a good thing. The*
> *trouble is that it hasn't been carried out in good faith and the*
> *leadership uses it to push through what it wants. It's not that they*
> *ignore it. They actually manipulate it.*[13]

Another former minister agreed that the problem was not the principle of the reform so much as the way it was practised:

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[11] Interview, Dianne Hayter

[12] Interview, Marjorie Paling

[13] Interview, Frank Dobson

The NPF was inserted into the process so that there was an opportunity for the detail to be discussed, but at the end if it came out with a view that was contrary to the party leadership then it was referred back, incorporating 'conference views' ... So, the NPF is what I call a 'paper aeroplane' device. It just goes around and around. It talks about things but can't do anything.[14]

However, it is also worth noting the positive effects that reform had, particularly on disagreements within the party. David Blunkett, whilst acknowledging that the new policy-making process '*has not worked as well as I would have hoped*' in terms of participation, argues that it did succeed in other ways because '*it did stop the major, public, internal conflict over policy that had been a feature of the 1980s.*'[15]

Strengths of Strategic Power as an Explanation

This looks like a major exercise of *SP*: leaders have brought about major reforms in the decision-making process which has had the effect of shoring up their own positions of authority. I will now examine this claim more closely by conducting a brief analysis guided by the questions set out in the previous section

Stage One: Prevailing Norms

a) What are the prevailing decision-making norms of the organisation and what is their effect on the access of voices and issues to decision-making arenas?

b) What people or groups are there seeking to reorganise these norms?

c) What people or groups are committed to defending prevailing norms?

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[14] Interview, Michael Meacher

[15] Interview, David Blunkett

In the period before reform, the party's prevailing organisational norms of representation and decision-making could be summarised as a regime of rule-based, publicly visible policy-making supported by a system of delegatory and representative democracy (Seyd and Whiteley 1992, 23). Annual Conference could be described as an expression of these norms and a point at which they were manifested. The conference and the debates held there expressed publicly the relationship between the different parts of the party from the branch to the constituency party; from the trade unions and socialist societies to the Parliamentary Labour Party and the leadership.

Through the *Partnership in Power* reforms, these prevailing organisational norms were challenged by leaders seeking both to enhance their own authority within the party and to manage the way in which the party was perceived in public. The reforms that followed would make the policy process more predictable and easier to control and therefore less of an encumbrance on the party leadership. It would also (in the view of leaders) make the process less divisive, providing more 'credible', carefully considered policy that was properly discussed rather than aggressively competed over. However, for party activists, Conference was an exciting and valuable aspect of party life and an opportunity to voice views not usually expressed by the Parliamentary Labour Party or the leadership.

Stage Two: Blocking Preferences and Demands

a) What opportunities do members have to express grievances or preferences, or make demands?

b) How and when are they thwarted?

Both under the old system and under the new, means were available to block unwelcome policy proposals and debates. What did change was, first, the availability of opportunities for activists to submit policy ideas and motions, second, the point in the process at which demands were thwarted, and third, the effectiveness with which this could be done under new rules.

As I have mentioned, there had been in the past some opportunity at least for all parts of the party to participate in the policy-making process, however indirectly. However, the likelihood of a particular branch's policy proposal making it all the way unscathed to the Conference agenda was tiny and the truth of the matter is that many proposals from CLPs were thwarted at compositing stage. Compositing was a useful tool for organising issues off the conference agenda or making their defeat inevitable. Indeed, it was relatively simple. Great care and precision in wording composites was important because the success or failure of a particular policy was dependent largely on this process. A huge union block vote could swing on the basis of a sentence: 'in the compositing meeting one phrase could appear interchangeable with another. When it came to the union delegation meeting it could make all the difference to a million votes' (Minkin 1978, 139). Therefore, knowing how to swing those votes was a key strategic weapon in determining what decisions fell and which were carried.

The effect of the new rules, then, was not so much to provide tools for obstructing unwanted proposals, since they already existed. Rather it was both to bury those tools deeper, away from the view of activists and the public, and to render them more effective. By devising a system in which Joint Policy Committees set the agenda and determined what could actually be debated in the first place, a framework was created in which certain issues could not even be considered in the earliest stages of the policy-

making process because the opportunities to get them included in the process were foreclosed. Where it was once relatively easy for small groups of activists to promote their policy agendas and build up a head of steam by careful co-ordination and organisation (such as the distribution of 'model motions' to constituency parties and union branches), the fact that the gates to that process were now guarded by the JPCs meant that any issue would now effectively need the leader's approval before it had any chance of crossing the threshold. Furthermore, the two year gestation period in four different internal forums, ensured that difficult proposals could be sanitised away from public (and more specifically, media) view. By the time it was debated at Conference, the outcome was effectively pre-determined: directed not by the concerns or whims of local constituency parties, but by the pre-existing policy process.

Previously (for example, at the compositing stage), proposals could be buried or subverted by manipulating the process itself in order to engineer their defeat (see my second example below), but there was *some* point in participating. Indeed, proposals acceptable to the leadership got through too, and many members valued the process in itself. Although the new process had the effect of making the decision-making process 'safer' and more controlled for leaders, it might also have been a reason behind declining membership participation. Furthermore, this decline may well have tended disproportionately to exclude activists with non-mainstream views. Previously, unorthodox voices had some opportunity to be heard, even if they were not always taken seriously; henceforth such voices were silenced.

a) How do norms, rules and procedures exclude certain voices, issues and challenges?

b) How does their exploitation secure the dominant positions of particular individuals or groups?

I have established that the prevailing organisational norms of the party were challenged by *Partnership in Power*, which embodied new ones: more deliberative and consensual norms, perhaps with a greater strategic outlook (i.e. with an eye to winning elections). Furthermore, the NPF was lauded by some as a way of creating opportunities for greater participation amongst the grass-roots members who did not get to participate in conferences (which were in any case dominated by trade union votes). However, as one former minister said, '*there is a lot of cynicism about that*'[16], which is not surprising given that MPs, MEPs, councillors and NEC members count for a more significant proportion of the membership than those from constituencies, regions and affiliated bodies. Furthermore, the powers of the NPF were carefully circumscribed. Thus, although there was arguably some wider input it became more controlled and restricted. This leads me to the most significant outcome of these manoeuvres in terms of power: because certain voices were excluded from the policy process by altering the process itself, leaders secured more control and more capacity to get their own way in matters of policy.

To summarise, analysing the *Partnership in Power* reforms through the lens of *SP* has a number of strengths. The analysis shows how leaders sought a restructuring of policy-making norms in order to curtail damaging or embarrassing conflict. Altering rules

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[16] Interview, Gavin Strang

meant that voices and issues unfavourable to elites could be thwarted at a much earlier stage of the process, even before it began. The risk of unwanted issues becoming 'visible' conflicts was therefore much reduced. This, I would argue, is a prime example of a mobilisation of bias in which practices are altered and new organisational norms established that act as an ongoing barrier against challenges and threats to leadership hegemony. The point here is that methodologically, this mode of power lies hidden within procedural reforms, but the reforms themselves are introduced in order to foreclose potential opposition and ensure that conflict remains out of public view, even though dissenting opinions and grievances may still exist.

Limits of Strategic Power as an Explanation

I have argued here that *SP* explains how power was intentionally exercised by and in favour of leaders, via reform of the party's procedures. *SP* supplements *IP* by illuminating how leaders secure power by manipulating rules and preventing the kind of conflict likely to threaten their position. This therefore militates against some voices or issues from getting an airing. However, this additional dimension of power is not adequate on its own because it cannot explain how the Labour Party came to embrace a new political culture. Additional accounts of power would need to be identified to do this. In particular this opens up questions about the relationship between power and intention, and therefore the role of agents in its operation and exercise.

Example 1 Conclusion

Analysis of the effects of the *Partnership in Power* reforms highlights in particular how *SP* can be used to entrench the position of certain powerful groups by excluding certain voices and closing off the possibility of challenge. Rule changes may act as an

insurance against future threats. On the other hand, they may simply displace those threats to other arenas such as the NPF itself. Either way, what I have demonstrated here is how the structure of the policy process affects the ability of activists to contribute to policy, the likelihood of conflicts over policy being exposed to public view and the ability of leaders to predict and control the outcomes. It is strategic because it is a power which is centred on the means by which decisions are made, conflicts are managed, and voices are included or excluded from decision-making. In this case, the exercise of *SP* has shored up the position of party leaders by marginalising and silencing voices and issues undesirable to them. There are, arguably, some resonances here with Robert Michels' theory of party elites. However, Robert Michels (1962 [1915]) brings to light a more structural organisational logic which is missing from *SP*. This dimension of power should be understood as more ontologically agentic, supplementing and building on *IP* by explaining how some groups or individuals are able actively to maintain dominant positions over others.

Example 2: Getting 'One Member One Vote' Through the 1993 Conference

A crucial aspect of the Labour Party's 'modernisation' process was realised when 'One Member One Vote' (OMOV) finally became the basis of the selection of parliamentary candidates and election of leaders in 1993. The moment appeared ripe. The year before, a poll of members found that 81% supported changing the leadership electoral system to OMOV (Russell 2005, 49). It did not happen suddenly but had been a matter of debate ever since the introduction of the electoral college in 1981.[17] Nonetheless, it was a momentous change:

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[17] The electoral college for the election of leader was made up of three sections: forty per cent of the college was given over to trade unions (who were under no obligation to ballot their members), thirty per

in a short period of seven years the party had abandoned the principle

of delegatory democracy enshrined in its constitution for over sixty

years and had begun the process which leads to individual member

democracy (Seyd and Whiteley 1992, 23).

What I am particularly interested in here is *how* the rules were changed rather than the

changes themselves; that is, what sort of power was needed to bring this change about?

What does the reform reveal about how power works in political parties and does it

demonstrate the value of *SP* as a lens of analysis? How, in the face of much resistance,

which persisted right up to the last moments, did the leadership get its way on this

particular issue?

It seems that sheer persistence may have been as important as anything else: the issue

just kept on coming back. The process of change took seven years from its first

appearance on the conference agenda in 1983 (when it was remitted to the NEC) up to

its use in NEC elections in 1990, and another three before it was applied more widely to

candidate selection and (in modified form) to leadership elections. In the interim,

another proposal was once again remitted to the NEC (in 1985). This time, a working

party was set up, reporting back to Conference in 1987, but consultation only served to

demonstrate how polarised views really were.[18] Conference reflected this division by

voting down both OMOV *and* the status quo. Hence an electoral college system for

candidate selection was chosen 'by default'.[19] Nonetheless the case for further reform

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cent to Constituency Labour Parties (in practice, their General Management Committees), and thirty per cent to individual MPs.

[18] 107 favoured mandatory OMOV, 100 preferred the status quo, 23 supported a local electoral college, 18 preferred other options (see Russell 2005, 44).

[19] When it was adopted in 1988, this did have the result of extending participation, since selecting candidates was no longer the preserve of activists on the GC but was extended to all party members, but unions still retained a role and ballots were not compulsory.

was getting stronger. The leadership contest of 1988 underlined the gap between activists and ordinary members: amongst the 350 constituencies that balloted their members, support for the incumbent Kinnock / Hattersley ticket was far stronger in comparison with those that did not.[20] Finally, in 1993 OMOV was formally adopted. Or it was almost OMOV: what the Conference in fact voted in favour of was a version of OMOV that was, firstly, a candidate selection process that would be conducted by means of a ballot of all CLP members, with individual trade unionists being required to pay a nominal sum to join in order participate; secondly, reforms to elections for Leader and Deputy Leader retained elements of the old electoral college, whilst 'individualising' them. The electoral college itself was reformed to one third each for MPs and MEPs, CLPs and trade unions (as opposed to 30-30-40 as it had been), and henceforth TUs and CLPs would be required to ballot their members individually and allocate the votes proportionally. However, the reasons for reform and its consequences have been extensively documented elsewhere.[21] It is the *how* of this reform which is of greater interest to this thesis.

The leadership's victory in getting OMOV through in 1993 is conventionally understood as the party leader, John Smith, asserting his will over the Labour Party by winning a straightforward vote at the party conference in 1993. At the Conference itself, Smith proclaimed it as 'the chance for more trade unionists than ever before to take part in all the decisions and the campaigns of the Labour Party' and that reforms

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[20] In 1988 Benn challenged Kinnock for the leadership and was crushed (Kinnock got 88.6% of the vote). John Prescott and Eric Heffer are both overwhelmingly defeated after challenging Roy Hattersley for the Deputy Leadership. Many of Benn's Campaign Group colleagues advised him against running, and a group of women members resigned from the group in protest at his candidacy.

[21] See, for example, Lovenduski and Norris (1994); Russell (2005, Chapter 3); Shaw (1994, 117-121).

were 'vital' and 'central' to winning power.[22] He even made threats to resign over the issue if he did not get his way, but even then, the vote was on a knife-edge. *The Independent* reported that

> the leader's number crunchers were panicking. The momentum towards reform had stopped, and the anti-OMOV traditionalists, they reckoned, had a seven percentage-point lead among the delegates. The situation could only be transformed by 'theatre, a politician with background.'[23]

Smith's masterstroke, it appeared, was to recruit John Prescott, a tub-thumping working-class union man, to the cause. Larry Whitty (the party's General Secretary) had been due to wind up the debate, but this plan was promptly dropped and a rousing speech by Prescott, insisting that this was a not a step towards divorce with the unions, has largely been credited with turning the conference around (Russell 2005, 55) and ensuring that the reform got through by the closest of margins.[24] It was a highly acclaimed, if unconventional performance:

> in the bar even his union critics were saying it was 'the best piece of joined-up shouting' they had ever heard.[25]

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[22] Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1993.

[23] Stephen Castle and Paul Routledge, 'Is Labour Electable?' *The Independent*, 3 October 1993.

[24] Patrick Wintour and Keith Harper, 'Smith Pulls Off High-Risk Gamble.' *The Guardian* 30 September 1993; 'Hero Prescott Stakes Claim to the No 2 Job; Smith Calls in the Cavalry.' *The Daily Mail* 30 September 1993; Matthew Parris, 'Verbal Bulldozer Clears the Path for Smith Reforms. *'The Times,* 30 September 1993.

[25] *The Independent*, 3 October 1993; op. cit.

In fact, the decisive actions that ensured the policy squeaked through happened away from the conference floor. Absolutely crucial to the rule-change being passed was the votes of trade unions which at the time still controlled 70 per cent of the votes at Annual Conference between them. In a confidential memo to the party leader before the conference, Larry Whitty noted that the 70 per cent was likely to be split 22.4 per cent in favour of reform and 47.4 per cent against. The situation seemed grim for the leadership:

> On this basis it would take only one in ten CLPs to vote against to defeat the proposal. The CLP opposition is bound to be at least that. It would be unwise to assume anything more than 60/40 amongst CLPs for the proposition. This would mean 57.3% against, 34.4% for. Abstention by MSF and USDAW would reduce against votes to 36.1%, although … on a 60/40 split the proposal would still go down. There could be more work done on MSF and USDAW … but … one of the big unions has to shift to at least abstention. Only if the GMB (or TGWU) shift will others start to shift except on a clear confidence vote for and against the leader.[26]

The National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) had shifted into the 'for' camp already, but the big unions continued to oppose change. MSF and USDAW were the only hope left.[27] In the end the USDAW delegation went against its mandate and voted in favour of the reform and the MSF abstained, which was just enough to carry the day.

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[26] Larry Whitty Memo to John Smith, 4 August 1993

[27] MSF: Manufacturing, Science, Finance union; USDAW: Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

The key to resolving the problem was the way in which the motion was drafted. It linked together two questions: as well as implementing one member one vote, the policy also would bring all women shortlists for parliamentary selections into being. This, for Hilary Armstrong, who was John Smith's Parliamentary Private Secretary at the time, was a clever move:

> *Larry Whitty had somehow got the question of OMOV linked to that of all-women shortlists (AWS). I don't quite remember how on earth he did it. There were probably political reasons, but he also had constitutional reasons for lumping a whole series of reforms together.*[28]

He certainly did have political reasons: such a move would support the General Secretary's key aim to 'minimise the number of defeats, and not to compound them'.[29] This action 'consciously exploited the dilemmas that would be faced by unions that had policy supporting one and opposing the other' (Russell 2005, 56), thus opening up the possibility of some unions changing position. This is precisely what happened, as an inside account MSF's shift of position demonstrates. A Guardian columnist wrote at the time:

> The leader's real hero was some unknown party official who earlier this summer rolled the proposed one-member-one-vote reform and a quite separate plan for women-only shortlists into one compendious rule change to be put to conference. It was done quite deliberately, I

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[28] Interview, Hilary Armstrong

[29] Whitty *op. cit.*

was later told by someone who certainly should know, in order to force

Labour's feminists to vote for OMOV.[30]

Recounting this story also brings to light a second important factor. Hilary Armstrong, at the same time as being a close aide to the leader, was officially part of the MSF conference delegation. As such she could speak at its meetings and participate in decision-making. The MSF's position on both issues was clear cut: there was '*strong policy support in the union for AWS, but also against OMOV*'.[31] Voting against the motion would therefore break their mandate on the former, and voting for it would break their mandate on the latter. The delegation was divided on what to do. However, Armstrong knew that an abstention was likely to be enough and she and a close colleague in the delegation were able to decisively influence its response to the dilemma at a crucial last-minute meeting:

> *We ended up putting off the delegation meeting to make a decision until Tuesday lunchtime, so it was just before the vote. It was that meeting that was a key to getting it through. Me and Anne, the women's officer went up and down in the lift three times before the meeting trying to decide how we could get the vote. In the end we decided that the delegation should abstain, because if we voted against the motion, we would be voting against our AWS policy and if we voted for it, we would be voting against our policy on OMOV. And that's what got it through!* [32]

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[30] Martin Kettle, 'Why Prescott's Peroration was Just the Gloss.' *The Guardian,* 2 October 1993.

[31] Interview, Hilary Armstrong

[32] Interview, Hilary Armstrong

The delegation decided by 19 votes to 17 to follow their advice, thus allowing the rule change to be passed by 45.7 to 44.4 per cent. Delegates from Constituency Parties voted 60:40 in favour, as the most optimistic forecasts predicted. For Armstrong, it was a relief:

> *I remember I went to see John who was on the platform and whispered in his ear, I told him not to show anything on his face (there were cameras all around and he was on the platform), but I told him not to worry and that we'd won the vote. Then of course John Prescott did his speech, and everyone thought it was him, which is great!*[33]

In the end though it was 'the single anonymous member' of the MSF delegation who voted to abstain on the proposals that won it and 'Prescott was simply the big finish'.[34]

Strengths of Strategic Power as an Explanation

<u>*Stage One: Prevailing Norms*</u>

a) What are the prevailing decision-making norms of the organisation and what is their effect on the access of voices and issues to decision-making arenas?

b) What people or groups are there seeking to reorganise these norms?

c) What people or groups are committed to defending prevailing norms?

The existing means of selecting leaders and candidates was based on the principles of representative or delegatory democracy that I highlighted as part of the previous

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[33] Interview, Hilary Armstrong

[34] Martin Kettle, *The Guardian*, *op. cit.*

example.[35] As I have argued, these were traditionally important parts of the party's prevailing organisational norms. However, the leadership sought to modify these norms by introducing the principle of One Member One Vote which would a) provide more opportunity for the mass of ordinary members to participate in these activities; b) further circumvent the influence of trade union leaders who wielded large 'block votes' on behalf of their memberships without directly consulting them and c) as a result, moderate the potential for challenges to the leadership. Since it was thought that ordinary party and trade union members were likely to be more moderate, the kinds of results that would come from member ballots were thought likely to be more acceptable to the party elite. Indeed this had been demonstrated by previous informal uses of ballots, including in the 1988 leadership contest, as I have shown above. The biggest barriers to change were the trade union leaderships who had an interest in maintaining the power they currently held in the form of the huge block votes they controlled.

Stage Two: Blocking Preferences and Demands

a) What opportunities do members have to express grievances or preferences, or make demands?

b) How and when are they thwarted?

The opportunity for trade unionists to express their preferences was presented in the form of reform proposals which they could vote against if they wished. However, those preferences became 'thwarted' in the case of the MSF by the use of procedural mechanisms: combining two policies on which the union delegation had differing instructions. The *existing* rules therefore were used to create dilemmas for potential

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[35] It should be noted that up to 1981, party leaders were elected by the Parliamentary Labour Party alone, thus the precise form that these prevailing norms took in the context of leadership elections was relatively new.

opponents of change and thus potentially block resistance. This is a primary example of how confrontation is mediated by manipulating procedure and changing the scope of decision-making. The MSF's situation was manipulated with the aim of producing just this result.

Stage Three: The Scope of Decision-Making

a) How do norms, rules and procedures exclude certain voices, issues and challenges?

b) How does their exploitation secure the dominant positions of particular individuals or groups?

The leadership and their supporters in the party conference administration were able to exploit and manipulate rules and procedures so that, in mobilising the support of trade union delegations like the MSF behind All Women Shortlists (AWS), they were able to silence the opposition to One Member One Vote (OMOV). Combining the two policies into a single proposal made it impossible for the MSF delegation to both challenge OMOV and support AWS. The norms of delegatory democracy required delegations to stick to their mandates (in this case to oppose OMOV and support AWS) but they could not do both and dominant interests in the party exploited this by intentionally creating the dilemma. There is another layer to this. Whilst party leaders were able to secure the change they desired through the manoeuvring of anonymous officials and aides behind the scenes, the trappings of confrontation, including a big set piece speech and threats to resign made the result look like a victorious head-to-head confrontation with reactionary trade unionists. Indeed, Lovenduski and Norris argue that the vote was more 'a symbolic assertion of the will of the party modernisers, directed at the electorate', designed to maximise 'the appearance of independence of the party from the unions'

(Lovenduski and Norris 1994, 216), than it was about the detail of parliamentary selections 'which were little understood and largely hidden from public view' (Russell 2005, 55). However, the introduction of OMOV was not just ephemeral or symbolic: by widening the involvement of the regular, less active membership, it was a means by which the leadership sought to moderate the likely outcome of selection processes and leadership ballots, thus securing their own position in the longer-term.

On the other hand, it was arguably a risky tactic for the leadership: since the delegation would have to go against its mandate either way, then it would have nothing to lose by voting against the proposal. However, the gamble was that they would not be prepared to sacrifice women's representation. This is where the importance became apparent of: a) the nineteen members of the delegation for whom the case for AWS was stronger than that against OMOV; and b) the influence of leadership allies like Hilary Armstrong.

Limits of Strategic Power as an Explanation

There are two points I wish to highlight here. My analysis of *SP* in this context has focused on the strategies and tactics employed to win the necessary number of votes to get a policy proposal through the 1993 Conference. However, it should be noted that the reforms themselves were part of a more gradual change, not just the outcome of certain tactics used on the day. It was trialled and tested on a voluntary basis, established as a means of electing representatives to the NEC constituency section and therefore had become a part of party culture, even if just in a small way. Only then was the leadership prepared to risk attaching itself to the proposal so decisively. The gradual acceptance of OMOV, one might argue, comes about because of a series of smaller, less 'visible' decisions around the edges of the party (i.e. in places deemed less

important to trade union interests in the party). One way of looking at this as the outcome of persistence, in which the policy came back and back again; another is to understand it as part of an organisational logic in which the wider political context inevitably propels the organisation towards measures which strengthen elites and diminish the influence of activists. Thus whilst *SP* provides a necessary supplement to *IP* by bringing context in as an important mediator of intentional power, it fails to account for the extent to which a more anonymous organisational logic might itself be a source of power that shapes decision-making possibilities. Secondly, as I have argued earlier, new organisational norms are developed out of pragmatic reforms designed to support political effectiveness and professionalism. This also has the effect of strengthening elite power and muffling or silencing alternative voices, such as organised trade unionism. *SP* can be very effective at explaining these processes, but it can go no further. Whilst *SP* focuses on norms it does not explain how they become sedimented through practice as part of the party's 'culture', pointing to the need for additional dimensions of analysis.

Example 2 Conclusion

This example of *SP* arises from a struggle for power and influence between party leaders and union leaders. For the latter, OMOV would weaken their influence over the selection of party leader in particular (because they would be obliged to ballot their members). They had only had that power since 1981 and were not going to give it up easily. It would also diminish the power of union representatives over candidate selection in local constituencies, which is a key influencing tool over the party as a whole (Schattschneider 1942, 64; Lovenduski and Norris 1995, 3). For leaders, on the other hand, victory was by no means guaranteed, even with the help of the strategic

manoeuvres that took place. Clearly, the General Secretary, the party leader and sympathetic others felt the danger of losing OMOV was a real one. Seen from the point of view of *IP*, the degree of careful calculation and the exploitation of the NEC's right to combine the two proposals in a single proposal, arguably demonstrated a level of weakness on the part of the leadership over this issue, because it recognised that they were unlikely to win in a direct confrontation. But *IP* sees power in only one dimension and fails to understand how power can be exercised more strategically. This example shows how *SP* was operationalised within the decision-making process in the way the motion was drafted and in the covert bargaining that took place within delegations. *SP* explains the leadership's victory in terms of the exploitation of both the norms and rules of decision-making thus securing its preferences with the threat of preventing another party (MSF) from securing an important part of theirs (AWS). Thus power is exercised by manipulating the ability of some actors to respond to issues, thereby suppressing their voices. However, *SP* is agentically focused and thus unable to account for the role of organisational logic and inadequate for grasping the processes by which the interests and subjectivities of participants were constituted before the crucial vote.

Example 3: Recruitment and Selection

My third example is concerned with the ability to exercise influence over who can join and represent the party. One sure way of heading-off a challenge to one's authority is to ensure that those likely to make one do not join the party in the first place. Thus, control of recruitment is a significant form of *SP* because it prevents certain people from getting into a position to express their views.

Until 1988, because control of recruitment was in local hands, local parties were able to have a significant say in who could or could not join the party. In a place like Tower

Hamlets, where the Labour Party was until 1986 in perpetual control of the council, this meant that local elites could prevent challenges to their own positions on the local council. However, this state of affairs was eventually threatened by two different developments: firstly, the entry of a new tranche of radical activists from the early 1980s onwards; secondly, the centralisation of the party's recruitment system and membership list in 1988, making it easier for people to join (via the national organisation) and harder for local elites to exercise the power of exclusion. Subsequently, however, new strategies became available for controlling candidate selection in the form of approved 'panels' of candidates, which arguably revived the possibility of control and shifted the location at which that control was exercised from further inside of the party.

This relocation and reorientation of *SP* in the party is well illustrated by the experience of Stephen Beckett, a trade union activist who first joined the party in the 1980s, motivated by the brand of left-wing politics espoused by Tony Benn and Ken Coates (See Coates 1979). Later in his party career, after years as an activist and still very much of the left, he became a councillor. He held that position at the time of the left-wing coup in the Labour Group which led to Dennis Twomey's capture of the leadership (see previous chapter). At these two key points in his party career, Beckett found himself subject to attempts to exclude him from the political process.

Beckett and other members I spoke to recount how the old small 'c' conservative party elites ran the local Labour Party in paternalistic fashion: members were relatively deferent and leaders acted as gatekeepers of party membership.[36] The kinds of barriers that existed were neither transparent nor formal and often varied. Sometimes, simply

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[36] Interviews, Mike Davis; Stephen Beckett; John Burnell

not being part of a dominant group could be a barrier. In some parts of London, for instance, local Labour Parties had traditionally been dominated by the Irish community:

> *There were some parties in London particularly that would very much stop you coming in. The old Islington North Party – a guy called Michael O'Halloran was the MP, in the 60s or early 70s – If you tried to join, they actually wrote back and said 'sorry, no vacancies'!*[37]

Other local parties (e.g. Hackney) would exclude non-union members from membership and keep the membership regulated that way.[38] Others, however, were difficult to join simply because of disorganisation or incompetence.[39] At other times it appeared to be more political in nature. Stephen Beckett's story is an excellent example of this.

> *Trying to join the Labour Party was fun, in a way. Having decided I was going to do it, I thought, how do you join the bloody Labour Party? I knew various councillors, well I say knew them, I knew who they were, and could identify some of them on the street. And I pulled up one of the councillors once and asked him about joining the Labour Party, and he looked at me very peculiarly and said 'No, no. You can't' and so I said 'What do you mean?' and he went 'it's full up'!*[40]

As a result, many members had to work surprisingly hard to join, or had to be 'sponsored' by people already on the inside. Persistence was required to get past the barriers that had been erected, as Beckett found out:

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[37] Interview, John Burnell

[38] Interview, Jan Burnell

[39] Interview, Marjorie Paling

[40] Interview, Stephen Beckett

It took me the best part of a year to get a card and find out where the branch was! I knew somebody who was a party member in Hackney and they sorted out a form and said send the money to Walworth Road[41], it will take its time, because they didn't have a local contact or one they could recommend locally to do it. It weren't like open party recruiting![42]

These kinds of practices were, it seems, a way of maintaining a kind of political and cultural homogeneity, and therefore power, by excluding those deemed undesirable by local elites. Those like Stephen who managed to get around the barriers recount the tension that was caused:

It was really difficult. Very old councillors, very traditional right wing, rather than particularly vicious: slightly incompetent, bumbling along types. And there was a hostility between new people coming into the party and I must say pretty much most, if not all, of the Labour group. You wouldn't have been able to call them Bennites! So there was a sort of clash immediately in that sense.[43]

As a result of this, local elites were able to control who was nominated as a candidate for local elections. In Hackney, for example,

several of the wards, particularly in the Hoxton area, the councillors… they had never had any proper selection procedures where anybody could be nominated and be selected. There were such low

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[41] The party's national headquarters at the time

[42] Interview, Stephen Beckett

[43] Interview, Stephen Beckett

memberships and they used to keep them quite low deliberately, a lot

of us felt. So they were there, and they were the candidates.[44]

Dennis Twomey reports that in the heyday of the 'old guard' the selection process for council candidates was informal, and highly localised

the selection was done entirely by the ward.[45] *I don't think there was*

anyone actually present from the party at all, just the ward members.

It was by today's standards, sufficiently informal as to be almost non-

existent. There were no panels or formal selection meetings, nothing

like that.[46]

But in Tower Hamlets, the grip of the old elites began to slip as more members broke through the barriers they had erected. Indeed, the elite losing control of recruitment seems to be a factor in the growing prominence of the left in the higher echelons of the Tower Hamlets Labour Party in the 1980s. Beckett played a role in that:

that's what pushed me and a few others to see we could recruit openly

and that ... and soon the party was starting to fill up with activists.

Branch meetings soon became thirty, forty people ... the whole party

seemed to re-energise. There were lots of internal battles, though,

between the camps.[47]

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[44] Interview, Mike Davis

[45] The 'ward' is an electoral sub-unit which elects councillors. In the context of Labour Party organisation, the term is synonymous with 'branch', referring to the most localised unit of the party organisation.

[46] Interview Dennis Twomey

[47] Interview, Stephen Beckett

However, by 1988 the Labour Party had begun to centralise its recruitment process and membership system. Individuals could now more easily apply directly to the national office and local parties had much less power to prevent anyone from joining and perhaps eventually becoming candidates and councillors. So whilst the benefit for the party was (potentially) more members, the problem was less ability to control *who* joined in the first place. However, because of the left's growing local prominence by this time, this was becoming more of a problem for them than the old right, since they had in a different way, been just as selective about who joined:

> *one of the lines we took in terms of trying to recruit is we would be involved in our tenants associations and things like that. And then amongst the tenants activists, initially you'd sort of think: 'so-and-so's really good' and you'd recruit them in. So they'd bring the issues of the tenants association into the Labour Party ... and that made them feel that the Labour Party was the vehicle that would help achieve those aims. And so that's why it became a bigger thing.*[48]

Although there was no longer direct control over who joined, a reform introduced in the 1990s made available a new tool that could help prevent 'inappropriate' candidates from being selected for office. Henceforth, prior to being selected as a candidate in any ward, an individual would have to be approved by the Local Government Committee (LGC) of the Constituency Party following admission to a 'panel' of approved candidates vetted by interview. It was a way in which local parties could keep a ready list of approved and acceptable candidates who were then permitted to go forward into the selection process in local wards. Thus it was also a potential tool for determining who

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[48] Interview, Stephen Beckett

could or could not become a candidate. Furthermore it meant that control of the Local Government Committee played a decisive role in the approval of candidates.

This is demonstrated by what happened following the 1995 coup in the Tower Hamlets Labour Group (see previous chapter). The defeated faction, despite losing control had meanwhile taken control of the LGC, which gave them control of an important strategic tool in the right's fight-back. In the following years, a number of left-wing councillors who had been elected in the Labour victory in 1994, were deselected and replaced. One former councillor recalls that '*a lot of my colleagues, who I had worked very closely with, were never reselected.*'[49] Stephen Beckett was among them and recounts his experience:

> *I was a councillor until 1998. The LGC at the time decided not to put me and a few other left councillors on the panel, so we couldn't re-run, unless we stood independently or whatever, which we weren't going to do. Although some people thought about it. There was no real reason. We were all totally competent as councillors. We hadn't broken the whip. We all had a number of very insulting reasons for our dismissal. I think mine was that I didn't show the commitment to be a Labour councillor. I appealed. And I won my appeal, as most of us did. Very disappointing, but politically motivated.*[50]

Thus by capturing control of the process of candidate approval, the right of the party were able to block their political opponents from even being *considered* as candidates,

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[49] Interview, Phil Maxwell

[50] Interview, Stephen Beckett

thereby excluding voices of the left not just from the council chamber, but from the selection process itself.[51]

Strengths of Strategic Power as an Explanation

In this particular case, *SP* has provided an important explanatory dimension which has two aspects to it. Firstly, it draws attention to how positions of authority can be used to mobilise bias: in this case, by putting up barriers against threats to the status quo and that exclude certain voices from membership altogether. Secondly, it highlights how changes in rules, procedures and norms can affect access to arenas that others may wish to protect and how this silences certain views. I will now discuss these points using the guide questions I have set out.

<u>*Stage One: Prevailing Norms*</u>

a) What are the prevailing decision-making norms of the organisation and what is their effect on the access of voices and issues to decision-making arenas?

b) What people or groups are there seeking to reorganise these norms?

c) What people or groups are committed to defending prevailing norms?

Using *SP* as the means of analysis, this example sees prevailing organisational norms coming under threat from two sources. Traditionally, local parties controlled the recruitment of members: they were the point at which people generally needed to apply to join the Labour Party, they collected subscriptions and were the key point of contact with individual members. Local elites were the gatekeepers to the organisation and clearly interested in defending their own powers in this regard. However, a challenge to these powers came from two directions: firstly, from a new breed of activist wanting to

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[51] Interview, Stephen Beckett, Phil Maxwell

access the party and open it up to more activists like them; and secondly, from the party nationally who wished to bring the membership under their control by means of a national membership scheme. This would, it was hoped, open up membership to the public much more widely, supporting the development of a mass, mainstream membership.

Stage Two: Blocking Preferences and Demands

a) What opportunities do members have to express grievances or preferences, or make demands?

b) How and when are they thwarted?

SP also reveals how changing the norms of (in this case) recruitment can bring about a re-location of powers of exclusion. Under the old rules, barriers could be put in the way of some people joining. Used judiciously, this would ensure that there was no opportunity at all for the voices of certain groups to be heard in the party's decision-making arenas. But these powers were relatively informal and, although often effective, were surmountable with a little effort. Furthermore, once an individual joined, there was little restriction on who could participate in selection processes. Thus once local elites lost control of recruitment they began to lose their grip on the local party altogether, including candidatures. The opening up of membership later on made it easier for anyone to participate if they chose to. However, new selection rules made it much harder for anyone to get through the process, since 'unacceptable' candidates could be thwarted more efficiently by a formal, rule-based system than by the arbitrary methods of the past.

a) How do norms, rules and procedures exclude certain voices, issues and challenges?

b) How does their exploitation secure the dominant positions of particular individuals or groups?

These examples clearly demonstrate how *SP* can be used to prevent certain voices, often from particular ideological perspectives, from being heard in the party's decision-making arenas and consequently in the council chamber itself. Whereas in the past, informal power was used to prevent those politically or culturally 'undesirable' to local elites from entering the party, the centralisation of recruitment made this impossible. Indeed, in the 1990s under Tony Blair's leadership there was a series of press advertisements in which a tear off membership card was glued to the page, including a Freephone number to call in order to make a credit card or direct debit payment, thereby becoming an 'instant' member of the Labour Party with no questions asked. Accordingly, membership became open to all. This had a double effect: it prevented local elites from restricting recruitment, but it also served to overwhelm and delegitimise small groups of activists who were both a source of local vibrancy and an of irritation to the party leaders. At the same time, however, it left no screening mechanism, no way of filtering out candidates until new rules around selection allowed the possibility of blocking 'unsuitable' people from public positions. This, first of all, points towards greater central control of the selection process, or at least makes it possible for providing a consistent, rule-based, observable process. Strategically, the new selection processes could be captured by organised groups and used for political purposes to exclude rivals, as appeared to be the case in Tower Hamlets in 1998. In this

way, there was a 'gatekeeping' function that shifted location from the outside of the organisation – where elites could put up barriers to entry – to inside, where procedures could be used or captured in order to restrict access to influential positions.

Limits of Strategic Power as an Explanation

A strength of *SP* over *IP* is that it illuminates how organisational procedures can be used to consolidate power and prevent conflicts arising, whether by preventing conflict as such or by excluding certain voices. What it does not explain, however, is the more anonymous, structural way in which organisation might itself function as a form of power rather than being an instrument of particular actors. In always looking for intentional action, *SP* does not look beyond agents to find explanations of exclusion and discipline: towards the power that is also inherent in the routine functioning of procedures like selection or membership, or in disciplinary procedures, for example. The important question here is: once these processes are set in train, to what extent do they take on a 'life of their own' not as directly controlled on a day to day basis by any agent, but as organisational powers that set contexts and shape the action possibilities of all who are subject to them? In other words, *SP* notices organisational procedures as vehicles that give agents more subtle modes of power than *IP*, but it still broadly adheres to the same agentic ontology. Its virtue is that it identifies additional resources and sources of power, but it is still insufficient in itself to explain how power operates within political parties *qua* bureaucratic structures.

Example 3 Conclusion

SP can be said to have particular benefits for explaining situations like the one I have discussed here. It adds much to the Individualistic approach set out in the last chapter,

because it looks behind the confrontations (or lack of them) between agents in parties and looks to how rules are used to block them. However, although it enriches my framework in this way, its maintenance of the focus on agents means that it does not ask a) how the agendas and preferences of individuals are constituted; and b) what role organisation plays as an independent, autonomous and perhaps anonymous means by which power is exercised on all party subjects, whatever their status in the party hierarchy.

Conclusion

In the last two chapters, sufficient material has been produced and analysed to show how power in its first and second dimensions is exercised. Whilst the previous chapter demonstrated that individuals do use power to pursue their interests or preferences, this current one shows how power is used *strategically* by manipulating procedures in order to exclude certain voices, perspectives and issues from the decision-making process. This dimension of Strategic Power adds significantly to the overall framework by explaining how power can be wielded in a political party like the Labour Party by occlusion rather than direct confrontation. It also indicates the extent to which the fields on which Individualistic Power might be played out are not level, but often shaped and manipulated in such a way as to favour of one group over another. Together, these approaches provide a much more expansive picture of how power in parties really works. Yet, although these two dimensions combined provide a much richer understanding of power than either one of them can alone, they are still inadequate for grasping how bureaucracy itself operates as a form of power. To this end, it is necessary to turn to a third dimension of power which considers this very question. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Four: **Bureaucratic Control**

In the previous two chapters, I have analysed two dimensions of party power in which the individual agent plays a crucial role. In the first chapter, an individual's success in a conflict of interest constitutes an exercise of power. In the second chapter, the power of agents is *mediated* by organisation. It is concerned with how rules and norms of decision-making can be used to secure power. However, whilst this second dimension adds much to the understanding of how power is exercised, decision-making practices are still regarded only as a means of enhancing individual power. It cannot explain how organisations function independently of agents and might actually *shape* human behaviour and courses of action. This will be the subject of the third dimension of power in my framework, Bureaucratic Control. As I argued in Chapter One, Bureaucratic Control is a recurring theme in the literature on party organisation and in this chapter I develop a consistent understanding of what this kind of power *is* so that I can investigate the role mechanisms and processes of the party organisation play in constraining, disciplining and excluding certain voices, while at the same time offering possibilities for action. This addition to my framework will support a richer understanding of the role of power in party political life more generally. I will therefore depart from individualist notions of interests and conflict, pointing instead towards organisation itself and the more structural role it plays in shaping and directing political actors.

I begin this chapter by setting out the overall theoretical framework which draws mainly on the work of Max Weber as well as some more recent analyses of bureaucracy. This is discussed explicitly in the opening section of the chapter. Following that, I set out the key characteristics of Bureaucratic Control and the 'guide questions' on which my

analysis is based. As with the previous two dimensions, I will then draw on examples from my research among party activists and MPs to test the theory.

What is Bureaucratic Control?

Weber is a particularly interesting and valuable theorist of power, but his work is most often considered from the perspective of individuals and only more rarely is it used as a source for developing more impersonal ways of looking at the concept. Indeed, consulting Weber in order to develop a conceptualisation of 'structural' power may initially seem somewhat counter-intuitive, since he is a methodological individualist who believes that power can only be exercised by an individual (or a group of them[1]). Weber's concept of *Macht*, for example, underpins the Individualistic and Strategic dimensions power that I set out earlier.[2] A second form of power, 'domination' (*Herrschaft*), is, for Weber, concerned with legitimate forms of rule and obedience to them: this has been extremely influential on the analysis of state power.[3] Nevertheless, organisations and structures cannot, in his view, be seen as independent entities with agentic capacities (Weber 1978, 14); only individuals have such agency. Organisations like a political party are, for Weber, simply 'a certain kind of development of actual or possible social actions of individual persons' (Ibid., 14), a view that chimes with individualistic approaches to power. Yet Weber also recognises a third kind of power, 'discipline' (Weber 1948, 253-264), which is a routinised kind of organisational power more structural and impersonal in its operations and possessed of a logic that restricts agency. It is exemplified by bureaucracy (Weber 1948 [MD], 253-4) and, as such, it

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[1] This is not the same thing as power being the property of a collective.

[2] See Chapter Two.

[3] Weber's own definitions and explanations of the different kinds of legitimate domination can be found in Weber (1978), 212-245.

can significantly add to the analysis of power in political parties, and so, of Weber's approaches to power, it is this one that I accordingly develop here.

In order to understand Weber's concept of discipline it is important to be mindful of a theme he consistently returns to: the phenomenon of societal 'rationalisation'. Rationalisation refers to how, as part of the process and even the character of modernisation, rational calculation overtakes all aspects of life, from music and art to politics and economics (Weber 1992 [1904], introduction). It is therefore an integral feature of modern Western societies, characterised by rule-based conduct. It makes human activity consistent and predictable, bringing calculability to, and a 'technicalisation' of, the way in which business is conducted, scientific discovery is made, buildings are built, harmonies are written and so on. The effect historically of this process was, according to Weber, to free action from superstition and 'magical' thought, and reorientate it towards the achievement of specified, rational ends (i.e. those most practically beneficial to the actor/s concerned) by the most efficient means available (Weber 1978, 24). In other words it signified the 'disenchantment of the world' (Weber 1948 [SV], 155). Thus:

> one of the most important aspects of the process of "rationalisation" of
> action is the substitution for the unthinking acceptance of ancient
> custom, of deliberate adaptation to situations in terms of self-interest
> (Weber 1978, 30).

Rationalisation provides the equipment for the accumulation and storage of a technical and specialised knowledge which is logically structured and reproducible; it involves a process of documentation whereby calculations are made, tests are conducted, results are analysed, learning documented and abstracted as general rules of conduct which can

be taught, learned, practised and improved by others. This kind of development has had a particular impact on the way that human beings organise themselves and is exemplified in modern societies by the triumph of bureaucracy as the primary legitimate and most effective form of organisation. It is within bureaucracy that 'discipline' functions. This is of course relevant to political parties since, like other forms of modern organisation, they have become increasingly bureaucratic, in their structures and *modus operandi*. This chapter therefore is concerned with a more complex understanding of power than those described earlier inasmuch as social action and individual actors become *routinised* and subsumed into rational, bureaucratic organisation.

Bureaucracy and the Concept of Discipline

Weber defines 'discipline', then, as

> the probability that by virtue of habituation a command will receive
>
> prompt and automatic obedience in stereotyped forms on the part of a
>
> given group of persons (Weber 1978, 53).

This is to say, that inasmuch as there is intentionality it is carefully circumscribed and formulaic: a kind of 'tick-box' reasoning reserved for limited calculation of means rather than critical reasoning about ends. Weber differentiates discipline from *Macht* and *Herrschaft* because it is unquestioning, uncritical, unresisting and habitual (Ibid., 53). For Weber, the content of discipline

> is nothing but the consistently rationalised, methodically trained and
>
> exact execution of the received order, in which all personal criticism is
>
> unconditionally suspended and the actor is unswervingly and

exclusively set for carrying out the command (Weber 1948 [MD], 253).

This still concerns the individual in some sense, although one exercising a rather weak agentic capacity and appearing more as a kind of automaton than a free actor. This is because discipline also brings to light a certain kind of power inherent in organisation itself: an immanent structural logic of its internal rules and mechanisms which directs, suppresses and reorients individual agency and undermines its autonomy. Since much of human interaction takes place in or is mediated through organisation in contemporary western societies, this is a very important aspect of power's operation to be accounted for, especially in the context of political parties.

For Weber, discipline is a *totalising* force, which demonstrates its rationality not just in how commands are communicated and carried out, but also in the use of calculation to extract optimum 'physical and psychic power' from individuals. Weber's concept shares some common ground with Foucault's elaboration of discipline (Foucault 1977) in this concern. However, the latter belongs analytically to a later dimension of power, in which agency is itself an *effect* of discipline rather than simply a victim of it.[4]

To illustrate discipline's scope, Weber uses the analogy of a large scale factory in which the conjunction of the person, a machine, the available time and the space in which the enterprise is carried out is organised for optimum efficiency. As a mere resource, the human being is adjusted to the machine and thereby effectively mechanised (Ibid., 261). The factory becomes a place in which

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[4] Disciplinary Control in Chapter Six, where I focus on a) the everyday details and minutiae of discipline and how it works at an individual level and b) the more constructive, empowering side of discipline.

the psycho-physical apparatus of man is completely adjusted to the demands of the outer world, the tools, the machines – in short, to an individual 'function'. The individual is shorn of his natural rhythm as determined by the structure of his organism; his psycho-physical apparatus is attuned to a new rhythm through a methodical specialisation of separately functioning muscles, and an optimal economy of forces is established corresponding to the conditions of work (Ibid., 261-262).

However, the *sine qua non* of discipline is not the factory; discipline's 'most rational offspring' is bureaucracy (Ibid., 254), and as my review of the party literature in Chapter One showed, its relevance for modern political parties has not escaped the notice of commentators.

Bureaucracy and Modern Society

Weber's account of bureaucracy has become central to understanding power in modern society, and especially in organisations like political parties. Kallinikos (2004) argues that 'bureaucracy and modernity are … inextricably bound up with one another. Bureaucracy is the organisation form of modernity' (Kallinikos 2004, 22). The study of bureaucracy is most often associated with the study of the state itself and public administration (Dunleavy 1991; Pierre 1995; Peters 2001), but its effects are spread much more widely. It is recognised as forming the organisational principle of businesses, corporations, voluntary organisations, unions and political parties amongst others. In fact, it 'describes the entire organisational landscape of modernity' (Kallinikos 2004, 17). Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a large organisation like a political party functioning effectively without a bureaucracy. Formal, bureaucratic

associations like these are crucial forms for a democratic polity (Savage 2005, 309) and a 'key part of a pluralist, democratic culture with an active civil society' (Ibid., 329). They therefore deserve close attention in terms of power.

Bureaucracy is indispensable for any sizeable association with specific goals and is without doubt technically superior to any other form of organisation. It is of great benefit in measuring levels of efficiency; in providing organisational learning and consistency (Weber 1948 [B], 214); in matching means to ends. Its detachment and objectivity support the functioning of organisations based on rules, which require 'the abstract regularity of the execution of authority' (Ibid., 224) and demand formal, rational and objective administration. As a way of performing complicated tasks, distributing roles and ensuring the continuous functioning of processes, it is highly effective. The principle of meritocratic recruitment, another important feature of bureaucratic regimes (Weber 1978, 225), looks not only fair and legitimate, but is also a means of organisational renewal: in theory, at least, it ensures that power is circulated among the most able rather than locking it up in old elites. In short, what bureaucracy means for parties is the ability to operate continuously at the optimum level.

Despite its indispensability, however, there is an inherent tendency in bureaucracy for substantively rational goals to be overcome by structural ones that are responsible for reproducing the system itself. In other words, the primary purpose of bureaucracy may become its own perpetuation. In this case, the means by which organisations are managed, their efficiency measured, their functioning assessed, become more important than the ends it is supposed to seek (Albrow 1970, 65) and they become self-enclosed. This is a potential problem for all organisations and therefore has consequences for how power in political parties is to be understood, too. The logic of organisation is that its

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positives – rationality, calculability and efficiency – become ends in themselves and the party's broader purpose is sidelined. A machine-like rationality shapes and directs political action in a way which *routinises* it so that political actors become cogs in 'a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes … an essentially fixed route of march' (Weber 1978, 988). They are subject to instrumental values that undermine their freedom at all levels of the party, even elites (Beetham 1996, 51). Indeed, this understanding of power seems to question the possibility of being an independent actor within organised politics at all.

One possible solution might be to escape and set up another organisation (like a party or a union), but this in turn would be subject to the same processes (Ibid., 54). Another more feasible solution, which Weber himself advocates, is to provide the maximum possible freedom for 'leaders who have political expertise and initiative' (Giddens 1972, 19). This is 'a kind of individualism writ large' (Beetham 1996, 62) and the only means by which 'the wholesale domination of bureaucratic initiative can be avoided' according to Weber (Giddens 1972, 19). To Weber's mind this 'leadership democracy'[5] was the one hope for some freedom of human action. However, this freedom belongs to the leader alone and entails a parliamentary party that contains 'nothing better than well-disciplined 'yes' men' at the beck and call of the whip' (Weber 1948 [PV], 106) and 'the "soullessness" of the following' in the wider party (Ibid., 113). Ordinary members, therefore, remain subjected. Yet, at the same time, bureaucracy is '*the* means of transforming social action into rationally organised action' (Weber 1978, 987), giving power to individuals that they might otherwise not have. Organised action *empowers* them to achieve ends individuals could not bring about alone. The paradox is

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[5] This was very influential on Schumpeter's elitist theory of democracy. See Joseph A. Schumpeter *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (London: Allen and Unwin. 1976), Chapter 22.

that whilst this provides them with 'purpose' or 'direction' (for example, a job or a series of tasks to complete), it substitutes independent political action with an imperative to serve organisational needs, indirectly undermining the political or moral purpose of the party. This was precisely what Weber feared: to achieve substantive political ends, the individual must participate in formally organised politics which leads inexorably to the triumph of Bureaucratic Control.

Key Components of Bureaucratic Control

Weber's analysis of bureaucracy has clear relevance to any understanding of how power works in political parties. Indeed, as demonstrated in Chapter One, the application of a Weberian framework has been a prominent approach in the political party literature. My own argument, however, is that it is best understood as a particular *dimension* of party power: one that operates in addition to and in conjunction with – although sometimes in conflict with – more individually oriented dimensions. In some instances, Bureaucratic Control may operate in its own right to constrain the action of party members and foreclose or even constitute their ideas. In others, the party bureaucracy may preclude certain perspectives, actions or voices, or determine their action possibilities.

Drawing on the discussion above, then, I propose five components or characteristics of Bureaucratic Control that will guide the rest of my analysis:

1. This kind of power is not a matter of conflict, but of process. It is exercised smoothly and anonymously in the functions and routines of organisation (e.g. through disciplinary procedures, decision-making processes). In this sense it is

structural logic and imperatives, more than elite will, that disciplines party actors.

2. Power is unequal. Although all individuals are constrained by the logic of the bureaucratic form, it disadvantages some more than others and perpetuates existing inequalities of power. In other words, bureaucracy is inherently and necessarily hierarchical.

3. Power is therefore conservative because it gives considerable and unequal power to those at the top of the hierarchy whilst making it difficult to advance radical or novel positions at odds with the inertia and routines built into bureaucratic structures. Thus although reorganisation of decision-making structures can be a means of imposing elite control, it can also deaden and choke-off the independent initiative and creativity the party needs (and this tends especially to affect radical, non-mainstream or new voices).

4. It is also therefore exclusionary in that it rules out certain voices, ideas and interventions but more often as a by-product or logic of its procedures and routines than deliberate action or decision.

5. Power subdues agency. It is a form of control that, through routinisation, constrains action and disciplines individuals into its functioning. Organisational imperatives, once set in train, take precedence over and overwhelm individual intent and action and individuals are 'carried along' in its operation.

Identifying Bureaucratic Control

Bureaucratic Control [henceforth, *BC*] differs from Individualistic and Strategic Power in two in key ways. Firstly, power is not the property of agents who use it strategically to advance their individual powers but is 'exercised', or operates, through the anonymous functioning of organisation in ways that may nonetheless benefit elites despite not being wielded by them. Secondly, rather than being action-oriented, *BC* frames, restricts and even constitutes action. Therefore, I approach analysis here differently from the last two chapters. In order to illuminate this dimension of power, I draw on examples from my interviews which look more specifically at people's experience of particular party functions, especially those that illustrate the consequences of centralisation and the experience of organisational routines. This includes experience of office-holding and activism at different levels of the party, and what happens when individuals attempt to challenge orthodoxy. These examples will illustrate Bureaucratic Power whilst giving empirical and experiential support to my argument that it is an important aspect of power in the modern party.

Following my identification of its characteristics above, there will be three parts to the analysis of *BC*: the first part considers how bureaucratic organisation disciplines members by constraining action, choking off independent initiative and thwarting challenges to orthodoxies; the second considers how bureaucracy empowers elites by ruling out or suppressing certain voices, ideas and interventions whilst effectively supporting others (but not by being intentionally wielded as a resource); the third part looks at how organisational imperative grips the party, rendering people 'cogs' in an instrumentally rational machine and inhibiting freedom of political action, which (indirectly) has wider political effects.

Guide Questions for Analysis

In summary, then, *BC* describes a dimension of power which is immanent in the logic of organisation, its internal rules and mechanisms. It is a rational, impersonal, and routinised power, intimately associated with control and obedience of an automated, mechanised kind. At various points it constrains and disciplines, excludes and punishes and accentuates and perpetuates existing inequalities of power. Although the design of specific organisations and parts of it may have substantive intent behind them at the outset, the power immanent in it is driven by organisational imperatives rather than the will or intention of any specific actor or group of actors, although it may benefit elites by suppressing change. The operation of *BC* will be uncovered by following the three-part analysis set out above, each of which gives rise to a series of questions which are used to guide the analysis:

Part One: The Discipline of Party Members

a) What happens when members break the rules or behave or act in ways contrary to 'orthodoxy'?

b) What mechanisms are available to discipline individuals and constrain that behaviour?

Part Two: The Empowerment of Elites

a) How are leaders empowered whilst others are disadvantaged?

b) How are certain voices ruled out or excluded?

c) How does the way organisation functions entrench existing inequalities?

a) How do the activities members participate in as part of party life discipline them and govern their conduct as political actors?

b) How do the positions people hold in the party or the jobs they do restrict their capacity for free and independent political action?

Application: Testing Bureaucratic Control's Explanatory Scope

Thus far, I have outlined the key components and conditions of *BC*. In what follows, I will apply and test its effectiveness using material gathered from interviews, archives and contemporary sources. I do not examine a single situation but instead, using the questions to guide my analysis, I draw on a range of experience that illuminates what I regard to be the two overarching features of *BC*: the tendency towards centralisation and its effect on the relationship between leaders and led and how individuals are disciplined by and into the routine functioning of organisation.

In the first of these, I use the guide questions under parts one and two above to examine three key aspects of the Labour Party's processes of centralisation that took place roughly between 1987 and 1992 (Kelly 2003, 110): the party leadership's increasing power and willingness to intervene in local party affairs, the National Executive Committee's growing authority over candidate selection, and the establishment of the National Constitutional Committee as a disciplinary tool. Using the guide questions under part three, my second set of examples examine more closely the paradox inherent in this dimension of power: at the same time bureaucratic organisation *empowers* individuals by providing opportunities and capacities for political activity, it also shapes and directs their involvement, stifling free political action in favour of organisational

imperatives. Thus empowered actors are also disempowered regarding their own values or preferences.

It is worth noting that some of the ways *BC* disciplines and excludes may not be immediately obvious to the observer or to those who experience it or, if they are, they might be experienced as a sort of 'Kafka-esque' frustration rather than being recognised as forms of power. Whilst it may be perfectly possible to observe and assess a process of centralisation in an organisation and how it changes the scope of action or decision-making, it is less straightforward to make arguments about *how* individuals become 'caught up' in organisation, such that they are disciplined, directed and shaped by it. Therefore, although the analysis that follows draws on individual accounts of encounters with the party machine, these require interpretation and reconstruction in order to draw out the operations of *BC*.

Example 1: Centralisation and Bureaucratic Control

Greater control over the Labour Party's organisation was 'the indispensable condition for the leadership's drive … to transform the party'(Shaw 2000, 133) and therefore its electability. Members had arguably gained significant ground in organisational terms in the 1970s (Kelly 2003), and Taylor (1999) argues that the activities of party modernisers in the 1980s and 1990s confirms Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy because it shows that elite control is reasserted after a period of membership influence (Taylor 1999, 22). Shaw (1994) agrees, suggesting that voluntary organisations, including (or perhaps especially) political parties, have 'endemic oligarchal tendencies' and the party's transition from traditional representative democracy to more 'direct' forms (see Chapter Three) facilitated more 'vertical' relationships between members and the centre, diminishing the role of local parties, and channels for independent discussion

like *Labour Weekly* (Shaw 1994, 120).   As a former Cabinet minister and 'moderniser' argued, it was felt that to have a chance of winning again: '*we had to show that not just policy was changing, but that the party itself was*'[6] and asked what it was that drove the process of centralisation and professionalisation, one senior party worker and trade unionist said, '*I think the demonstration that the opposite had been disastrous'.*[7] Certainly the direction of travel was clear, as one activist and left-wing campaigner for party reform reflected:

> *there were big issues that we fought and lost over around party democracy… and it was quite clear, even under John Smith, there was going to be a tightening up of central control … [compared to] the eighties where there had been a lot of autonomy for local parties, and conference had been a powerful force.*[8]

In what follows, I outline three examples of how the party's relatively liberal regime became more controlled and even authoritarian: firstly, in the willingness to intervene in local party affairs; secondly, the NEC's expanded role in candidate selection; thirdly, the establishment of the National Constitutional Committee as a disciplinary tool.

Example 1.1: Intervention in Local Party Affairs

When, between 1982 and 1986 there was a troublesome 'open split' in the Tower Hamlets Labour Group, the attention paid to it by higher party authorities was minimal:

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[6] Interview, Hilary Armstrong

[7] Interview, Joe Irvin

[8] Interview, Mike Davis

anywhere between 8 and 11[of us] ... voted against the whip quite

often. [But] the Greater London Labour Party seemed to spend most

of its time not doing anything, I mean quite deliberately not doing

anything... I would have thought that these would have been the

people who were supposed to be saying, you know 'you ought to

suspend these people from the party, you should be taking disciplinary

action' but actually it was always putting it off. [9]

This relatively hands-off approach did not last since it was now recognised by leaders that swift and decisive action was required to safeguard the party's electoral goals. Thus local parties became increasingly subject to intervention from the centre, and although sometimes this may have been used strategically to enhance elite positions, from the perspective of *BC*, a more invidious, subterranean process was at work.

Most of the time, regional parties were empowered to play the interventionist role (see Chapter Two) which often took the form of gentle 'advice' or warnings to take care:

I mean, we got read the riot act a few times and we had people like

Frank Dobson and Nick Raynsford come over, you know, and say the

Daily Mail were always looking for one story rubbishing the Labour

councils and please don't give them ammunition. [10]

However at other times it was more direct and intrusive. In Hackney, for example, Left-wing activists had gained control of the Local Government Committee (LGC) in an

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[9] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[10] Interview Mark Taylor; Frank Dobson is MP for Holborn and St. Pancras (since 1979), Nick Raynsford was MP for Fulham between 1986 and 1987 and for Greenwich and Woolwich since 1992.

attempt to exercise control over councillors, who they felt were unaccountable to local members, and this became subject to intervention. The LGC, after all, *'was quite a key vehicle for expression of the Labour Party's will'* in Hackney and controlling it meant *'we more or less determined what the council's policy would be … I think there were some people in the council who weren't happy.'*[11] Others in the party hierarchy were clearly unhappy too, and the Greater London Labour Party intervened to obstruct, and eventually suspend the LGC, accusing it of acting unconstitutionally.[12] In another example, Mildred Gordon, candidate for Bow and Poplar in the 1992 General Election, discovered what happened when campaigns deviate from national strategy:

> *I wrote my own leaflets and Jenny Fisher, who was brilliant on the computer, drew them up. But … they [the Greater London Labour Party] sent bloody Jim Fitzpatrick[13] down who took over, ignored Dennis Twomey [Gordon's Election Agent]… and cancelled all my leaflets. They put in their standard leaflets and tried to take over the campaign. They didn't like what I was saying.*[14]

Just how decisive and ruthless the party machine had become by the 1990s, though, is illustrated best by the suspension of Walsall District Labour Party in 1995. The left-wing Labour administration there had run into controversy locally for its policy to radically decentralise local services, which the Conservative government seemed intent on exploiting. The Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, was due to visit the area, and seemed bound to attempt to embarrass the Labour leadership over the

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[11] Interview, Mike Davis

[12] Interview, Mike Davis

[13] Fitzpatrick was a Greater London Labour Party official, later to beat Gordon to the nomination of the newly created seat of Poplar and Canning Town (in 1997).

[14] Interview, Mildred Gordon

affair.[15]   On the very day he was due to go, the local Labour Party was suspended. Responsible for the decision was Frank Dobson, the party's Environment spokesperson at the time.   For him it was '*a very easy decision*' because, in his view, '*they were completely crackers!*'[16] Only two NEC members voted against a proposal to suspend the leader and deputy leader of the council,[17] which was itself a strong indicator of how the balance of power there had changed in favour of the leadership, but also the attitude towards disciplinary measures of this kind.

Example 1.2: The NEC and the Selection Process

Two episodes were crucial in leading the NEC to tighten its grip over candidate selection, especially for high profile by-elections.   Firstly, in 1983, Peter Tatchell's selection as the candidate for Bermondsey and Southwark, and the inept attempts by the leadership to block his candidature had been a highly public, drawn-out process which was embarrassing to the party leadership and ultimately unsuccessful.   It resulted in a massive defeat in the ensuing by-election (See Tatchell 1983; Golding 2003, 273-283), not surprising given that 'many people, even in the highest reaches of the Labour Party … did not want me to win' (Tatchell 1983, 119).   Secondly, and a turning point in Labour's drive towards centralisation, was the 1987 Greenwich by-election.   Deirdre Wood had been selected by the local party and immediately cast as 'a hard left candidate' (Seyd and Whiteley 1992, 210), although '*somewhat unfairly*'.[18]   The press relentlessly attacked her throughout the campaign as an extremist, with which she

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[15] John McKie 'Walsall "in Shock" Over Suspension Move.' *The Independent*, 10 August 1995.

[16] Interview, Frank Dobson

[17] John Rentoul 'Labour Removes "Extremist" Council Chief.' *The Independent*, 30 November 1995

[18] Interview, Frank Dobson; there is some doubt as to whether she was seriously regarded as hard left amongst the Party leadership (See McSmith 1996, 124-127).

seemed ill-equipped to cope,[19] and was duly defeated by Rosie Barnes of the SDP on a 10% swing. These two catastrophic results in Labour heartlands led directly to a strengthening of the NEC's role by creating a by-election panel to directly oversee the process of selection. As Frank Dobson, Campaigns Co-ordinator for the Party between 1987 and 1989, confirms:

> *The lesson after Greenwich was that we couldn't leave the selection of by-election candidates to local party choice … a by-election is a national event with a national impact and therefore we need a national approach. So the rule became that local parties could appoint from shortlists that were drawn up by the national party, and if the local party did not play ball then we could impose one. And that's still the rule now. Is that undemocratic? Maybe. But it is fully tied up with the general prosperity of the national party. What's more it's about the candidate themselves. Whoever it is must be able to stand up to the attention that they will get from the national press and media. I've had many candidates crying on my shoulder in these situations, literally. And when people complained, I'd say: I've seen this and you haven't. It's horrendous.*[20]

In 1989, these new rules came into practice when the NEC panel interviewed and short-listed candidates for the Vauxhall by-election and drew up an almost all-white shortlist including Kate Hoey and Nick Raynsford, and excluding locally favoured black, left-

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[19] Interview, Frank Dobson; See Richard Evans, 'Mudslinging Marks By-election Launch' *The Times*, February 5 1987

[20] Interview, Frank Dobson

wing candidates, like Martha Osamor despite attempts to reinstate her.[21] Local activists refused to participate in the election as a result (although Labour won anyway).   In December of the same year, the NEC ordered a further selection process to be conducted when Frank Field was denied reselection in Birkenhead by the result of a TGWU block vote.[22]   Other cases include the exclusion of Ken Capstick as a candidate for the Hemsworth by-election and the imposition of Derek Enright after the CLP rejected the NEC's approved shortlist.[23]

Example 1.3: Party discipline and the National Constitutional Committee

Until 1986, the NEC was largely responsible for disciplinary issues relating to individuals.   However, serious problems over the expulsion of members of the Trotskyite entryist group, the Militant Tendency, and the conflict between Labour Party rules and the Courts which arose from them,[24] exposed the inefficiency of the system and persuaded the NEC that changes were needed (Shaw 1988, 279).   High profile Militant members had been expelled only following exhaustive and exhausting meetings characterised by 'endless hours of procedural wrangling', and the efforts of many constituency parties to expel others had collapsed (Ibid., 278).

In response to these problems, the General Secretary put before the 1986 Party Conference proposals for a National Constitutional Committee (NCC) which would be

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[21] NEC Minutes, 17 May 1989

[22] This problem was in part a product of the fudge on selection processes in 1987 which introduced the short-lived local electoral college. All this achieved was to highlight the conflicts between TUs and local members (Russell 2005, 46), as this case (and the case of George Galloway in Hillhead: see Ken Smith, 'Hillhead 13 Quit in Anger at Galloway' *The Herald* 29 August 1989) amply demonstrates. On the other hand there were some doubts over the veracity or validity of Field's complaints via a 150 page dossier, as suggested by Hattersley and Peter Kilfoyle (who oversaw the process).

[23] Colin Brown, 'By-election Candidate Imposed by Labour.' *The Independent,* 18 October 1991.

[24] Courts were becoming increasingly interested in the affairs of voluntary organisations (see Shaw 1988, 238, 280).

elected by Conference and independent of the NEC. This committee would have a specific remit to handle disciplinary issues against individuals referred by the NEC or constituency parties.[25] This new committee, bound by clear rules and procedures represented a legally less ambiguous way of handling discipline. Whitty told the Conference that

> an organisation is lost if it cannot enforce its own rules and it is lost if
>
> it relies on the judges to enforce them for it. Our present rules,
>
> unfortunately, and our long-standing procedures at national level and
>
> at constituency level, neither protect the party nor do they protect
>
> individuals from vindictive action … The best way of keeping the
>
> judges out of our business is to make sure that our rules are
>
> unambiguous and unchallengeable. These proposals are just that.[26]

Richard Heffernan and Mike Marqusee (1992) were highly critical of these reforms, arguing that the NCC was politically driven, treating party left harshly whilst letting the right off lightly (Heffernan and Marqusee 1992, 263-5). There is no question that reform was critical to the ability to seek out and expel members of Militant and other entryist groups but this was because the meaning of 'bringing the party into disrepute' specifically included membership of organisations deemed 'incompatible'. Whitty, clarifying the charge described it as follows:

> We are not talking about individual actions; nor are we talking about
>
> the expression or publication of ideas. People will not be pursued for
>
> their ideas, they will not be pursued for individual actions. We are

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[25] Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1986

[26] Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1986

talking about a sustained period of conduct … where somebody stands against an official candidate of the Party, and the provision whereby they have been involved in an organisation which has been deemed incompatible with Party membership. These are the two main areas where this new provision would apply.[27]

In other words, the process was successful because it was effectively *de*politicised (and therefore depersonalised), by removing these responsibilities from the party organisation's key political body (the NEC) to a more bureaucratic, rule-based one. This had an additional benefit for the leadership of actually achieving the political objectives in which they had hitherto failed, since members of Militant could now be explicitly and clearly pursued for breaking party rules rather than for their political beliefs.

But the NCC dealt with more than simply Militant, as an extract from the report to the NEC of 27 April 1988 reproduced below shows. It summarises forty-four cases that had gone before the Committee since its first meeting in February 1987:

> Of the 44 cases, 6 were appeals against the withdrawal of the Whip, 3 were upheld and 3 were rejected but had the period of time of the withdrawal of the whip reduced; 16 were charged with membership of the Militant Tendency, 14 were found to be proved and expelled from membership of the Labour Party; 16 were charged with sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the Party and 6 with breach of other Party rules and Constitution. Of these 22 cases, 8 were expelled from

[27] Labour Party Annual Conference Report 1986

membership of the Party (2 for standing against official Labour candidates in last year's local elections), 5 were found not proved or rejected, and the other 9 had various penalties imposed on them, from severe reprimand to suspension of Party membership for a period or suspended from being a delegate or holding office.[28]

Altogether, the NCC dealt with 251 disciplinary cases between 1986 and 1990. Charges included 'bringing the party in disrepute' and 'sustained course of conduct prejudicial to the Party', 150 of which ended in expulsion. Of the 119 members charged with Militant membership, 112 were expelled (Heffernan and Marqusee 1992, 264-5). Key to its success in doing this was its legalistic, rule-based approach because it made Militant expulsions more acceptable to those on the emerging 'soft-left' who had previously harboured doubts about so-called 'witch-hunts' of left-wingers. Said a member of the Committee,

> *It was a very important process, partly because it brought the soft left over. When we expelled Dave Nellist [MP for Coventry South East], Clare Short fronted the case and only a few years before she had been defending Militant.[29]*

Furthermore, it meant that now there was a permanent process in which cases such as these could be heard and resolved relatively quickly and efficiently.

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[28] NCC report to NEC, 27 April 1988

[29] Interview, Dianne Hayter

Strengths of Bureaucratic Control as an Explanation

The examples and stories used in this section have a common theme running through them: they all demonstrate the kinds of interventions that local organisations, members and activists are subject to in order to prevent or punish deviation from organisational rules and orthodoxies. In contrast with *SP*, *BC* is concerned with the *mechanisms* that operate in organisations and discipline members rather than how confrontations are won or lost. It recognises the extent to which organisation itself is imbued with power. This enables the analyst to identify how organisation militates against freedom of political agents to act because the exclusion or punishment of certain voices, behaviours, views or approaches to politics are 'built into' it. The examples I have used should be understood in that light. The Weberian thesis that organisations in the end tend towards centralisation and domination by an elite clearly have some salience here. However, what is specifically interesting to me is the extent to which *BC*, as a particular dimension of power derived from Weberian theory, is at work through these processes. I will now analyse this question by conducting an analysis of the cases I have outlined, using the guide questions I set out above.

First Part: The Discipline of Party Members

  a) What happens when members break the rules or behave or act in ways contrary to 'orthodoxy'?

  b) What mechanisms are available to discipline individuals and constrain that behaviour?

What these examples demonstrate is that as the party organisation becomes more sharply directed towards rational goals, i.e. electoral victory, there is increasing

intolerance of anything that is likely to detract from them and greater likelihood therefore of interference in local affairs and activities. The investigation and punishment of those who break rules is made simpler by a) the establishment and enforcement of new and existing rules and b) the establishment of clear procedures for investigation and the application of sanctions. Mechanisms might include suspension of individuals or whole local parties, overruling selection processes, taking over election campaigns and even expulsion. In order to shed further light on this, I will look at each of these mechanisms more closely.

Firstly, local members, local committees and even entire local parties may be suspended for unorthodox practices. In each of the cases presented in Example 1.1, members were participating in organised, official party activity, pursuing their own local objectives: in Hackney, members attempted to use party mechanisms in order to tackle the problem of (what they felt to be) insufficiently accountable representatives; the general election campaign team in Bow and Poplar developed their own localised election publicity materials; the party in Walsall had its own specific policies on the structure of local administration. However, although these locally organised initiatives may not necessarily have been directly designed to challenge or confront the leadership, they were blocked or obstructed as incompatible with the party's immediate electoral goals (e.g. by generating negative press coverage). Members, activists, or candidates in Walsall developed a policy which may have been appropriate to specific local circumstances, but it was specifically *their own* and not the Party's policy. That is, their policy was dissenting, unconventional and attracting attention, something the more effective, centralised, election-oriented party machine could not tolerate.

Secondly, the rights of members can be overridden by the centre as is demonstrated by Example 2.2. Selecting candidates was a traditional privilege of local parties but, following a rule change in 1988 (after the Greenwich by-election), the NEC was granted power to take over a constituency party's selection process for by-elections. There were very practical reasons for this, not least the high profile of such contests. But it was also linked to the leadership's fear of local parties failing to select the 'right kind' of candidate, damaging not just local re-election prospects, but national ones too: Bermondsey had selected an openly gay left-winger; Vauxhall favoured a radical black activist from Tottenham; Hemsworth wanted a left-wing former Vice Chairman of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). In each case, the leadership was vehemently opposed to their candidacies and intervened to try to stop them. Despite their failure to stop Tatchell's selection, they got their way in the latter two cases because by the time they arose, there were *rules* and a *system* by which the NEC could, indeed was *required* to, intervene without the same level of legal and constitutional wrangling. In other words, an administrative process had become established, providing the conditions for *BC* to become active.

Thirdly, at the extreme end, members may be expelled. The case of the Militant expulsions is an interesting one. The new NCC was successful at excluding so many of those associated with the entryist group not because individual members were deemed to hold *views* incompatible with the mainstream or the leadership (although that was certainly the case), but for being part of *organisations* that were regarded as such. Greater clarity of organisational (as opposed to ideological) rules and the establishment of clear procedure enabled the party to purge itself of organised groups hostile to the leadership (including the Militant Tendency) much more efficiently.

What these examples illustrate is how, in the process of centralisation, *BC* gradually takes hold. Individuals and groups within the party are brought into line, punished or excluded not by individuals seeking personal ends but for deviating from party orthodoxy. Discipline is depersonalised, procedural and concerns the efficacy of the party as an electoral machine rather than specific political or ideological goals. Thus suspensions are carried out for unorthodox activities rather than ideas; intervention in selections has generally been approached as a procedural rather than political matter, and exclusions are carried out for violation of organisational rules rather than ideological ones.

Second Part: The Empowerment of Elites

a) How are leaders empowered whilst others are disadvantaged?

b) How are certain voices ruled out or excluded?

c) How does the way organisation functions entrench existing inequalities?

The three examples above also demonstrate how elites indirectly benefit from new procedures which are designed to make the party a more effective organisation. The establishment of these measures removes the autonomy of rank-and-file members and local party organisations to make policy, run campaigns select candidates, and set membership rules. As new rules become established, a different kind of power emerges that acquires a sort of extra-agentic capacity to discipline and control, the *effects* of which are not always neutral. Leaders are empowered partly because more of the party's functions are under their direct control, which allows them to respond swiftly and quickly to issues that concern them (such as the embarrassment that may have been caused by Walsall District Labour Party). But also, as part of the logic of organisation, local parties become more like a small part of the national machine than an independent

organisation, and grassroots members more like a cog in that machine. Unorthodox and noncompliant voices are thereby suppressed, silenced or ruled out as incompatible with the party's functional logic.

In the case of Walsall, there is clearly an element of tactical manoeuvre designed to deflect negative publicity, which suggests not *BC* so much as an exercise of *SP* by party leaders. However, such an exercise of power would not even be possible without the structural advantages with which *BC* empowers leaders and disadvantages others. Indeed, the disadvantage to which some groups like local activists are put is perhaps even better illustrated by the case of the Hackney LGC. Activists there were attempting to ensure that existing organisational rules and mechanisms (i.e. the Local Government Committee) were used to hold local representatives to account. However, their attempts were overridden by higher authorities, and they themselves became subject to a procedural discipline more concerned with party unity than democracy.

Similar things can be said about the NEC's control over selection processes. It has been a key mechanism for excluding 'undesirable' candidates, and this appears to have been the initial reason for implementing these processes. This looks like an exercise of *SP*. However, once the process is set in motion, voices incompatible with orthodoxy and electoral success (because they are too left-wing, too gay, too black) become excluded through a more 'systematic' process of monitoring and assessing candidates, suggesting that what begins as an exercise of *SP*, sometimes ends up as *BC*. The long-running debacle over the Bermondsey selection should be contrasted with the way in which Vauxhall was handled by the party six years later. Although the process was no less controversial, and even resulted in the local party sitting out the election, it was swifter, more efficiently done and with less overall damage to the party. Thus the will and

intention that failed in the Bermondsey case are in a sense replaced, or at least supplemented, by organisational machinery working in favour of the existing balance of power.   It is in this sense that organisation is 'conservative' and tends to preserve existing inequalities.   The establishment of the NCC is another good example of this. By 'letting go' of the process of discipline and passing it over to a new bureaucratic, rule-based committee, leaders actually got *more* of what they wanted from it. Discipline became a *process* by which *organised* voices in particular were excluded and ruled out. Thus power is evident not in confrontation but in routine *function*. Thus rule changes may initially be an exercise of *SP* in which elites use rules for their own purposes. However, once implemented, these rules and processes take on a life of their own and discipline everyone. They may still indirectly benefit the elite in most cases because they militate against change, but they cannot be wielded by them directly, for personal ends, or as a resource for aggrandising their own positions.

Limits of Bureaucratic Control as an Explanation

BC focuses on how processes and procedures strengthen inequalities of power, excludes voices and disciplines non-orthodoxy. However, it seems reasonable to ask how much of this is really an outcome of process and procedure and how much of it is in fact the outcome arbitrary interventions. Part of this depends to a degree on the motives that one believes underpin rule changes: whether they really are conscious elite strategies designed to serve their own ends, or whether the reasons behind these essentially administrative reforms are to make the organisation a more effective electoral machine in an age in which media scrutiny of parties is non-stop and often hostile. Would the imposition of Kate Hoey on Vauxhall have happened otherwise? Was the creation of the National Constitutional Committee anything other than a device for getting rid of

people that the leadership did not want in the party? Did the suspension of Walsall follow 'due process'? The answer to all of these questions could be, on a different reading of these events, no. However, the fact remains that these are outcomes of processes that may have been established for similar reasons, but which over time become embedded in the party organisation: the events in Vauxhall would not have occurred without a mechanism for them to be carried out (or at least not easily); the NCC established an ongoing process of discipline that follows the rules of natural justice which continues today; the suspension of Walsall was only possible because there was a means for Frank Dobson to do it. In other words, what may begin as *SP* soon becomes *BC*, that is a means control which is dislocated from individuals and immanent in organisational functioning.

Example 1 Conclusion

In order to achieve electoral objectives, the party leadership needs to gain more control over party members and organisation. In order to do so, stronger organisation is needed that supports their ability to intervene and manage the whole organisation. *BC* is a form of power that is inherent in the extension of these organisational functions and processes and offers much enlightenment about how the power of elites is indirectly strengthened and supported by the nature and logic of organisation and how certain groups are disciplined and excluded by it. It explains how the relationship between leaders and led is embedded in the logic of organisation. However, this logic does not stop there because over time, leaders and elites will also find themselves constrained by the rules that govern the organisation and unless they are especially charismatic or strategically skilled, they too are likely to fall into line.

Although it illuminates the importance of organisational power, what this dimension of power does not always demonstrate adequately is how discipline and control actually works at the individual level. Political parties are voluntary organisations and people cannot easily be forced to do what leaders want: they are free to leave if they find participation unsatisfying, and an analysis of power in these settings needs to accommodate this. One small step in this direction is to examine the extent to which participation in political parties becomes subject to organisational imperative. In the following section, I will examine some examples of how the organisation's functioning actually disciplines individual members by regulating, regularising, and structuring their actions.

Example 2: Organisational Imperatives, Meetings and Canvassing

Being a member of a political party, as one long standing Labour Party member put it, requires 'disciplines' and involves compromises.[30] The individuals I have spoken to joined the Labour Party for a variety of reasons: Mark Taylor, for example, was motivated to join and become active in the party by causes such as anti-racism but '*the thing that really got me going was the poll-tax, about 1990*';[31] Stephen Beckett was '*inspired and energised*' by Tony Benn's bid for the Deputy Leadership in 1981 and the pressure from the left at the time for organisational and political reform.[32] Being a part of that change and contributing to it was something that '*drew me into the party*' and it was this particular strand within the party '*that attracted me*', he told me, because '*if*

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[30] Interview, John Burnell

[31] Interview, Mark Taylor

[32] This included the campaign for Labour Party Democracy's demands for the mandatory re-selection of MPs, an electoral college for electing the Party Leader and control by the NEC over the manifesto. The first two of had been achieved by early 1981.

you want to see that change you've got to be part of it.[33] For others, joining the party seemed to be the '*natural thing to do*' given their family background.[34] But however inspired, energised or natural the reason for joining, much of the reality of party life is more prosaic and routine: attending meetings, campaigning and canvassing (including getting out the vote and leaflet delivery); being a branch officer, constituency officer, or a conference delegate; being an organiser, an agent, or a candidate; assisting MPs or councillors and doing administrative work. Much of the work of the party activist is routine and fairly dull, consisting perhaps of '*a bit of canvassing, a lot of leaflet delivery, attending meetings*' and so on.[35] In the rest of this section, I will briefly examine two examples: the conduct of meetings in local party organisations and routine campaigning and canvassing activities. The reason for focusing on these is because they are staples of party life that most active members will participate in at one time or another. Some may go on to become representatives or party officers, some may go no further, but (nearly) all will have participated in these activities first.

Example 2.1 The Conduct of Meetings

Meetings are perhaps the primary means by which members and activists experience and participate in the party and (therefore) by which the actions of individuals are shaped and directed.   Meetings take place at all levels of the party, from the local Branch to the Cabinet, and perform many crucial functions: from making and legitimising decisions to electing officers and providing accountability; from planning initiatives and distributing responsibilities to monitoring and evaluating tasks. They are central to the party's routine operation and the likelihood is that all active members of a

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[33] Interview, Stephen Beckett

[34] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[35] Interview, Mark Taylor

political party will participate in meetings of one kind or another at various points in their participatory life.

A Branch meeting (at the electoral ward level) is, for many, their first contact with active party life. For some it may be the limit of their commitment, but for others it is the springboard to deeper involvement, as a campaigner, officer or candidate. When the new generation of activists came through in the early 1980s, many of them did so by getting involved in their local branches. By this route, they discovered a talent for, say, campaigning or organising, or became party officers or candidates.[36] Branch meetings are, in this way, an initiation into the party as a whole, the means through which members become more deeply involved in the organisation. For example, if you want to hold office in the party then you have to start at branch level because

you get on the GC by being a ward delegate ... You get on the LGC

(Local Government Committee) through being on the GC ... Generally

speaking there would be one or two per ward. Some ward positions on

the GC were hotly contested, some they were not so hotly contested. It

just depended what ward you were in, what the nature of the GC was,

whether it was divided or not.[37]

Meetings are key contexts in which formal roles are carried out and are therefore helpful points at which to examine the functioning of those roles. The Constituency Secretary's role, for example, largely centres on the servicing of meetings, which includes convening meetings, booking rooms, drawing up agendas and papers and ensuring they are distributed to participants, taking minutes, ensuring communications with local

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[36] Interview, John Burnell

[37] Interview, Mike Davis

members are carried out. The Secretary also acts as the main point of contact for internal and external bodies and individuals and ensures that party rules and procedures are correctly administered. The job, therefore, involves a great deal of administration and paperwork and failure to do so can bring party activity to a halt. A prominent Labour blogger and Hackney councillor recently suggested that a 'weak or incompetent' Constituency Secretary can mean 'Labour's constituency organisation collapses' whereas a 'strong and dynamic' one can 'change the culture of a local party to make it far more outward-looking and vibrant.'[38] This is something that Mike Tyrrell witnessed himself in Tower Hamlets in the 1980s:

> *After the 1987 election, the party became a bit moribund; we had three*
> *or four GCs that were inquorate because the Secretary never sent out*
> *the notices. The Treasurer and Secretary completely fucked up, so a*
> *group of us got together ... with all sections of the party represented,*
> *just to get the thing going again.*[39]

The general conduct of meetings can be understood as an established ritual governed by standing orders, and it is the responsibility of the Chair to manage them. Typical standing orders for a Constituency Labour Party stipulate that the Chair, whilst ensuring that meetings begin and end on time ('meetings shall normally commence at 7.30pm and end at 10pm') and are quorate, 'shall commence all meetings by welcoming delegates and introducing any new delegates and observers present at the meeting and calling for any apologies tendered by delegates absent from the meeting'.[40] The Chair

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[38] Akehurst L., October 31 2011, *The 636 Unsung Heroes of the Labour Party,* labourlist.org. Accessed November 26, 2011. http://labourlist.org/2011/10/the-636-unsung-heroes-of-the-labour-party/

[39] Interview, Mike Tyrrell

[40] Quotes are drawn from Bethnal Green and Bow Constituency Labour Party, 2002.

will then go through the agenda item by item, introducing each one, perhaps summing up or thanking the appropriate contributor at each stage before introducing the next item and so on down the list.[41]   As well as particular duties, standing orders stipulate rules for general conduct and behaviour: meetings should be 'organised in a comradely fashion in such a way as to maximise participation from members' and be free from 'harassment or intimidation of members on the basis of sex or race'.   Discussion of policy follows definite rules, and where motions are being proposed there is a formal structure to discussion: motions must be 'proposed by a delegate from the originating organisation [such as a Branch party] present at the meeting and seconded before debate can proceed; 'delegates must be recognised by the chair' and 'shall stand where able and shall address the chair'; 'no delegate may speak more than once on any motion except at the chair's discretion' and only after everyone else who wants to speak has done so.   Furthermore, 'speakers shall have a maximum of three minutes each'.   It amounts to fairly detailed guidance on conduct.

One of the most important functions of these meetings, and the most common item on the agenda is the provision of accountability.[42]   Executive Officers (such as the Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary), local Councillors and other representatives are all expected to provide reports for scrutiny by GC delegates.   It is the main means by which local members can hold local officers and representatives to account as well as learn about what decisions are being or have been made in local government or in other units of the party organisation (such as the Constituency Executive or the Local Government Committee).   For example, the agenda of a meeting of the Bethnal Green and Bow

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[41] Standing orders also lay down that the usual order of business which 'shall be 1. Apologies; 2. Speakers / Discussion; 3. Minutes of the last meeting; 4. Matters arising; 5. Motions; 6. Parliamentary Report; 7. Labour Group Report; 8. Executive Committee Report; 9. Other Reports Not Already Covered; 10. Campaigning Report; 11. Any Other Business'

[42] See previous footnote

Labour Party GC held in July 2002 consists (apart from one submitted motion) *entirely* of reports: from members of the Executive Committee – including the Campaigns and Membership team's plans for a new leaflet, requests for nominations to a campaign planning committee, the Treasurer's report on the state of local party's accounts – and from representatives, including Councillors and the local MP. They are an important and often valued part of party meetings for many activists because they are an opportunity for activists to be heard. Stephen Beckett, an activist from Bethnal Green and Bow argues that between representatives and members,

> *you have to have lines of communication, opportunities for input [and]*
>
> *some kind of accountability to know that input in is being considered.*[43]

The process of reporting is important at Branch level too, especially since it is a means of communicating the decisions that have been taken by the GC as well as a way of keeping abreast of the work of local councillors and Branch officers. One of the main advances that activists like John Burnell, Mike Davis, and Stephen Beckett felt they had made in '*getting rid of the real old right wing Tammany Hall types*'[44] was in ensuring that there *was* some kind of accountability, to the local Branch, for example in which it '*sent delegates to GCs that did attend and did come back and tell people*'[45] Indeed, unlike many of his predecessors, Mark Taylor, who was a councillor in Tower Hamlets from 1994 until 2002

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[43] Interview, Stephen Beckett

[44] Interview, John Burnell

[45] Interview, Stephen Beckett

used to make a real point of making sure that I would attend the ward

meetings for the party and I wrote them a report every ward meeting

that there was.[46]

However, reports are generally conducted in a business-like way, the information contained in them fairly dry and banal. Mark Taylor reported on '*things I thought were important*' and, he told me, '*some of that's going to be dull*'[47]. A typical example included an attempt to re-open dormant laundry, a proposed new resident parking scheme, racial attacks on a local estate, meetings of two committees of which he had become chair, the Labour Group's budget making discussions.

The danger of this culture of meetings and reporting is that political discussion or action yields to the official kind: for example, reports on party matters, procedures, membership, attendance at other official party meetings, budgets and fundraising, the election of officers and delegates and so on. It therefore has a depoliticising effect and instils a level of tedium and routine into meetings. In the end individuals come out of meetings politically disempowered rather than the reverse.

Example 2.2 The Tasks of Canvassing and Campaigning

An important way in which local party organisation contributes to the party's overall goals is to ensure the Party vote is maximised at local and national elections. Canvassing and election campaigning is central to this and a key role of activists. For some it is a route to further and deeper participation, and even a kind of rite of passage.

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[46] Interview, Mark Taylor

[47] Interview, Mark Taylor

Jan Burnell put it to me that *'unless you've delivered leaflets in the European election you can't call yourself a true activist.'*[48]

For Marjorie Paling in a marginal Labour area in Nottinghamshire, canvassing is an ongoing and time-consuming activity that is hard work to maintain:

> *I do telephone canvassing once a fortnight ... [but] we really scrape by and we need to keep our MP in. There's a small group of four or five of us who are joined by around twenty others, but there are never twenty of us! It really is hard work.*[49]

Canvassers need to ask the appropriate questions and mark canvassing cards correctly so as to ensure that the party's vote can be accurately and quickly identified come polling day. They also need to make sure that Labour voters can get to the polls, are willing to put posters up and if possible help the campaign or even join the party (Labour Party 1992). It is a routine job, which can be quite daunting and '*People are frightened in case someone asks them a difficult question. And some are difficult.*'[50] People therefore need reassurance and encouragement, but most of all they need to be *organised*. John Burnell has been an organiser of campaigning and canvassing almost from the time he joined the Party and counters that even if party members are 'frightened to phone or doorstep canvass amongst the general public' the party has the right to ask:

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[48] Interview, Jan Burnell

[49] Interview, Marjorie Paling

[50] Interview, Marjorie Paling

so I will ask them and have no compunction about that. I won't take

no for an answer. I say 'we're going leafleting, what time will you be

there?'[51]

In Burnell's view proper organisation is crucial, more so than candidates, in winning elections.[52] For a General Election campaign for example, it requires the careful co-ordinating of ward organisers, a central team of press officers, weekly meetings, the setting and monitoring of targets. Organising is effectively a full-time job, as Mike Tyrrell remembers:

I can't believe it took up so much of my time! It took up a hell of a lot

of time. I'd leave work, go down the party office and do a whole raft of

paperwork.[53]

It is perhaps inevitable, therefore, that a well-organised, well-funded local party is one in which bureaucratic 'party' roles are clearly distinguished from 'political' ones: one 'delivers votes', whilst the other debates policy. Operational functions become paramount and canvassing is understood as an administrative activity rather than a political one. Party guidance on the conduct of canvassing advises that the job of a canvasser is 'to identify [a] voter's intentions, not to argue or convert' and to be 'the public face of the Labour Party' which means conducting oneself in a manner which is 'polite and friendly at all times' (Labour Party1992). 'Voter i/d' as canvassing had been re-branded by 1997 was not 'designed … to change people's minds, but to secure more votes for Labour.' It was treated not as a political activity because 'it's organisational'

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[51] Interview, John Burnell

[52] Interview, John Burnell

[53] Interview, Mike Tyrrell

(Labour Party 1997, 11). In other words, the process is depoliticised and individual initiative is kept firmly in check.   The significance of this kind of organisational arrangement in party life is that it creates the conditions for an administrative detachment of the kind Weber attributes to bureaucracy, even in a party political body like the Labour Party. John Burnell sees his role today more as an impassive official concerned only with organisational objectives:

> *I've almost totally given up on the policy field. I am now just a machine politician out of my gut, tribal loyalty to the Labour Party. For me, the political objectives are to have a smooth operating machine that gets leaflets delivered and canvassing done. I don't frankly care what the message is at all. I'm depoliticised. And that's because of so many things the Labour Government has done that makes me feel uncomfortable. But the party is bigger than its leader. That's the line I've always taken.*[54]

Strengths of Bureaucratic Control as an Explanation

Third Part: Organisational Imperatives

a) How do the activities members participate in as part of party life discipline them and govern their conduct as political actors?

b) How do the positions people hold in the party or the jobs they do restrict their capacity for free and independent political action?

Meetings are perhaps an obvious way in which the conduct of members and their political activity is governed by organisational imperatives. Meetings are the main way

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[54] Interview, John Burnell

in which members participate and a gateway into the party. It is the route through which they can access positions of authority and responsibility, and a springboard for becoming involved in more activities, especially campaigning and canvassing; in other words, becoming activists. Meetings also provide opportunities for members to participate in policy-making and in holding representatives to account. Thus meetings also discipline representatives, MPs, councillors and officers by requiring them to attend and account in some sense for their actions and to be questioned by delegates and members. However, the delegates themselves are closely disciplined too, since these crucial functions of the party meeting are tightly governed by rules of conduct and procedure, particularly through devices like standing orders and the responsibilities of the Chair to ensure that they are followed. Indeed, party officers like the Chair and Secretary are perhaps the most disciplined of all. They are apparently consumed almost completely by the organisation and their duties are designed to serve the needs of the organisation's continued functioning. Failure to do so leads potentially to organisational failure which can, far from 'freeing' individuals to act freely, curtail their ability to act politically at all. However, for officers in particular there is little if any time for 'free' political action in terms of ideological deliberation or policy-making any case since their time is dominated by administrative work, which is organisational rather than political

It should be remembered, however that all this organisation has a purpose. The empowerment of the party machine is the means by which wider political power is sought. After all, to achieve its aims in a representative democracy the party needs power: to gain power the party needs to maximise votes. Campaigning and canvassing are therefore also vitally important activities for the basic substantive aims of democratic party organisation. They require substantial organisation and contribute to

the influence of *BC*. It not only provides routines that keep activists occupied in the service of the party, but substantially directs the energies and attentions of its most talented activists into almost purely managerial functions. The party organisation therefore needs functionaries, administrators and workers following set codes of conduct, gathering clearly defined administrative information. Despite the fears some people have, therefore, Labour Party guidance explicitly and expressly steers them away from engaging the public politically, and towards sticking closely to defined administrative tasks. However effective this may be for the pursuit of political office, it shows how organisational management strengthens at the expense of political initiative.

Limits of Bureaucratic Control as an Explanation

There are two main limits to this approach which need to be resolved. Firstly, *BC* tends to focus on the negative, restrictive aspects of power's operation and exercise. Whilst it does not ignore it entirely, it does not emphasise strongly enough the aspects of organisation that *support* the exercise of power in other dimensions too (i.e. *IP* and *SP*). Rules govern conduct, but knowing and learning the rules means that individuals have a powerful weapon in their hands with which they can defend themselves and attack others. Bureaucratic organisation is (as Michels and Weber both acknowledge) the lifeblood of major political parties like the Labour Party and other large institutions. It is difficult to envisage any serious alternative. But is it reasonable to see the direction of organisation being only one-way?

Example 2: Conclusion

BC illuminates power's organisational dimension and is therefore more structural than agentic. It is a more anonymous and subtle dimension of power that operates in the

day-to-day organisational functioning often taken for granted in parties. Thus this part of the analysis has been directed towards routines: party meetings and activities like canvassing as well as the functional administrative roles that party officers perform. This supplements the focus on the effects of centralisation discussed earlier in the chapter by shedding light on how individual members are disciplined by the routine functioning of *BC*. However, it is a fairly negative conception of power that arguably does not put enough emphasis on how individuals can also be *empowered* by organisation and how resistance to it can ensure that there is some room for manoeuvre in terms of action, even if at times it is highly restricted. Nevertheless, the unique perspective that this particular aspect of *BC* provides enriches the framework of party power and contributes to the depth of understanding of the dimensional complexities of power. It is not sufficient on its own, but it is an important aspect in a complex framework of multi-tiered power operating in the modern party.

Conclusion

As well as groups of individuals mediated by rules, democratic political parties are ongoing organisations with some kind of stability. To be successful organisations, they need to maintain continuous presence *between* elections in order to develop policies and promote them; to market themselves, fundraise, select candidates, build support, maintain campaigning resources and so on. In order to support these subsidiary goals, parties have to become permanently organised and develop a continuous administration. In short, they become bureaucracies. In this chapter, I have considered how analysing a dimension of Bureaucratic Control allows power's organisational dimension to be taken into account when studying the political party. It focuses on the tendency of organisations to centralise and restrict the freedom of political actors within it.

However, it also illuminates how this kind of power works more subtly through the routine procedures and functioning of party organisation to discipline individual members. I have suggested that it nevertheless needs to be seen not as an inevitable 'iron law', but as an important dimension of power that works alongside those I have already analysed.

Despite its benefits, there are four main lacunae in the concept of Bureaucratic Control which demonstrate that on its own, it is insufficient. Firstly, it is unable adequately to account for how power can be constitutive as well as oppressive: the emphasis on restriction means that it cannot accommodate the extent to which party life may actually be a positive source of political identity and subjectivity rather than simply a means of stifling it. Secondly, it does not fully recognise the extent to which organisational power is not omnipotent and can be resisted by exercising Strategic Power: for example, rules are written down, and members can learn them in order to effectively deploy them in their own favour; representatives or officers can also, perhaps, resist scrutiny by reporting only innocuous information. Thirdly, bureaucratic instruments are (therefore) by no means entirely independent and can be used as a resource, too. Fourthly, Bureaucratic Control is effective at illuminating a certain kind of organisational power and its effects but it is still too general and impersonal to elicit the details of its operation on individual behaviour. Thus, discipline has not yet been fully exploited as a mode of power.

There are two final points I wish to emphasise which point towards the next stage of my analysis. Firstly, although the kind of centralising and dominant internal power described in this chapter is important for achieving electoral goals, the associated danger is a loss of vitality in the life of the party and its activists. The party therefore

needs to find ways of building capacity for itself in this context, i.e. it needs to be able to change in response to wider social shifts of power and opinion. Secondly, the negative focus of Bureaucratic Control creates the impression that parties do little more than destroy political freedom for activists. If this were the case, it would be counterproductive. Further analysis needs to identify the extent to which the party constitutes its activists and in so doing provides useful capacities for itself by empowering them in a variety of ways that they may also value. This is why a dimension of power that is more constitutive and positive in character is required. It is to the task of developing this fourth dimension of power that I turn in the next chapter.

Five: Constitutive Power

As my analysis has unfolded, power in parties has taken on an increasingly anonymous and pervasive character. I began with Individualistic Power, which is effective at explaining loyalty and conflict in direct, competitive relationships. Strategic Power provides insights into how organisation amplifies these relations, and Bureaucratic Control explains how party members are kept loyal and obedient by the controlling power of hierarchy and bureaucratic process. However, the relationship between members and the party is not purely mechanical, nor is it oriented solely around relationships of command and obedience. These approaches leave unanswered two important questions. Firstly, the analysis has so far focused on how the interests and desires of individuals are expressed in conflict, denied, organised out, manipulated or repressed, but how can the ongoing loyalty of members be accounted for? Secondly, once parties have reached a certain level of organisation, with an efficient bureaucratic system of control, how does it then build the kind of capacities that it needs?

These are the kinds of questions that the fourth dimension of power in my framework seeks to address. My interest here is in how individual subjectivities (and therefore their beliefs and interests) are constituted and shaped by power. In order to pursue this, I will take the search for power's operation *beyond* individuals and institutions, which only give a partial picture. Instead, I am concerned more with how power *produces* interests than with the specific outcomes of their pursuit in any particular situation.

In the rest of this chapter, then, I firstly set out the key attributes of this dimension of power. Once the task of definition is completed and some thought given to the kinds of questions that should be asked I, secondly, test its explanatory scope by applying it to

the experiences of party members.   Thirdly, I also discuss how it fits into the overall framework, what strengths it brings and what gaps in explanation it leaves.

It is this dimension which is most closely related to Lukes' (2005) 'radical view' of power because it is designed to identify the unobservable forces and processes that shape agents' understanding of themselves and their interests.   However, there are important differences between his conception of power and mine: Lukes understands power in negative and repressive terms, in which individual's 'real' interests are obscured by an insidious, hidden ideology;[1] in contrast, I seek in this chapter to illuminate power's more positive and constitutive side.   My immediate task, then, is to find some initial theoretical support for this idea.   Whilst Lukes can be understood as drawing on one aspect of Marxist thought to support his notion of 'objective interests', I turn to another: the explanatory possibilities opened up by structural Marxism, in particular Louis Althusser's concept of ideology.   This will allow me to ask not so much where power is located, but how it operates.

What is Constitutive Power?

Althusser's overall concern is with how certain 'apparatuses' (including organised politics)   reproduce the dominant ideology of liberal-democratic-capitalism for the ultimate benefit of capital.   Althusser argues that certain kinds of institution can be classified as an 'Ideological State Apparatus' (ISA).   ISAs are a means by which the 'dominant ideology' is spread in subtle ways.   The concept of ISAs covers a multitude

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[1] This aspect of Lukes' theory was based on Marxist ideas of 'false consciousness'. However, he modifies this later in his 2005 edition of *PRV*, arguing that what he is interested in is 'the shaping of agents desires and beliefs by factors external to those agents' (Lukes 2005, 134) in ways that are not necessarily intentional or intelligent. This is not 'false consciousness' as such, but still makes use of the notion of 'real interests' albeit in a slightly different way. Instead, he uses it to mean what an individual would choose under 'conditions of relative autonomy' (Ibid., 146). Thus 'power' may include power to mislead, censor, disinform, infantilise judgement and so on.

of institutions, but certainly includes religious institutions, education, family, the legal and political system (including political parties), trade-unions, communications (including press, radio and television), and cultural institutions. Although ISAs 'present themselves to the immediate observer in the form distinct and specialised institutions' (Althusser 2008 [1971], 17) that are not directly connected with state power, they are no less important to it than the police, the army and other repressive means of domination. Crucial, here, is his attention to how ISAs constitute a form of subjectivity or agency that is congenial to capital. The concern of this thesis is nevertheless more precise: the specific dimensions of power which are at work in the political party. It therefore focuses not on the construction of subjectivity *per se*, but on the way particular kinds of subjectivity are constituted within parties in order to provide them with the subjective capacities needed for them to function in an efficient and effective way. Despite its generality, Althusser's concept of ideology is a valuable and provocative source for understanding power in this way and I accordingly draw on some key aspects of it in order to develop my own conception of Constitutive Power.

Althusser's notion of ideology has some notable correspondence with Gramsci's conceptualisation. Gramsci proposed a dynamic and sophisticated understanding of ideology as a means by which hegemony is maintained in society. He argued that 'man is … the process of his actions' and that human nature arises out of the complex of social relations (Gramsci 1971, 351). People are 'organised', he continues, by ideologies, which 'create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc' (Ibid., 377). Underlying Gramsci's discussion is a notion of ideology as 'a practice, producing subjects' (Mouffe 1979, 187) and this informs Althusser's approach too. When he uses the term 'ideology', Althusser does not refer to a system of ideas or principles, or a creed that one might choose to follow, nor does he

describe a notion of 'false consciousness' by which the 'real' is obscured (Hirst 1979, 41), as Lukes does.[2] Rather, he refers to structures of social practices in organisations which shape and produce individual subjectivities. This is the main source of what I will call 'Constitutive Power'. Constitutive Power gives form to certain modes of subjectivity that in turn provide the basis for the beliefs that follow it. Therefore, rather than being concerned about who is 'getting their way' or not and under what constraints, Constitutive Power is focused on how social forces work to produce certain kinds of subjectivity needed to reproduce the current system: an altogether more clandestine and effective form of power than notions of 'false consciousness' and without its dubious theoretical and epistemological baggage.

Constitutive Power has a *material* existence in an apparatus like a political party (Althusser 2008 [1971], 39-40), because it refers to a 'structure of social relationships' that is 'as real as the economy' (Hirst 1979, 28). A political party can be understood as consisting of a series of *practices* in which the role of a party member, an activist, a local representative, a party officer, is carried out or performed. In this context, the term 'practices' is understood to mean the performances and rituals in which behavioural norms are sedimented and repeated: it refers to habitual, or customary actions or patterns of behaviour, including established procedures or systems; it includes shared repertoires and norms of language and speech and makes use of words, objects, physical equipment and other material.

These practices may be understood not as expressions of prior beliefs, but practical manifestations and inculcations of the belief itself. Althusser illustrates this by referring to Pascal's formula, in which 'Pascal says more or less: "Kneel down, move your lips in

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[2] See previous footnote.

prayer, and you will believe"' (Althusser 2008 [1971], 42). Belief from this perspective is initially an *effect* of repeated, ritualised actions. This once again echoes Gramsci who argued that faith is retained through repetition and a continuity of relations which 'is the best didactic means for working on popular mentality' (Gramsci 1971, 340). 'Belief' is in this sense a *material* phenomenon derived from the participation of an individual in certain practices in the context of a particular apparatus. In other words, for Althusser human 'ideas' exist and are maintained in and through action, where actions are elements of a wider complex of ideologically circumscribed practices, performances and rituals (Ibid., 42-3). The significance of these is that they serve to reproduce the existing system in ways that render the power involved invisible because it is imbricated within everyday behaviour. It is their *repetition* that makes them seem natural and therefore taken-for-granted as an ethos or modus operandi. They therefore smoothly (for the most part) reproduce the status quo and its prevailing structures and hierarchies. In this sense it is similar to what Bourdieu calls a *habitus* and its potency lies precisely in its familiarity.

This constitutive dimension of power is helpful for examining how the party produces subjects who are *voluntarily* loyal because they have or share certain values and ideas about the world which are not innate or *a priori* but have been *produced*. In other words, this kind of power concerns not their ideological normative values (concerning for example social justice) but belief systems concerning what it means to be a loyal and effective party member. Here it is not political ideals which are at stake but their behavioural norms within the party machine, where obedience, commitment, efficiency and hence the engendering of appropriate capacities and forms of agency are the crucial ingredients comprising party membership. To put it another way, this is about practical, behavioural norms of subjectivity, rather than ideational or ideological ones.

Constitutive Power as an approach to analysis suggests that individuals are not necessarily pre-disposed to loyalty, or to certain values or structures; rather, through following the practices of party life the party member is made over as a loyal and proficient activist. This can therefore be thought of as a kind of socialisation but in a wider sense than the term might normally be understood, congruent with the role Althusser gives to schools, family or church in inculcating norms of obedience or leadership. This does not, therefore, denote a distorted reality (like false consciousness) but a real, living relation to the world (Thompson 1984, 90) that has nonetheless been *constituted*.

The structure of social practices in the party contributes to the production of specific subjectivities that the party needs for its own reproduction: particular interests, desires and capacities, like organisational skills, or a particular talent for campaigning, say. It is not monolithic because it accommodates differences and variations in the kinds of activists it produces and the different roles they play. This is possible because Constitutive Power is not a negative force that seeks to restrict and contain, but a *positive* one that seeks to shape and build. It is a mode of power that is understood as productive and constitutive rather than being merely repressive. Indeed, a political party would not be able to function were it to consist merely of obedient automatons, and it would be impossible for even the most charismatic of leaders to have direct command over a vast machine made up of docile 'placemen' waiting to be directed. Through this more positive mode of power, one can begin to understand how the party constitutes activists and members by creating new agentic capacities for itself. This does not require merely obedient subjects, but also *empowered* ones. The same can be said for the fact that the practices through which Constitutive Power is exercised do not stay unchanged forever, but are challenged, overturned and renewed from time-to-time

as new circumstances reward modified or novel practices. Far from being evidence of resistance to power, change is precisely how Constitutive Power is sustained and renewed and how parties retain their grip. It demonstrates its effective operation as a positive force and provides a way out of the problems of 'stasis' with which critics of Althusser like E.P. Thompson (1978) were concerned. In political parties, these kinds of evolutions are especially apparent as new generations of members come through with different responses to their roles as party activists, leaders and representatives as circumstances and technologies change. Party life, in other words, is in part an ongoing *reinvention* and reconfiguration of practices, and subjectivities change accordingly. Individuals are unaware of power's role in this and freely accept their subjection (Althusser 2008 [1971], 56) because they are empowered within limits and make appropriate choices. However, this is also a means by which individuals are controlled and directed. This, therefore, is a very economical and subtle way in which power is systemically reproduced.

The Key Components of Constitutive Power

Constitutive Power provides my framework with a means of filling an important gap left by Bureaucratic Control: that is, how does power actually function within organisations and how does the efficiently organised party build capacity for itself? It does so by constituting subjects in manifold, material ways through its ordinary everyday practices. As such, Constitutive Power has two main components:

1. Constitutive Power is immanent in the *material*, lived practice in organised party politics. It includes conduct, patterns of behaviour, the rituals and performances of party life. The focus of Constitutive Power therefore is on the *everyday*

material practices of party life in which subjects, different kinds of political actor, are constituted and the party structure is reproduced.

2. Constitutive Power is *positive* and *constitutive*. It does not block or restrict, but rather *empowers* individuals thus endowing them with skills and capacities to act according to its political objectives (i.e. getting elected). This has the effect of further reinforcing and reproducing the party structure and its requirements. Yet, at the same time it (thereby) acts as a subtle form of control over members, who cannot afford to fail in their tasks and who must negotiate a fine line between obedience and agency.

Identifying Constitutive Power

How, then, do political parties utilise *and* exemplify Constitutive Power [henceforth *CP*]? How can it be applied to political parties and party members? How do parties produce the right kind of party activist? From this perspective, activists' subjectivities are constituted by participating in the practices that *make* them activists: by attending meetings, campaigning and canvassing; by becoming a branch or constituency officer, or a delegate; perhaps by becoming an organiser, an agent, or a candidate; by assisting MPs or councillors (e.g. running constituency surgeries) or doing administrative work. Activists may participate in internal groups or factions, read certain publications, get involved in specific campaigns and so on. Through such means is the individual constituted as a 'party activist', but crucially, an activist of a certain exemplary kind: efficient, on-message, sometimes passive, but perhaps more importantly, loyal.

'*There has to be loyalty in politics*' said one former Cabinet Minister I spoke to,[3] and indeed, loyalty is a central principle of politics, especially party politics. But it is also hard to define and could mean a number of different things at different times in a party context. It could mean loyalty to objectives that might be immediate or tactical (like winning a specific vote), strategic (like winning power) or ideological (like pursuing social democratic objectives). On the other hand, loyalty may be given to legitimate party structures or rules in which the test of an initiative or policy is that it comes through the proper party policy-making structures and channels. It may also mean loyalty to the party leadership. This is also important in party politics, especially in an age where the leadership is ever more the focus of public and media attention. However, the loyalty of members to political parties cannot simply be explained by obedience, as *BC* might suggest, or the self-interest of political careerists, as *IP* might propose. Whilst loyalty, particularly in terms of obedience or commitment, clearly has some attributes that might be associated with other dimensions of power I discuss, it is not fully or satisfactorily explained by the three I have so far considered in this thesis. Generally, even the most recalcitrant MP will concede that it is '*no good being against the leadership for the sake of it*'.[4] Indeed, a 'basic assumption' of loyalty to leaders is not a result of being suppressed or defeated, but is part of the *culture* of party politics[5]. It is on this basis, as something which party members are constituted *as*, that I explore the concept of loyalty in this chapter. The next step is therefore to apply these ideas, and I do so by working through two stages of analysis. The initial stage is concerned with the constitution of subjectivities and identifies the practices, rituals and performances in which party members regularly participate and draws connections

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[3] Interview, Gavin Strang.

[4] Interview, Gavin Strang

[5] Interview, Michael Meacher

between these and the kinds of party members, activists and representatives that a party needs. The second stage examines the way the party builds or renews the capacities and skills it needs in what might be considered to be its 'workforce' or store of human capital.

Guide Questions for Analysis

CP operates in social practices in parties to constitute the particular modes of subjectivity that produce useful political actors. The focus of analysis shifts away from individuals and institutions and towards the day-to-day practices of party life. Other dimensions of power focus on what makes certain groups or individuals dominant and others obedient, but by ignoring these important details they miss what it is that makes people willingly loyal and effective agents. I begin the process of rectifying this by using the following series of questions (based on the stages of analysis I have set out above) as a guide for my analysis:

Stage One: Constituting Subjects

a) Through what habits and practices in everyday party life is party structure reproduced?

b) How do these taken-for-granted repetitions become sedimented tools of control?

Stage Two: Building Capacities

a) How are individuals empowered with capacities to act within this scheme?

b) What benefits does this bring to the party?

Application: Testing Constitutive Power's Explanatory Scope

I will conduct this analysis by using examples which range across different practices in party life. As I have suggested, the party needs to produce effective, empowered subjects rather than merely obedient ones. However, the subjects it produces must also be constituted as *loyal*. The investment the party makes in producing and constituting useful subjectivities relies on the fact that they remain within and serve the party loyally, which is a means by which parties exert subtle means of control. Thus, for the rest of this chapter, I examine the different ways in which, and the different habits and practices by which, parties are able to build useful, effective and loyal subjects. I will use three examples: firstly, meetings and how they contribute to producing certain subjectivities through everyday activities; secondly, I will look at how subjectivities change as party needs change by highlighting how the career structure of the modern party helps produce effective and loyal members that suit the requirements of contemporary political life; thirdly, I will examine how training has developed as modern technique for constituting the right kinds of 'mainstream' subjectivities that professional, electorally-oriented parties need.

Example 1: Meetings

The most obvious, ongoing material means by which a political party like the Labour Party can be said to have existence, for its own members at least, is by meetings. As I discussed in the last chapter, meetings are a primary means by which members and activists experience the party, and participate in it. Meetings are so 'normal' and so much part of a 'common sense' way of running an organisation that they are not often thought about in terms of power. The 'efficiency' or otherwise of particular formats of

meetings or whether they achieve a particular outcome or not may be argued over from time-to-time, but the extent to which meetings *per se* play a role in producing useful and loyal activists is rarely either considered by academics or noticed by participants. In this chapter, meetings are considered as 'practices': regular, repeated and governed by a series of written and unwritten rules and conventions that contribute towards the production of useful subjectivities. Meetings are seen, in part, as a ritualised means of communication between participants and an important means of socialising new members. As such, they are points at which party activists begin to emerge and are constituted even as they are disciplined.

There are many different kinds of meetings, governed by different rules, situated in different parts of the party apparatus, with different functions: at the branch level, at the constituency level, at the national level; also within the Parliamentary Labour Party and the (Shadow) Cabinet itself. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Branch meeting is for many members their first point of contact with active party life. Some regularity of attendance at branch meetings is perhaps the most basic level of commitment that an activist can show the party. Some will go no further, but attendance at local branch meetings is the first step towards much deeper involvement and activism, such as becoming a delegate to the constituency General Committee (GC) or being recruited to participation in local campaigning and electioneering, fundraising and so on. It is therefore empowering regarding future possible roles, but it is also a way in which the individual begins to be subtly opened up to control: by virtue of the requirement to emulate and absorb the practices and the language of the party meeting. This is just the beginning for those who will become 'committed' to the party, but it is a vital first step towards constituting them as loyal activists.

The meeting is a point at which individual involvement is validated; through which individuals are recognised as participants by other party members and brought into its scheme. The informal induction and orientation of new members is an important part of this. New members might learn by observation, or be guided by a 'mentor'. In his introduction to GC meetings, for example, Stephen Beckett recalled that it

was quite difficult coming in … the procedure took a little bit of time to get round. But pretty much dependent on your politics, someone would pick you up and show you the ropes … telling you how this worked, that worked, that sort of thing. [6]

This is a way, therefore, in which individuals are not only subjected to subtle control but at the same time are empowered to be effective agents. The party member must become familiar with the detailed practices of party life as if they were a 'natural instinct'. That familiarity and the ease of communication and interaction that goes with it in the context of these rituals are part of what constitutes an individual as a local activist, a trusted party member: as one who is 'fit' to be a representative. In other words, this means conforming to certain understandings of what a political activist *should* be and being empowered to do so. There is something of this idea to be found in the importance that Beckett, now a long-standing activist in Tower Hamlets, attaches to the regular attendance at party meetings:

being a member doesn't mean to say you have to go to a meeting, you have to be involved … [but] I think it should be a little bit of that. Clearly, there shouldn't be any compulsion, but I think if you want to represent a political party … you should have to show some evidence

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[6] Interview, Stephen Beckett

of local involvement ... however you want to describe that:
campaigning at election time, being involved in your branch or at least
attending your branch. I think if you don't, how do you know what
other Labour party members want ... or what their ideas or views are,
how you represent them or how you build a team that's going to go out
and win an election or whatever? Political parties are about people
coming together ... that's what I think a political party should be.[7]

Underlying this quote is an assumed association between meetings and the production of useful and able party workers and representatives. These meetings therefore are at the centre of local party life: their regularity and their role as a structured ritual of communication between local activists and other parts of the party organisation, are central to the constitution of individuals as 'activists' (and their recognition as such) and to the party's ability to build for itself useful capacity via campaigners, organisers, representatives and others. These are, in a way, models for coming to belief in the Pascalian sense, inasmuch as performing the acts associated with loyal, effective party agency engenders commitments to and skills in these particular roles.

However, as I argued earlier, these performances and roles are not unchanging. Established practices may sometimes be challenged and subject to change in line with the party's needs as these respond to wider social imperatives. Faucher-King (2005), for example, points out that there is a particular 'reverence for rules' in the Labour Party (although many of these practices have been defined by custom and learned by experience). 'New Labour', however, was (initially at least) characterised by an ostentatious disrespect of rituals: as archaic, unprofessional and noninstrumental

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[7] Interview, Stephen Beckett

(Faucher-King 2005, 69).   But despite the iconoclasm of the early Blair era, the practices and rituals which make up party life have nonetheless hardened over time with conventional ways of doing things.   In the earlier stages of reform in 1988, for example, the party leadership launched a campaign to recruit a million new members.   Part of the problem of attracting and maintaining new members, however, seemed to be a certain rigidity and formalism in its routines:

> Joining Labour can mean a succession of bureaucratic meetings rather
>
> than active involvement … Among supporters who should and could
>
> be joining the party, this is a strong perception (Labour Party 1989).

It was therefore suggested that the normal habits of meetings could be broken, for example, by asking members involved in other local community organisations to lead discussions; by having a ten minute 'soap box' slot in which members could present on a topic that concerned or interested them; by paying 'special attention to new members', for example, by inviting them to the pub afterwards.   It was further proposed to make meetings more 'interesting' by arranging a programme of talks on 'subjects based on Labour's key priorities', or inviting visiting speakers like the local MP; perhaps trying new formats like 'joint meetings with other branches, meetings open to the general public or breaking meetings into small groups or study circles for part of the time' (Labour Party n.d., *Recruiting Members*).   In addition, it was suggested that

> There's more to life than meetings. As well as improving your
>
> meeting, there should be opportunities for members to be involved in a
>
> range of other branch activities … try a regular quiz night;
>
> entertainment at Christmas; a social for elderly members – perhaps in
>
> the afternoon, or a party for members' children … why not a trip to the

local pub? New members will welcome the chance to get to know

people in their area (Labour Party 1990).

Meetings were portrayed here more as barriers to outsiders and as off-putting to new

members, and thus as ineffective in attracting the kind of more active member the party

needed in the late twentieth century. In other words, it was not enough just to fit into

established organisational patterns, as an approach centred on *BC* might suggest: in a

fast developing media age, more active, even creative, skills were needed from the party

membership. The new activities prescribed were therefore designed to produce these

new forms of subjectivity. As I will discuss in the next example, the needs of the party

were evolving: the kinds of new members that parties needed to attract and the means

by which it was thought they would be attracted, maintained and made useful was

changing.

Strengths of Constitutive Power as an Explanation

<u>*Stage One: Constituting Subjects*</u>

a) Through what habits and practices in everyday party life is party structure
   reproduced?

b) How do these taken-for-granted repetitions become sedimented tools of control?

The language, structure, relationships and habits of communication that are built into

branch meetings reproduce the relations of power in the party as a whole. The

appropriate levels of deference towards and respect for authority are played out in the

relationships between the Chair and the other attendees of the meeting, for example.

Relations of authority are reproduced through the formal control ascribed to the Chair:

the formal, third person, language employed in referring to the 'Chair', the practice of

speaking through and deferring to the Chair and so on. Another example is reporting which is an important part of any party meeting (see previous chapter). The reporting roles of officers, representatives and delegates communicate the party's structures of authority: the delegate to the constituency GC repeats the discussions and decision of the CLP; the councillor informs members of his or her actions and the decisions of the Labour Group; they may be scrutinised and subject to questions (presided over by the Chair). This communicates an 'apartness' and a relationship of formal accountability between these different parts of the party and in the constitution of that relationship, the subjects themselves are also constituted within its scheme. Meetings operate as tools of control because they establish norms of conduct, but they also empower by constituting participants in particular roles: whether Chair, Secretary, a councillor, delegate or ordinary member. This is part of what makes individuals into 'proper' activists, empowered in particular roles and loyal to the party in a much deeper sense than just alignment with particular leaders or ideologies. In other words, it becomes a way of life, a culture.

Stage Two: Building Capacities

    a) How are individuals empowered with capacities to act within this scheme?

    b) What benefits does this bring to the party?

Being constituted in this fashion empowers agents to act according to the party's political objectives because as members, they are deeply imbued with the party's culture and practices, marking them out as subjects of the party structure, but also making them into effective political actors: recognition as trusted, loyal, or talented, for example, empowers agents because it opens doors to much deeper involvement and activism. However, for the same reason, it also controls them. From the party leader down,

including executives, party officers, organisers and grass-roots party workers, they are constituted as agents capable of fulfilling the kind of roles the party needs to strengthen and support its perpetuation. These individuals are therefore reinforcements of party structure as well as vehicles for it.

Attempts to challenge 'traditional' practices in the 1980s and 1990s can be understood in this light as the party's logical response to changes in politics and technology and the need to maintain subjects as supports. By adapting to changing technologies and social practices, the party structure maintains its capacity to attract individuals into its scheme. As part of this, there is an attempt through training and guidance to 'reconstitute' existing members and activists, making them more useful, especially in terms of outreach to potential new members. This makes them a significant support for the party in reproducing its own structure and building greater capacity for itself. An evolution in the party's practices helps to produce more relevant, and thus more effective, subjectivities loyal to the emerging language, structure and practice of Labour Party politics. Party life, in other words, is not just a series of unchanging rituals, but is in part an ongoing *reinvention* of ritual and it is in this very reinvention, and in the conflicts and tensions that it sometimes throws up, that the contours of *CP* can be traced.

Limits of Constitutive Power as an Explanation

Because this dimension of power is concerned with the constitution of subjectivities, the level of analysis is one in which individuals are regarded as effects of structure. This highlights an important difference between *CP* and the other dimensions that have preceded it, and therefore the greater richness it brings to my analysis. However, because of its structural focus, what this approach lacks is a clear and detailed sense of

how these practices actually invade the human body to constitute the particular subjectivities the party needs. Therefore, although *CP* provides the analysis with valuable insights into the constitution of loyalty and its role as a subtle form of control, it does not explain how this actually happens at the micro-level leaving important gaps in the explanation to be filled.

Example 1 Conclusion

This example illustrates how, in general terms, *CP* adds to the overall framework of power: it aids understanding of how party subjects emerge as effects of the routine practices and rituals of party life, such as meetings. Meetings are practices that help to structure everyday party life and relationships. They reproduce that structure and they contribute towards the constitution of appropriate subjectivities, thus refining the kinds of organisational capacities and acumen required to perform different relevant roles within the party. This, furthermore, contributes and adds to the culture of loyalty which is such a prominent feature of the party ethos and which exercises subtle control over those subjects. However, while this dimension of power that Althusser inspires is extremely provocative in suggesting how internal party rituals engender loyal and effective members, it does not yet provide the means to examine the process in sufficient detail. This is a gap that the framework will need to address in order to be truly comprehensive in its coverage. A question that this particular example has not answered that perhaps can be addressed from the perspective of *CP*, however, is how the kinds of subjectivities constituted in the practices of party life change with the party's needs. This is what I will look at more closely with the help of my second example.

<u>Example 2: The Party Career Structure</u>

The trend towards centralisation and professionalisation that I discussed in the previous chapter has a repressive and controlling aspect as *BC* demonstrates. However, what this third dimension of power is unable to recognise is that such a development may also have a positive, productive and constitutive effect. As I have argued, even though the party's electoral orientation means that it becomes more tightly controlled from the centre in an administrative sense, it cannot operate efficiently or effectively if it is simply populated with obedient automatons. It therefore needs some capacity to train and develop new kinds of activists and members who will be useful to it in the contemporary political landscape. *CP* is able to illuminate this.

One signal of this kind of change and its effects on the party is the sense in which, since the period of reform in the 1980s and 1990s, there appears to have been a significant change in the kinds of people who become active party members. This has been remarked upon by noted observers of the Labour Party:

> *I was at a Scottish conference recently ... there was this influx of young, well-dressed, clearly middle-class people who seemed quite incongruous with the rest. But these were people who were employed in some kind of political capacity ... This is a trend that has carried on since the 1980s really, and it signifies perhaps that there is a different conception of what it means to be a party member today.*[8]

As British politics has changed, especially in relation to its relationship with modern media, Labour politics and party administration have changed too, becoming more

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[8] Interview, Eric Shaw

professional and focused around Westminster, attuned to the needs of a round-the-clock national media. This has engendered a shift in the party's focus away from local politics and towards the national arena. As one activist has put it,

> *the party is increasingly centralised because of the nature of politics, which is a lot more Westminster focused ... Local Government, running the local state, used to be a powerhouse in the party but it increasingly became less important. There is much more central government control and little discretion now.* [9]

If part of the party's role is to perpetuate and reproduce its internal structure and its efficiency within the wider political field, then local parties and representative structures need to be reordered in line with these developments. Furthermore, the roles that are performed and the way they are organised and managed are important ways of training and building new kinds of party activists, workers and representatives who are more suitable supports for the Party's contemporary orientation. Thus since the 1990s, a new generation of members who are much more professionally minded and Westminster focused have emerged. These young activists, says John Burnell – a lifelong local organiser in London and Hertfordshire – regard local activism more as a means of building up a political CV, than a commitment to local government and politics. There are '*probably no more than two or three thousand of them in the whole party*', he says[10] but in an era when many parties are '*lucky to get ten people at a meeting*'[11] they represent an important core group of activists. The Vauxhall party (of which Burnell's daughter is a member), for example, is '*full of Labour Party staffers*' and so '*people still*

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[9] Interview, John Burnell

[10] Interview, John Burnell

[11] Interview, Stephen Beckett

turn up to branch meetings, which is quite unusual'[12].   Marjorie Paling has noticed these 'young men in suits' in Nottinghamshire, too, who are

> *new from university, having done their degrees, offering to be this*
>
> *officer, that officer, but they want to change their officerships so their*
>
> *CV looks like it's got this broad breadth of everything under the sun*
>
> *before they actually get their first seat.   We have a lovely young*
>
> *organiser where I am.   He finished university where he had done*
>
> *politics and history and he wants to get his experience in the Labour*
>
> *Party, so he's working as an organiser getting paid a pittance as well*
>
> *as being his branch secretary.   But he's doing it because he wants to*
>
> *get known.*[13]

This, says Burnell, is a reason why '*our generation and this generation is different ... for me, organising was done for the good of the party, but for [them] it is about building a career*.' [14]

Taking a wider view and using the lens of *CP* might, however, lead one to draw a slightly different conclusion from John Burnell's.   As I have shown in previous chapters, during the 1980s and 1990s, in response to the changing media and political landscape, the Labour Party reformed its decision-making structures, its membership administration, and practices, so that it became more controlled and centralised.   It follows, therefore, that as the party itself is restructured, so the capacities it requires to pursue its political objectives will change too.   Thus, under Kinnock's and Blair's

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[12] Interview, John Burnell

[13] Interview, Marjorie Paling

[14] Interview, John Burnell

leadership the trajectory of the party's development was such that even in Labour's local government heartlands local party politics became less about producing capacities for winning power locally and running local councils and more a means of constituting new generations of effective political agents with the right blend of skills and experience for a more nationally oriented politics. In other words, to be mainstream and professional, the party needs members who look and act the same way; who express this party ethos because they really are professionally ambitious and regard the party as a vehicle for professional success. Thus 'professionalisation' is reflected in the way party elites are trained and produced:

> *One of the main things that has changed in the party is the way people get to the top, 'the assisted places scheme' as many of the old guard call it. Certain people like the Milibands, Ed Balls and people like that are all professional politicians who are fast-tracked via the back office, parachuted into a safe seat and walk straight into the Cabinet.*[15]

Strengths of Constitutive Power as an Explanation

Stage One: Constituting Subjects

a) Through what habits and practices in everyday party life is party structure reproduced?

b) How do these taken-for-granted repetitions become sedimented tools of control?

The habits and practices of party activism, the structure of roles to be performed in the party locally and nationally, and their relation to the wider structures of authority were subject to significant evolution during the 1980s and 1990s. In line with the party's

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[15] Interview, Paul Farrelly

changing needs, new and different kinds of subjectivities with suitable capacities have been produced. Organisational centralisation has been an important development, but so has the business-like orientation and professionalisation of party life. Party life is in part seen as building a career, with importance attached to a sense of progress up a hierarchy, or promotion in which individuals are assigned roles with greater responsibility and authority in the party structure. If party activists wish to become Parliamentary candidates at some point in their career, they are expected to have a 'good CV', which includes a range of responsibilities, a breadth and depth of experience in the party in all its aspects. Simply having one job for ten years as an organiser, for example, would most likely be regarded as poor preparation for Parliament.

It might be argued that, contrary to an anonymous constitutive form of power, what can in fact be observed here is just individual people pursuing their ambitions and desires for advancement, competing with others to achieve that by getting as much experience as possible. However, from the perspective of *CP*, it could also be argued that it is the party that has helped to constitute them *as* such and which commends itself as a career ladder whilst also using members' ambitions to reproduce itself and its power through a new professionalised ethos. This argument underlines the way in which these practices, as they became sedimented and an integral part of party life, are both a subtle means by which control is exercised and a response to the changing needs of the party that draws on individuals' own socially motivated goals. Oriented towards the specific needs of the party, they produce specific skills and capacities that are useful to it. Subjects, as they progress up the 'career ladder', then become more enmeshed in the party structure: their loyalty to the party; the fact that they are constituted by and dependent on it; the extent to which they are effectively 'locked-into' its scheme, are tightly entwined. This could be seen as complementary to a more Michelsian concern about bureaucratic

oligarchy in which the professional ambitions of these new activists within the party organisation endows them with certain modes of elite power. Viewed from the perspective of *CP*, however, this is also a way in which the party both ensures their loyalty and reconstitutes them in its own preferred image: as young, ambitious talent within a professional, and thus competent and trustworthy, political party.

Stage Two: Building Capacities

a) How are individuals empowered with capacities to act within this scheme?

b) What benefits does this bring to the party?

The practices of party life that I have described are empowering because they engender the skills, abilities and knowledge party activists need to fulfil their roles and climb the hierarchy, and therefore become advisers, researchers, officials, MPs, even cabinet ministers and leaders. Indeed, these are precisely the kinds of ways in which party leaders today are produced. The benefits to the party are that it produces loyal, knowledgeable, experienced subjects who live and breathe the party's culture and priorities; who are ambitious and focused on winning elections and therefore political power for the party. Furthermore, it is also a means by which both old-fashioned paternalistic elites (see Chapter Three) and troublesome left-wing activists can be marginalised because they do not fit the model of the ambitious, modern, professional party activist which is the product of the party's ideological scheme.

Limits of Constitutive Power as an Explanation

This example demonstrates some complementarity between *CP* and *BC* because it shows how, within a more tightly organised party, new kinds of subjectivity and loyalty emerge in the practices which develop. Members and activists are not simply obedient

fodder for leaders (as *BC* might suggest) but are constituted as loyal actors effective and congruent with the party's political objectives. However, once again, there are few specifics offered about what kinds of individuals this produces and how they are actually constituted in practice (e.g. in the way they act, interact, dress; what they look and sound like and so on). Thus, although the introduction of *CP* into the framework answers some of the questions left open by the previous three dimensions of power, it in fact opens up new questions about power that the framework needs to address in some way.

Example 2 Conclusion

In this section I have argued that the reorganisation of the party and the way in which subjectivities are produced are linked. Despite the relatively high level of analysis and minimal detail, what this dimension of power helps illuminate is how party reform and change (in response to changing technologies and political circumstances, for example) engenders changes in the kinds of capacities and skills the party requires to achieve its political objectives. New practices become sedimented and established as an integral part of party life and as such are both a means by which the party builds capacities and pursues its goals. However it is also a means by which the party is able to exercise a subtle level of control over its members. But a question that this analysis opens up, is: by what specific means in the modern, professional party, is capacity built? What are the kinds of techniques used to generate the skills and capacities required in party members and activists? This is a question to which I will turn my attention in the third and final example in this chapter, which looks at training.

<u>Example 3: Training Councillors</u>

As the party's structures of power have become more controlled, the practices by which the constitution of useful and loyal subjects is achieved have also evolved. Since the 1990s, training workshops and courses have become increasingly prominent contributions to this process. Training is itself a practice which develops useful capacities in members by instilling appropriate habits and 'know-how' that contribute towards their constitution as effective agents. Training empowers members but is also a way of exerting control over them in this nexus of empowerment and discipline I have been describing. Such practices might be used to support the recruitment of members, getting out the vote, and even training people in how to be councillors: it on this latter example that I focus in this section.

The position and role of councillor is a very prominent one in local parties. Even in a highly centralised party, councillors play an important role because their perceived competence (or otherwise) in the local political sphere is a reflection on the image and aims of the party nationally. Councillors are also a potential source for the renewal of national elites, providing potential MPs and perhaps even senior leaders. Although for some, 'councillor' may be as far as they go, for others it is a step on the 'career ladder', especially for the ambitious young activists I have discussed above. In other words, local government is another point in the party's structure where effective agents are needed and at which further agentic capacity can be built. As such producing competent and effective councillors who are likely to be loyal to the mainstream party is an important and necessary function supported by the practices of training. By instilling in them the right kinds of habits and working practices early on, the party's needs are

responded to and embedded in the practical cultures of local representation; that is, the 'know-how' of being a councillor.

Training appears to have become a more prominent feature of the party's approach as the organisation has become more formalised and centralised. When Dennis Twomey first became a councillor in the 1970s, things were a lot more informal. A 'word-in-the-ear' from a local official would suffice as advice on how to be a good councillor:

> *The party then had a full-time agent, Bob Searle and what Bob actually said was, if you get selected and become a councillor this is how you need to behave. What he said was ... something like this: 'you must never do anything improper, you must never do anything that appears improper and you must never do anything that anyone – however ill-disposed to you – can portray as improper'... So it was a fairly hard line, but I was always grateful to him because I found it immensely useful in sort of saying 'No. Can't do that'.*[16]

But as far as training was concerned, *'that was about it.'*[17] Later, however, things began to change. Phil Maxwell, who was a councillor between 1986 and 1998, recalls that towards the end of his time in office this approach began to change. He remembers

> *going to a workshop where we all had to do this role-play in the 1990s ... it must have been about 95/96. Everybody was divided into groups and we had to come up with policy ideas and things. It was a kind of framework which facilitated the managerial approach to politics, and I*

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[16] Interview, Dennis Twomey

[17] Interview, Dennis Twomey

stopped and thought to myself, 'why am I here? What has happened?

What's going on?' It's almost as if the Labour Party sleepwalked into

a different kind of culture.[18]

From the perspective of *CP*, however, it was not a sleepwalk as much as a logical outcome of changing circumstances and the structural requirements of party efficacy. Thus, by the 1990s the Party was producing training packs for Labour candidates with titles like *On the Council* (Labour Party 1992a), which prescribed workshops, group tasks, role plays and exercises based on the kinds of situations members might be likely to encounter. The purpose of this was primarily to instil particular habits and practices of problem solving, decision-making and co-operation, helping to ensure that the party was not only producing individuals willing and capable of fulfilling the role of councillor (which satisfies the party's function of winning local elections and running local authorities), but the right *kind* of councillor who acts in a way that fully exemplifies, represents and communicates the party's 'brand' and its approach to politics (i.e. mainstream and moderate). By way of illustration, in the *On the Council* training pack there are two exercises for candidates to carry out: the first is a group discussion on the role of the councillor, including what the job entails, what the relationship with other councillors, officers and unions should be (see Figure 5.1 below); the second is a task-based exercise on how councillors in a Labour Group (in power or in opposition) could work together in a contentious decision-making situation.

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[18] Interview, Phil Maxwell

Figure 5.1 *Example of Candidate Training Activity*

Group Discussion: The Role of the Councillor

Aim
To decide what is the Councillor's job. To decide what the relationship between councillors, officers and unions should be.

Task
Listed below are a number of statements about the role of the Councillor

In your group discuss each statement and decide if you agree or disagree. Put your comments on a flip-chart to show the rest of the group.

(Don't worry – be as frank as you wish!)

Decide who will report back to the rest of the group.

1. **It's clear officers can't run the council's services.** With my experience on lots of management committees I can show them how it should be done.

2. **I didn't join the Labour Party to attack workers**. If NALGO are refusing to open libraries for longer hours, then I will back them all the way.

3. **I got elected by Labour voters**. If the local Resident's Association don't like my youth centre discos that's their problem

4. **Councillors aren't elected to deal with silly issues like dog dirt in the parks**. We're there to build socialism.

5. **If my ward wants me to vote against cuts then that's what I will do.** The members are what counts, not the Labour Group.

6. **Our manifesto said the Labour Party would decentralise the management of housing estates.** We must implement this pledge even though it's going to cost us twice as much as we thought and put £30 on our poll tax. That's real political principle for you.

Reproduced from the Labour Party (1992a).

A close look at the statements provided to guide the discussion in Figure 5.1 seems to indicate that there is a clear direction in which any discussion is likely to lead: that is, that council officers *should* be listened to, respected and their advice taken seriously; that trade unions are *not* always right; that non-Labour voters are at least as important to the deliberations of representatives as Labour voters; that nitty-gritty issues like local environment and litter are more important than abstract ideas about building

'socialism'; that the Labour Group's decisions and unity take priority over the wishes and whims of local branch members; that the local tax burden should be a priority over expensive schemes. Put simply, the party is seeking to produce pragmatic, practical, moderate councillors: like Mark Taylor, who became a councillor during the period in which this guidance was being used in the party (in 1994), and argued that whilst '*some people want to sort of create a socialist utopia ... all [we] were interested in was making sure that the streets were clean, and we didn't care less how certain things got achieved.*'[19]

The second task is a workshop that takes the form of a role play, in which participants practise 'working together as councillors' (Ibid.). It sets out a scenario, and provides associated documentation and briefing materials, in which a special meeting of the Labour Group must deal with a local planning problem. It is, in the scenario, just before local elections and the issue 'threatens to be the major issue of the campaign unless the Council gets its act together quickly and sorts it out' (Ibid.). They are set the task of coming up with a position for the group to present at a public meeting on the issue and attempting to prevent the possibility of 'a big public row just before the election'. It divides the participants up into those playing the parts of rival positions in the debate, including Planning Committee members, ward councillors supporting residents objecting to the scheme, Policy Committee members, and those who support the District Party and the unions. Each sub-group is asked first to make a decision about a unified position to put to the whole group, compromising as necessary. In front of the whole group, they are asked to present and explain their decision. Finally the whole group must come to a decision about what should be presented to a forthcoming public meeting.

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[19] Interview, Mark Taylor

The benefit of this kind of training is that the participants are not instructed as such, but explore and find the answers for themselves through group discussions and exercises, discussing previous successes and problems and so on. In other words, they *learn* how to become certain kinds of agent through a directed process. Once again, the emphasis is placed very strongly on a willingness to compromise; on a self- and group-discipline that holds in public, and on a co-operative form of decision-making that takes into account the views of a wide range of interests, not necessarily just what might have traditionally been thought of as 'Labour' ones. For the party, this produces self-disciplined political subjectivities with a 'mainstream' approach to politics and political problem-solving, the very things that the modern, professional, electoral party needs to be. Through the process of training, candidates and councillors that support and reinforce that professionalism are produced and the practices that engender them are embedded in party culture.

Strengths of Constitutive Power as an Explanation

Stage One: Constituting Subjects

a) Through what habits and practices in everyday party life is party structure reproduced?
b) How do these taken-for-granted repetitions become sedimented tools of control?

Training programmes like this are part of a process by which the party instils appropriate habits and conduct, not through mechanisms of hierarchical command, but by constituting useful agents with useful capacities. In this case, the training of potential councillors is a way of constituting moderate, pragmatic representatives who conduct themselves in ways that reflect well on the modern, professional electorally-

oriented party. This is useful to the party because it constitutes them as decision-makers who can come to their own conclusions which nonetheless are congruent with the party's dominant value systems. This is much more efficient and effective than direct control. It produces the kind of party representation the party needs in order to project and sustain an image and approach to politics which is moderate, mainstream and professional. These kinds of practices, despite the sense of free discussion, independence and decision-making are also, however, highly insidious tools of control because the habits and practices into which individuals are inculcated are imbricated with the party's political priorities.

Stage Two: Building Capacities

a) How are individuals empowered with capacities to act within this scheme?
b) What benefits does this bring to the party?

Individual subjects are empowered because they are imbued with the confidence, knowledge and skills to approach problems in the professional, pragmatic manner in which they have been trained. Thus, individual councillors are empowered in different ways according to how their activity is oriented: they are in a position to achieve political ends because of their ability to contribute to group decisions, to compromise and come up with 'practical' implementable solutions to everyday solvable issues (like dog dirt and litter); subjects may also advance further in the party – for example becoming a Parliamentary candidate – by being the 'right kind' of person, imbued with the right kind of personality, skills and experience to do so. This benefits the party because it helps to make it more congruent with the mainstream political system and also because (as part of this) it produces trained representatives who may be able to go further in the party, thus building more potential leadership capacity. Although many

local representatives will go no further than this, they are still essential to even the most nationally-oriented party culture: the moderate, managerially competent local Labour authority contributes to the party's compatibility with the wider political power structures. An embarrassing, maverick, radical or 'incompetent' council may create problems for the Party in this respect. This is illustrated by the way in which many left-wing Labour councils were portrayed in the 1980s, dismissed as 'loony left' more concerned with fashionable left-wing causes than 'ordinary people' (Curran 2005).

Limits to Constitutive Power as an Explanation

The weaknesses of *CP* revealed by this example are very similar to those I have mentioned already in this chapter. I therefore have little to add to them, except to say that whilst this example illuminates how a technique like training helps to constitute subjectivities congruent with the party's priorities, it does not provide the kind of empirical detail that shows how these practices impact in a very direct way upon the participants themselves. In order to gain some understanding of how these processes work at a much more detailed level, this, the framework needs some additional development.

Example 3 Conclusion

CP here complements my analysis of party power and has an important role to play in my overall five-dimensional framework because it shows something of how the production of loyalty is part of a constitutive process. Individual subjects from this perspective are not obedient automatons but trained agents. They are empowered to act in certain ways congruent with the party's political objectives and image, and they are imbued with the capacities it needs to reproduce itself while commending itself as an

instrument of government. The training given and the culture in which councillors and potential councillors have been constituted also forges and maintains a loyalty, not specifically to party leaders or a particular policy or even rules, but to the party as a culture and a way of life.

Conclusion

Constitutive Power is a means by which parties build for themselves useful capacities. They do so through the constitution of subjectivities in the performance, repetition and learning of relevant practices, behavioural norms and conduct. On this level, Althusser's insistence on materiality is very important because it does not entail subjectivities merely as consciousness but also as *embodied* actors whose corporeality is also incorporated into their performances. The examples I have used in this chapter – the practice of meetings, the party's career structure and the training of councillors – all provide examples of how members are constituted in practices as useful supports for the party's goals, structure and value systems. In contrast to the other dimensions of power that I have elaborated so far, Constitutive Power is not concerned with how individuals are disciplined through systems of command or become influential actors because of their ability to achieve goals and internalised priorities. Instead, it focuses its attention on how appropriate subjectivities are produced through the practices of everyday party life. As well as subjectivities that are useful for perpetuating the party's value system and endowed with capacities that are needed for achieving its goals, the party needs to constitute voluntary loyalty among members in order to benefit from the capacities, or human capital, that it has 'invested' in. As an analytical frame, Constitutive Power recognises this dimension of power by noting that attachment to party culture is achieved through the very constitution of party agents as particular kinds of actor who

obey party norms because they are embedded in the behavioural patterns they take for granted and perform in the daily rituals of party life. Loyalty is not necessarily a relationship of obedience between leader and led or an attachment to particular policies or rules, but is a part of party culture and is constituted in the practices in which party members participate.

Whilst I have put aside the wider role of the party in the reproduction of capitalism that is one of the main concerns of Althusser's work on ideology, I have extracted from his work ideas about how the logic of party structures drives the production of certain kinds of subjectivity through the practices and habits that form and give shape to party culture. This helps to explain why and how the party and the power immanent within it constitute *loyal*, effective members and activists. Nevertheless, whilst Constitutive Power adds a subtle and structural dimension of power to my framework, on its own it does not yet adequately provide the details of *how* this happens. It adds theoretically to the understanding of power in political parties by explaining dedication to the party in terms of a constituted loyalty that also acts as a subtle mode of control, rather than describing mindless obedience or rational self-interest. However, because it remains somewhat abstract, it still leaves some questions unanswered.

Where Bureaucratic Control was able to demonstrate how obedient subjects are produced by the party, Constitutive Power has demonstrated something towards the understanding of how effective subjects are constituted and remain loyal. But the structural focus of this dimension of power needs to be supplemented with a more intimate sense of how individuals are subjectified and an account of how they are reconfigured according to the party's needs. In other words, whilst Constitutive Power explains *theoretically* how subjectivities congruent with party requirements are

reproduced, a more ethnographic, empirical account of the ways this occurs in the context of modern parties is *also* required if this dimension of power is really to bear fruit. A way to bring the individual 'back in' in some sense without undermining the insights that have been added by this dimension of analysis needs to be identified. Therefore I would argue a final, fifth dimension of power is needed to link Constitutive Power with Bureaucratic Control and fill in the specifics of how parties produce subjects who are embodied actors both effective and disciplined down to the finest detail.

Six: **Disciplinary Control**

Through its first four dimensions, power has become progressively more anonymous and structural in nature, but at the same time less negative and more constitutive. The analysis has moved steadily further away from the individuals on whom the first dimension of power is centred: by-passing confrontations between them in the second dimension of power, disciplined and confined by organisation in the third, and constituting their very subjectivity in the fourth. In this fifth, and final, dimension in my framework, power becomes more anonymous still, and yet there is a sense in which I come full circle to focus once again on the individual: in particular on how individuals are forged and invested with the capacities to be effective political actors. I will call this dimension of power Disciplinary Control. It shares some common ground with Bureaucratic Control because of its concern with the consistent and regularised operation of systems of control, and with Constitutive Power, especially in its focus on power's more constitutive side. However Disciplinary Control fleshes out and deepens the understanding of power developed by these third and fourth dimensions in important ways. In the former case, it provides the specifics of *how* the kind of control that Bureaucratic Control represents actually is applied at a detailed level. In the latter, it homes in on the fine-grained detail of the micro-processes of power, to elaborate with empirical detail what is largely a theoretical argument. My analysis in this chapter therefore seeks to identify the specific means by which control is exercised and subjectivity is sustained and reinforced. To develop the concept of Disciplinary Control I draw on the work of Michel Foucault and others working within his framework, especially contemporary feminist theorists. Following that, I will set out the key component characteristics and the questions which will guide my analysis, based on interviews, archive research and contemporary accounts.

What is Disciplinary Control?

Up until now, I have examined how power might be seen as a property of individuals, an effect of structural forces or embedded in organisational dynamics. For Foucault, power is not possessed by any individual nor located at specific points in the structure. It is instead conceived as a *relation* which is productive of reality and truth and not necessarily oppressive of it (Deleuze 1988, 22-7). Foucault is more interested in the question of how power operates *beneath* such structures and 'systems of command'.[1] Power is, for him, a strategic force that 'brings into play relations between individuals' (Foucault 1994, 337). However, these relations are given effect by the 'divisions, inequalities and disequilibriums' immanent in *everyday* relationships (Foucault 1979, 94), including economic, or sexual relations. This dimension of power cannot therefore be understood in political parties by an analysis of structures and leaders, which is why Foucault argues that in political theory 'we need to cut off the king's head' (Foucault 1994a, 122) and redirect analysis towards the immanence of power within networks of relations, in the mundane day-to-day details, even banalities, of party life. Especially important to this thesis is how Foucault's unique perspective illuminates the circulation of power through the party fabric in micro-processes: small pressures and petty humiliations, advice on practice via manuals and guides, for example. Looking solely at the formal constitution of a party, its leaders and procedures is insufficient here, then, because this perspective facilitates a level of analysis which focuses on these micro-techniques rather than particular locations. These techniques can be identified at points often overlooked or skimmed-over by traditional political analysis and more structurally

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[1] During his 'middle' genealogical period, between the publication of The Archaeology of Knowledge (first published in 1969; in English in 1972) and the first Volume of the History of Sexuality (first published in 1976; in English in 1979) in which he elaborates his general conceptualisation of power (see Foucault 1979, 92-102).

oriented approaches to power. It therefore provides a valuable supplement to the more macroscopic outlooks of Bureaucratic Control and Constitutive Power.

Foucauldian scholars have too often neglected the study of formal political institutions like parties. This is a pity, because his work provides an interesting new dimension to the operation of power by focusing on the micro-level. This is to some extent being rectified in contemporary political research: for example, through studies of ceremony and ritual in Parliament that draw on his work (See for example Rai 2010). I intend to rectify this further by making particular use of Foucault's concept of discipline to shed light on the operation of micro-power in modern political parties. There are two main ways, I would argue, in which Disciplinary Control operates in this dimension: firstly through detailed control in organisation, and secondly through surveillance and normalisation.

Discipline and Detailed Control

Discipline is a strategy, or technology, of power which organises and manages agents in relation to time, space and tasks (for example, by means of timetables) and in relation to other individuals so as to obtain as efficient a machine as possible. Time is a precious commodity which must be 'without impurities or defects.' It must be not only filled but of 'good quality, throughout which the body is constantly applied to its exercise' (Foucault 1977, 151). The body itself must be employed to its full capacity and 'nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required' (Ibid., 152). Space is enclosed and divided in such a way as to accommodate the efficient distribution of agents into roles and functions. In this way, discipline is 'a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces' (Ibid., 154). In short, discipline is a

'political anatomy of detail' (Foucault 1977, 138) which is directed towards the careful management of individuals, space, time and knowledge, so that

> each individual has his own place; and each place its individual … one
> must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled
> disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable
> and dangerous coagulation (Ibid., 143)

In other words, it produces an efficient machine down to the finest detail.

At first glance, this appears similar to Weber's concept of discipline, which I discussed in Chapter Four. Weberian discipline is, after all, about extracting the optimum 'physical and psychic power' from individuals through rational calculation (Weber 1948 [MD], 254). However, whilst Weber is concerned with the integrational, totalising aspects of discipline in which individuality and the capacity to act is overwhelmed by its machinery, Foucauldian discipline is *productive*, being a means by which individuals are *empowered* as agents to act within its scheme. Instead of crushing individual capacities and turning people into automatons, it constructs them as useful agents. Discipline does this by making use of devices like timetables that control activity, organisational techniques that compose and distribute individuals, and targets that provide the basis for monitoring them. For example, by providing individuals with the correct training and guidance, and by allocating them into appropriate tasks, they are empowered with capacities to be effective political actors. Another key difference between the two conceptualisations of discipline is that, whereas Weber's approach suggests discipline is the product of a general trend towards societal rationalisation, the latter cannot be described as a scheme of any kind. For Foucault, the techniques I have described are applied *ad hoc* in response to specific problems of control and

organisation, essentially problems of rational organisation. There is no grand strategy: there is not (as Weber understood it) a general process of societal rationalisation which affects political parties as it does every other organisation and institution in society, but specific *rationalities* (Foucault 1994, 329), which consist of rational responses to particular problems encountered by petty officials. They may link together into a network of power relations that might appear as 'major dominations' with 'hegemonic effects' (Foucault 1979, 94) but in fact what can be seen is the intersection of specific micro-powers arising from relatively mundane and specific points and their 'congealing' into a system.

Discipline, Surveillance and Normalisation

As well as these mechanisms of detailed organisation, Foucauldian discipline can also illuminate how power constructs and constrains bodies at an exceedingly subtle and insidious level of detailed control (Coole 2007, 414). Politics is largely played out in the media, especially on television and in the press and as such has many of the characteristics of a performance. Erving Goffman's account of 'performance' in everyday life can be a helpful source for elaborating some of these ideas. He emphasises the importance of the 'expressive equipment' employed by 'performers', which includes insignias of office or rank, clothing and so on, but also posture, speech patterns, facial expressions, bodily gestures (Goffman 1990 [1959], 32-34). Furthermore, physical attributes like sex, age, racial characteristics, even size and looks are included (Ibid., 32-34). For Goffman, these different pieces of 'equipment' are employed to communicate status, and provide the means by which performance is 'socialised' so that it fits the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented (Ibid., 44). However, I would argue that these are ways in which the body is

marked out and classified, primed for conveying messages that manifest the party's brand through gestures, appearance and conduct. Discipline thereby excludes and normalises those that fail to fit expected norms as well as being productive.

Such ideas are exemplified by Judith Butler, who draws on Foucault to argue that 'the gendered body is performative': a fiction that has 'no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality' (Butler 1990, 136). In particular, the effect of this is such that what appears to be the essence of femininity or masculinity is in fact 'an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse' which creates 'the illusion of an interior and organising gender core' (Butler 1990, 136). This is important to the understanding of modern party power in particular because it is an aspect of discipline which is intensified by the attentions of television and the representation of politicians in the press, which the party internalises and reinforces in marketing techniques. In such a way, the norms of performance are internalised by the party and its members. Contemporary feminist analysis in particular has made use of these ideas to highlight how the body is

> subjected to the look, the gaze, the surveillance of the other. Its
> surfaces are marked and inscribed by others, such that different bodies
> are recognised and categorised, disciplined and excluded (Coole 2007,
> 416).

Two mechanisms, surveillance and normalisation, work together to produce this effect. Surveillance plays a role as a mechanism of Disciplinary Control by subjecting embodied agents to the gaze of the 'other': individual politicians are under ongoing visual scrutiny by the television and press not only for what they say, but also for how closely they conform or not to expected norms. This does not mean there is an explicit

or even conscious evaluation of their appearance, but it does mean that any deviation from an expected norm of performance or appearance is noticed: weight, age, clothing, hair (or lack of it) may all be included on this list. In this way, political actors are perpetually supervised and observed. The term 'normalisation' refers to the construction of norms of conduct into which actors are disciplined and ranked according to whether or not they conform to them. Thus, people are differentiated, ranked and graded as a means of reward and punishment. Those departing from norms are subject to a finely calibrated series of sanctions such as humiliation or embarrassment, which undermine their performance and therefore their status within the party; those who conform, on the other hand, are rewarded. As part of this process, 'good' and 'bad' subjects are thus hierarchised in relation to one another (Foucault 1977, 181).

These two mechanisms signify a particularly effective form of power: using the kind of information gathered in surveillance produces judgements with which agents are ranked and disciplined around a norm. Thus the kinds of pressures that come from outside surveillance become, firstly, internalised by the party and turned on its representatives as they are reproduced through the application of marketing and presentational techniques and, secondly, inscribed directly on the individuals themselves, so that conformity to these norms become automatic. In such a way, the performances of politics constitute its reality. This is especially apparent when it comes to gender and racial norms in (British) political life. Nirmal Puwar argues that the 'female body is an awkward and conspicuous form in relation to the (masculine) somatic norm' (Puwar 2004, 78). In the spaces in which politics is conducted, especially in the media there is doubt cast on the role of women and ethnic minorities. They are 'not automatically expected to embody the relevant competencies' and thus are subject to additional scrutiny in which 'their every gesture, movement and utterance is observed' since they

are viewed suspiciously and judged more harshly (Puwar 2004a, 73). Building on Butler's themes, Puwar reminds the reader that masculinity, too, is performative and, the 'maleness of the state is an ongoing performative accomplishment' in which 'sedimented masculine rituals' act as a norm around which the performance of feminine roles are judged and become subject to discipline:

> The position of an MP has been performed as a highly masculinist act … conducted in a spectacular, exaggerated and theatrical manner; a form of exhibitionism that is underscored by a bureaucratic form of violence. Needless to say, the hero of this performance is a white male usually displaying in a manner and style of speech of the upper/middle classes. As this is the norm, this is the template against which the speech, gestures and bodily movements of female and black and Asian bodies are measured. (Ibid., 74-5)

Hostility and exclusivity is expressed, not by formal barriers to entry, but by surveillance and judgement on the basis of these templates at a less formal level: for example, remarks made about women's clothes, hair and make-up, or deploying gestures to put women off their stride when speaking and so on (Coole 2007, 428). In modern politics, however, the role of visual media means that surveillance and scrutiny is not just conducted by colleagues:

> As the media become more important in the making and breaking of MPs, they continue to keep a watchful eye on the bodily image, gestures and postures of the women MPs … women's bodies matter in the body politic, and … their bodies are always with them. (Puwar 2004, 95)

Thus if women want to be accepted they have to display the 'acceptable' face of femininity: they cannot just do an impression of men or clone male leaders; and they cannot be 'too feminine' either (Bartky 1988, 75). Indeed, Diana Coole, too, has argued that simply aping masculine styles does not work in conventionally gendered spaces (Coole 2007, 428), and women are encouraged in such situations 'to adopt the very styles of traditional femininity that are used to demean them' (Ibid., 428). Coole is referring to the House of Commons when she makes this point, but I would argue that it equally applies to the representation of female politicians in the media.

Despite its pervasiveness, this kind of power is hard to detect using 'traditional' methodologies that seek to locate power: it is 'everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinarian is everyone and yet no one in particular' (Bartky 1988, 74). It is in a sense less 'visible' methodologically speaking because it works directly on the body, 'an oft-neglected actor within democratic processes' which is 'for the most part ignored by those who study the interpersonal relationships that animate the political domain' (Coole 2007, 413). That is, political theory (which looks for power's legitimate possession and location) and methodological individualism (which seeks it in the securing of identifiable interests) cannot detect it. Furthermore, a key means through which this kind of power operates is in the relatively mundane rituals, informal rules and practices of political life (Spary 2010, 341). These too, being unwritten, even unspoken, are less visible, less open to scrutiny in traditional political analysis, and thus they may also be more resistant to change (Franceschet 2010, 405). However, despite this, the *effects* of power are *always* visible, because it is etched on the body and performed in its conduct. This visibility is an especially important feature of Disciplinary Control's mode of operation, especially in relation to performance. As Shirin Rai points out, there is always 'the presumption of an audience or spectators in

built into the performance of ritual' (Rai 2010, 294), and it is this constant assumption of visibility that results in 'a self-policing subject, self-committed to a relentless self-surveillance' and thereby producing individuals who exercise discipline 'on and against their own bodies' (Bartky 1988, 81). Thus codes of dress, speech (including gesture) participatory norms and behaviour can all be means by which individuals are disciplined (Rai 2010, 288) and rendered useful party members. At the same time subjectivities that do not 'fit' the norm are marginalised and excluded and newcomers, for example, may therefore seek to minimise difference by adopting the habits of the dominant group (Franceschet 2010, 395).

Thus, in modern politics visibility is a 'double-edged sword', necessary and advantageous for success, but a means by which individuals are subject to ever more detailed discipline in which 'every gesture, movement and utterance is observed' (Puwar 2004, 145). What this highlights, in Foucauldian terms, is how discipline 'invades the body and seeks to regulate its very forces and operations, the economy and efficiency of its movements' (Bartky 1988, 61), right down to the finest detail of body language speaking 'eloquently , though silently, of [woman's] subordinate status' (Ibid., 74). Furthermore, it illuminates how Disciplinary Control is exercised not by one individual on another but in the application of *self*-discipline by individuals.

The Key Components of Disciplinary Control

Disciplinary Control adds to my framework of power within political parties, then, because of its ability to breathe life into structural approaches to power by focusing attention at the micro-level. It is

a type of power, a modality for its exercise, composing a whole set of
instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is
a 'physics' or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology. (Foucault 1977,
215)

It invites examination of the sociology of parties in their ordinary, everyday processes
by looking for the scattered but pervasive signs of power that construct subjectivities
and capacities but, above all, discipline party actors to conform. Its characteristics are
as follows:

1. Power produces party actors, who are at once disciplined, effective and
   'empowered'. It does this through detailed techniques and strategies of control
   that develop some capacities and dampen others.

2. Disciplinary strategies include the application of technical knowledge to
   problems of organisation. In particular, the meticulous organisation of time,
   space and bodies aids organisational efficiency and at the same time disciplines
   individual conduct at a fine-grained level. In this sense, discipline fills in the
   finer details of conduct that Weber's broad account of bureaucratic
   rationalisation skims over.

3. The site and focus of power is the body and its conduct. The body (or the
   'embodied actor) is trained and surveyed at a micro-level. Its gestures and
   appearance are carefully articulated and configured in accordance with the
   disciplinary strategies highlighted above.

4. Disciplinary Control 'normalises' agents by subtly (re)constructing the body and
   its gestures and thereby constructing certain modes and expressions of

subjectivity or identity. This is underpinned by surveillance, in which actors believe they are visible all the time and adjust their behaviour accordingly, thus disciplining *themselves* at a detailed level.

Identifying Disciplinary Control

The visible effects of power to which I have referred means that it should be possible, by drawing on Foucauldian ideas, for the observer to identify the effects of Disciplinary Control [henceforth *DC*] in two ways: firstly, by taking a genealogical approach to examining the kinds of documents, guidance and so on that engender it – from this kind of analysis the techniques and technologies of *DC*'s operation will emerge; secondly, by observing the conformist style of bodies and the experience of party actors, who themselves may not identify the particular pressures they are subject to as power exactly, but may nonetheless be aware of the pressure to conform, for example when worrying about what to wear, or how they look or sound. Bearing this in mind, the two key aspects of discipline that I have highlighted will be applied to the Labour Party in two main ways. Firstly, in the pursuit of its electoral goals, the party needed to organise people efficiently in the fulfilment of specific tasks like canvassing and election campaigns. For this purpose, detailed guidance and advice was produced, which I analyse using a genealogical approach to elicit how they engender *DC*. Secondly, party politics is largely conducted in the full gaze of the media, especially television which demands articulate, charismatic and presentably attractive figures. The party responded to this by adapting its presentation, its message and even policies, but more importantly to this analysis, its representatives. My examples will focus on how the constant visibility of politicians is a critical aspect of discipline's 'normalising' role: the ongoing surveillance and assessment of individuals adjusts and directs behaviour, particularly

through the direct application of marketing techniques and sensibilities which invade and reconstruct the body. To conduct this two-stage analysis, I will draw on a mixture of experience as communicated through interviews, materials like election campaign timetables, briefings and guides issued by the party, as well as contemporary media reports and biographical accounts.

Guide Questions for Analysis

There are two sets of questions, then, each oriented towards the stages of analysis that I have set out above.

First Stage: Detailed Control

a) What technical problems does modern political organisation seek to solve?

b) What kinds of solutions have been designed and applied to those problems?

c) What is the disciplinary effect of the solutions and techniques applied (e.g. through surveillance, examination, management, organisation, classification and ranking)?

Second Stage: Surveillance and Normalisation

a) How are individuals and their bodies exposed to surveillance and judged?

b) How are bodies made conspicuous, scrutinised and subjected to exclusion and/or normalisation?

Application: Testing Disciplinary Control's Explanatory Scope

Now that the main characteristics and components of *DC* have been elaborated, and the basis of my examination set out, the task is to apply it to my chosen examples. For the

first stage of analysis, I find an example of detailed control in how the organisation of electoral campaigning ensures an efficient, disciplined campaigning team. My second example draws on the experience of two women MPs in order to elicit ways in which surveillance and normalisation are applied with disciplinary effect, and how such modes of power are reinforced by the application of marketing strategies and norms.

Example 1: Election and Campaign Planning

The most important part of any campaign is planning. Richards (2001) emphasises that whether it is a 'thick wad of papers' or just a side of A4,

> at local, regional, or national level, you must have a plan … Without it, your election campaign will lack focus, squander resources, burn out your activists and volunteers, and suffer from what the military call 'mission drift'. You will also find yourself buffeted by your opponents and always reacting to their agenda and on the back foot. (Richards 2001 46).

The effective targeting of resources demands planning to provide direction and the efficient use of time and party workers. A particular feature of modern political campaign planning is what has become known as 'the grid', which has 'assumed the role of Bible, Koran, Torah … is guarded with the secrecy of 'Enigma', and like the holy books of Medieval times, can only be viewed by the chosen few.' It is

> the nuts and bolts of the party's campaign plan, distilled from a thousand meetings and discussions, from the wisdom of pollsters, advisers, strategists and politicians, and forms the strategy that a party will follow during a campaign. (Ibid., 47)

The grid is 'the heart of an election campaign' according to Philip Gould, a key strategist and adviser for the Labour Party between 1987 and 2005. More than a timetable, it is where 'strategic and message imperatives … connect with the planning logistics' (Gould 1999, 335-6). Without it 'the campaign cannot really be said to exist.' (Ibid., 337) In short, it is the campaign plan.

Because the actual mechanics of an election, i.e. getting voters to the polls, is organised locally, nowhere is planning more important than at the local level. Local campaigns are, and need to be, planned meticulously and in the rest of this section I will present some different elements of this. Drawing on briefing documents and publications distributed to local parties, organisers and activists, it can be seen just how important planning is in terms of timing, task allocation and distribution of workers, the targeting of voters, and finally the monitoring of all this activity. The purpose of all this organisation is not to turn members into obedient automatons. Far more efficient is ensuring that party workers are kept occupied to the optimum effect and in such a way that they do not need to be continuously instructed. In other words *DC*, through detailed organisation, turns them into effective actors equipped with the ability to fulfil specified tasks on the party's behalf. However, in doing so it exerts a finely detailed level of control on them at the same time.

Timetables

The first principle of effective campaigning is timing. It therefore follows that at the centre of any campaign plan, is the timetable. Timetables establish the rhythms of the campaign, impose occupations on individuals and regulate cycles of activity (Foucault 1977, 149), just as a school timetable orders the activities and movements of the school day.

Figure 6.1 (below) is a reproduction of a carefully timetabled polling day battle plan distributed in daily briefing notes to Election Agents called *Organise to Win* (Labour Party 1987). What this represents is typical, but just an outline. There are in addition to this a long list of instructions, advice and directions which fill in the gaps, ensuring that as far as possible, not a moment is wasted, nor a worker underemployed and that every detail is taken care of.

Figure 6.1 Polling Day Battle Plan

```
            POLLING DAY CAMPAIGN BATTLE PLAN

6:00am-9:00am    Deliver polling day 'Good Morning / Today
                 is Polling day leaflets'

7:00am           Your Polling Station Tellers should be at
                 their allotted stations now

9:00am-12 noon   Concentrate on collecting the elderly /
                 infirm to take them to vote before they
                 disappear to their Luncheon Clubs and
                 Pensioner Federation Clubs.  Loudspeaker
                 tours / decorated vehicles in selected
                 areas.

10:00am          Start knocking up from Reading Sheets

Mid-day onwards  Continue and intensify knocking up.
                 Second polling day leaflet drop

5:30pm           Main thrust of evening knock-up begins

7:30pm onwards   This is the time to pull off your (able-
                 bodied) number-takers if you're short of
                 workers and get them onto the doorsteps
                 for that final push.  Keep on at it till
                 the polls close.

KEEP ON CAMPAIGNING RIGHT UNTIL THE POLLS CLOSE!!
```

A closer look at the instructions reveals a more detailed series of activities that need to be meticulously organised within the overall timetable, including:[2]

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[2] All following references are from Labour Party (1987).

A leafleting programme with drops in the morning 'to be on the mat with the newspaper and post', lunchtime 'so that they can't forget' and teatime, their 'last chance' to get rid of the Tories;

A Number-taking operation (where tellers record which individuals have cast their vote at the local polling stations) with a 'proper schedule … don't leave a worker there too long, work out proper shifts … Number-takers must be at the polling stations by 7am';

Tannoy tours (a loudspeaker fitted to the roof of a car) which should 'make the maximum use of your loudspeakers. However, workers should be careful to 'use them systematically' and 'target areas with the appropriate message.' Attached to the briefing is a brief guide, containing '30 things to say'. It tells campaigners 'what to say outside the hospital, the schools, the post office, at the bus stop. Stop and say it and then move on. Use the general slogans as you travel around. Use the loudspeaker to encourage people not only to vote Labour, but particularly in key areas like housing estates, to come out and vote';

'Knocking up' voters which should 'start … early in the morning … put the maximum effort into those areas that need persuasion … apathy cannot be a feature of this campaign. To be effective send teams of knockers-up on to an estate, going round and round the estate until every Labour vote has been cast';

Making 'car calls' (driving less mobile voters to the polling station): 'don't miss any and be on time. If a time has been fixed for the call, be there at that time'.

Finally, and most importantly,

Workers must be used effectively – have everything ready for workers coming in to do a job. Don't have them hanging about, don't sit them down or have them drinking tea. The voters are out there – not in the committee room, and every five minutes not on the doorstep can win or lose you the election … Every vote counts – Keep on campaigning right until the polls close (Ibid.).

Task Allocation and Distribution

Whilst the above sets out in detail activities for almost every minute of the day, it still does not show the full extent to which election campaign organisation is finely detailed. As well as what needs to be done and when, the campaign battle plan specifies *where* it should be done and how. The campaign's success will depend not just on ensuring that all the necessary tasks are completed, but also on allocating the right people to the right jobs at the right time, including the organisation of canvassers into streets, areas, and polling districts, concentrating on particular groups of voters.

Each ward committee room should be well stocked with equipment including 'Reading pads'[3] and a board to paste them on, various stationery items, number-taking rotas and pads, canvassing packs, legal notices, electoral registers, a telephone, rosettes, maps, clipboards, leaflets (Labour Party 1995). The layout and organisation of the room is an essential element in the management of a good and successful election campaign:

An efficiently organised committee room with a good atmosphere can make the difference on polling day. For helpers, there is nothing

---

[3] A means by which canvassers can record voting intention. The 'Reading System' is so-called because it was devised by Reading Constituency Labour Party for the election of Ian Mikardo in 1945.

worse than walking into a crowded, untidy room and to having to wait

around before being dispatched to knock-up (Ibid., 30).

The guide continues,

> A good committee room is an empty one, or nearly. Helpers should be
>
> kept working, not standing around … Use every minute of the day
>
> constructively. You only get one chance! (Ibid., 35-6)

Ward Organisers need to 'make sure workers are allocated most effectively' (Labour

Party 1992).   Indeed, one campaigning manual revealingly sets the imperative to 'fill

jobs with people' (Labour Party 1995, 5) to 'allocate workers according to the promise

you need to get out' (Ibid., 5), rather than the other way around. Responsibilities should

be distributed carefully and workers properly trained and instructed: canvassers should

be well 'briefed to identify Labour voters', polling station number-takers and polling

day helpers properly briefed on recording votes and 'knocking up'. It is especially

important therefore that committee room organisers are 'identified well in advance',

fully briefed, trained and competent; and equally so that volunteer organisers are

appointed who will allocate other workers their specific roles (Ibid., 14).

The kind of co-ordination required needs constant updates with up-to-the-minute

information in order to arrange tactics most effectively. It is a dynamic process,

changing as new information comes in. In the constantly shifting situation of election

day, the campaign co-ordinator needs to

> make arrangements for your committee rooms to ring you at least
>
> every two hours, at a different set time for each committee room. You
>
> want to know the turn-out in each area, areas that are difficult, the

number of workers. You can then move workers about from area to

area to give the maximum help where it is most needed. (Labour Party

1987)

Efficient Targeting

The election campaign is looking fairly comprehensive now: there are a series of

timetabled tasks laid out in a clear sequence throughout the day; there are workers

allocated to the right tasks in the right places at the right time, even using the right

words; the committee room is properly equipped.   However, there is one further detail

that has not yet been elaborated: for truly optimal efficiency, targeting needs to be more

detailed than just allocating workers to certain streets in the hope that they will find the

right people to get out and boost the Labour Party vote. In any case, how are campaign

organisers supposed to know *which* streets to target in the first place? The answer is by

targeting individuals. Voting is an individual act. Therefore, organisation needs to

centre on which individuals are to be targeted with what messages at what time. In the

Party's 1997 *General Election Handbook* for local campaigners, the sophistication of

the methods used is apparent. The process of canvassing that takes place throughout the

year in many constituencies, wards and boroughs is an ongoing information gathering

exercise ultimately designed to support the party's work on polling day. Voters are

segmented by previous voting behaviour: firm Labour voters; weak Labour voters;

Liberal Democrats; undecided voters; Conservatives; won't say, non-voters; and a

number of sub-categories indicating, for example whether 'weak Labour' voters are so

because they are irregular voters, or because they have voted for other parties in the past

(Labour Party 1997, 12). Voters are coded and ranked in order of their likelihood to

turn out and vote Labour. They are targeted with different approaches, messages and

media accordingly. For example, 'weak Labour' voters need to be encouraged to turn out by 'stressing the difference a Labour government will make to them personally'; 'waverers' are particularly important (weak / potential Labour voters) and 'we need to pay them particular attention'. On the other hand 'it goes without saying that we will be ignoring voters who are Conservative' and others who are firmly in another camp (Ibid.,14-15), 'we should not canvass them, deliver leaflets to them or even send them anything in the Freepost service' (Labour Party 1994). This information about voters is 'best analysed at the level of polling districts'[4] which supports 'getting the best possible return from the investment made' i.e. not having to campaign everywhere with one blanket message (Ibid.). Thus 'with good records it should be possible to canvass only a particular type of voter' such as 'weak Labour' voters (Ibid.). This furthermore provides a background for the accurate distribution of individual volunteers and workers in the campaign itself. Once targets are calculated, teams can be organised or articulated in the most efficient way possible.

Monitoring

This detailed level of efficient activity works because participants and their activities are constantly observed, assessed and adjusted accordingly. Observation and supervision of this kind is made possible by the development of the detailed kinds of targets I have discussed. At the same time, targets are effective because they produce the criteria which support observation and supervision. Therefore two central requirements of election campaigning are the activity of monitoring and the provision of tools for that purpose: monitoring sheets which show on an hourly basis how many 'promises' have actually voted; progress charts that keep track of how many houses have been visited

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[4] A polling district is an area which is created by the dividing a constituency or ward into smaller units, within which a polling station convenient to electors is located.

each hour of the day. These are the kinds of tools available for monitoring the progress of a whole campaign, and ranking individual party workers by their performance and progress. Using tables and charts like these, progress through territory is monitored, house by house and hour by hour (Labour Party 1995).

Having demonstrated the means by which techniques of organisation are brought to bear upon the particular problem of identifying and getting out the vote on election day, I will next explain in more detail how this produces disciplinary effects by investing party workers with detailed techniques of control that ensure neither a moment, nor a gesture is wasted. In doing so, *DC* does not simply restrict and repress action, but empowers individuals as agents, investing them with the appropriate capacities to be effective on the party's behalf. This sense of empowerment and self-discipline is reflected in how Jan Burnell (an activist in Hackney) felt about the 1987 election campaign in which she participated:

> *It was a model of how to run a team. We were more or less free in our wards but we had targets to meet. We'd meet every week to begin with, more often towards the end. There was no question who was leading it, but it was all done with us in charge of our own patches with our own set of tasks to complete. It was very inspirational, and it's not just me saying that. Other ward organisers from then that we are still friendly with say so too.*[5]

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[5] Interview, Jan Burnell.

Strengths of Disciplinary Control as an Explanation

<u>*First Stage: Detailed Control*</u>

a) What technical problems does modern political organisation seek to solve?

b) What kinds of solutions have been designed and applied to those problems?

c) What is the disciplinary effect of the solutions and techniques applied (e.g. through surveillance, examination, management, organisation, classification and ranking)?

To prevent agents from going outside the party's scheme, timetables establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, and regulate the cycles of repetition of an act. The example shows how control works at the micro-level by instituting a specific series of tasks that must be followed in a particular order and completed within a specific timeframe. Every aspect is managed carefully and nothing is left to chance: when certain leaflets should be delivered, when car calls and tannoy tours should take place, and when knocking up starts. Whilst engaged in these tasks, there is little time allowed, preferably none at all, for rest or for individuals to do their 'own thing'. The timetable is the scheme that sets a standard by which agents are assessed and by which their efficiency can be measured. It details the roles, tasks and functions to which agents are allocated as functionaries of this machine. There is no room left for individuals to take their own initiative because there is a process and a precise routine which must be followed. In short, it provides a scheme whereby agents can be prevented from going off-track and that disciplines them into following the route mapped out by the party. It thus determines the optimum level of operation for each individual.

As well as time, agents must also be organised in relation to space to ensure that every individual is fully occupied in useful tasks (a serious problem according to the guidance is having campaign workers standing around waiting for something to do). Jobs need to be 'filled with people', workers 'allocated' according to calculations of required outcomes, and moved around where they can be most effective. Efficient organisation means that workers are distributed to the right place at the right time, and are managed to ensure they are working at the optimum level in the most effective places, with the most useful voters. It once again eliminates 'waste': not only is the time of actors fully occupied but the places in which tasks are carried out are carefully circumscribed. This is absolutely essential to the efficient completion of the tasks in hand, but the effect is a highly detailed level of control that keeps agents disciplined at a micro-level.

The productivity of disciplined party workers can be enhanced by providing them with the kind of information that enables them to structure their door-knocking even more efficiently. The accumulation and organisation of knowledge about voters through night after night of canvassing or 'voter identification', which classifies and ranks voters according to the likelihood of their voting Labour, equips party workers with the information they need to target not just specific streets but particular *individuals*. Furthermore, the ranking of those individuals by voting intention is the basis for how and with what messages they are contacted, thus also providing workers with what to say as well as who to say it to. This further subjects agents to highly detailed organisation whilst at the same time providing criteria by which their performance can be measured (i.e. who has been 'knocked-up' and, with the information from polling stations, which of them have actually voted). This is essential since it determines the ongoing allocation and distribution of party workers throughout the day.

Thus, monitoring is fundamental to *DC*. For this scheme to function effectively, it must be monitored carefully.   All the techniques used to ensure an efficient, disciplined campaign – timetabling, allocation of tasks, the setting of targets, coalesce in their observability. Individuals have been trained, their programmes of activity designed and set out in timetables; tasks have been distributed and agents allocated to them. Although, election campaigns do not 'enclose' people in an observational space like a hospital, a prison or a school (Foucault 1977, 171-2), there is a sense in which, for a time, and for those working within its scheme, the whole polling district becomes a site of observation and examination. Discipline is conducted by observation, by measuring and ranking workers aided by monitoring forms, progress charts and statistics, observation and measurement. This supports the timetabling, allocations and targeting discussed above.   The committee rooms are the central supervisory point observing, monitoring activity; recording, collating and processing information which feeds back into the overall scheme. Thus for the duration of the campaign, the streets themselves become part of the mechanism, a functional site in which disciplinary power operates, distributing and monitoring individuals. Individuals have to be in a certain place at a certain time, thus their lives are regulated down to the smallest detail.

By this point, party workers are completely invested with power at a highly detailed level: the tasks they have to complete are allocated; the rhythms and timing of their activity is set; they are distributed into the most useful and productive places; they have been endowed with the appropriate skills and provided with the appropriate words to direct at specific individuals. However, it is important to remember that they are not automatons, or otherwise empty shells directed by an all-powerful party hierarchy. This level of highly detailed organisation makes deviation from the track laid out more difficult, it is certain; but it also makes it less desirable for the party activist because of

the sense of empowerment that such organisation can stimulate, as exemplified by Jan Burnell's words quoted above.

Limits of Disciplinary Control as an Explanation

DC differs from other approaches to power because of its level of analysis and because of its approach to the location and possession of power. It offers a truly radical view of power that conventional approaches do not recognise. Thus as this example has shown, where *DC* is really effective as a dimension of power is in conjunction with another like *BC*, filling in the details of how power works at the day-to-day micro-level to control and direct individuals, and imbue them with capacities to act in the party's scheme. Where it falls short, arguably, is that in focusing so resolutely on the details of how discipline functions in the everyday and mundane activities of party life (because *DC* comes not out of intention or logic, but is a contingent outcome of the application of certain kinds of knowledge to specific problems like organising elections), it misses the extent to which agents operating with intent might have a direct effect on the intentions of others. It also bypasses the importance of institutions and structures that operate with a particular logic. By homing in on the micro-level it does not (because it is not designed to) recognise the importance of meso-level and macro-level influences on power relations, including the party organisation itself, and its culture and practices on a structural level.

Example 1 Conclusion

The aspects of *DC* that I have discussed so far are in some ways closely linked to the concerns that underpin *BC*. That is, it understands power as a controlling force that works through continuous organisational routine. However, *DC* differs from *BC* in

several important respects. Firstly, it has a positive element: this dimension of power plays an important role in building the capacities of individuals and the party. Thus, rather than repressing otherwise 'free' political actors, *DC* empowers individuals as effective political actors by organising bodies in conjunction with time, space and tasks in fine detail. This investment helps to make individuals into useful and effective agents able to deliver on party priorities and provides the basis for discipline through the monitoring and assessment of activity. Secondly, therefore, this dimension of power directs attention away from the functioning of organisational structures and towards the low-level, apparently minor and banal details of mundane party activities, like run-of-the-mill canvassing and election campaigns. It is in these continuous, day-to-day regularities in which power can be detected. Thirdly, *DC* comes about in the application of knowledge to the solution of specific organisational problems. Party actors become disciplined, not because they have been beaten into submission or overwhelmed, but through being trained and invested as agents. The detailed micro-control of activity in parties, then, does not come about by command and direct manipulation, nor through an anonymous structural logic, but as a contingent outcome of practice. It is, as Digeser has put it, 'a kind of unintended consequence of intentional action' (Digeser 1992, 984).

Example 2: Media, Marketing and Normalisation

The second example focuses on how *DC* functions through surveillance and normalisation: it looks at how the body is understood as a political construct and a marker of identity which in its visibility is subject to discipline, reconstruction, marginalisation and exclusion. Politics is in many ways a performance and through performance, discipline inscribes itself on the body in gestures and appearance. There

are two main ways in which it does this. Firstly, it marginalises and excludes those who do not 'fit' the expressive needs of the party because of their gender, race, age or appearance. It does this not through prohibition or expulsion, but often by petty humiliations or minor slights and omissions. Secondly, it disciplines those it does not exclude by 'normalising' them so that they fit more precisely the expected norms of appearance, sound and gesture. This underlines the visibility of politics, especially in an age of television and other visual media. I shall approach this aspect of *DC* by analysing examples that illustrate how important presentation and marketing techniques have become to the representation of politics in the media. During the 1980s and 1990s, the period on which this thesis is centred, there were important developments in visual media and professional marketing which has had a knock-on effect on the way politics is reported in the press and the way in which politics itself is practiced. The advent of twenty-four hour news and the proliferation of marketing techniques have brought with them particular norms and practices which have been absorbed and internalised by modern parties, and as such they represent an important mode of *DC* in parties which is subtle and detailed in its operation. These trends had a profound impact on the way in which the Labour Party 'did' politics (See Shaw 1994, Chapter 6). Some of the consequences of this are examined further in the rest of this section.

Television and politics are certainly bedfellows, but politicians' relationship with the former is not always a happy one. Mildred Gordon, before eventually becoming MP for Bow and Poplar in 1987 had been a party candidate in a number of different elections and as such had previous experience of just '*how perfidious the television was*'. In the Greater London Council elections just before abolition in the 1980s, Gordon was particularly stung by a television news report: '*I never trusted the television after that.*

Ever.' She and her opponent both made a speech at a meeting being filmed for the television news. After she had made her speech

> *I left for the pub where all my supporters were and they asked why I didn't speak. I said I had spoken for 20 minutes, but they insisted that I had left without a word. The TV had waited until I left and made out that I went without speaking in their report. I wore these big glasses at the time and I had to push them up and they had a picture of this, saying 'Mildred Gordon wipes away a tear'. They made me look like a whipped dog ... They did the same to me once again: asked me to shop in Tesco's in my constituency. When I finished shopping they said 'would you walk slowly towards the door?' I did, thinking that was going to be a shot and they said 'Mildred Gordon walks slowly and wearily...' They pulled all kinds of stunts.*[6]

As well as television, the detailed attentions of the press subject female politicians to unprecedented levels of scrutiny in the media. This is well illustrated by the case of Mo Mowlam (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland following the 1997 General Election). Her case highlights the conspicuousness of women's bodies in politics, especially if they do not fit with the expected norms of femininity. Earlier in her career, Mowlam had been 'the clever blonde who sits for Redcar',[7] 'a bit like a raunchy Julie Christie'[8] and 'the femme fatale of the People's Party'[9] (quite apart from being a political science PhD, a front-bench spokesperson from early in her parliamentary career and clearly set

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[6] Interview, Mildred Gordon.

[7] Andrew Rawnsley, 'Labour Unleashes Cannon Fodder.' *The Guardian*, November 11 1987.

[8] Lynda Lee-Potter, 'Love and Labour's Little Mo.' *Daily Mail*, August 4 1992.

[9] Alan Watkins, 'The Gang of Four Would be at Home with Tony.' *The Independent*, Jan 5 1997.

for a glittering political future). However, by the start of the 1997 general election campaign, she had begun treatment for a brain tumour which had caused her to gain weight and lose her hair, which she covered with a wig. This began to attract the notice of the press, and the Labour Party's manifesto launch in London in April 1997 was 'a defining moment' for her, she says:

> the attention in some of the press the next day was less on the detail of the manifesto and more on what I looked like. 'What has happened to Mo Mowlam?' they asked with a circle around my head in the cabinet picture (Mowlam 2002, 41).

Some of the press comment was at best uncomplimentary, at worst, 'unpleasant'[10]. The initial speculation suggested that it was down to giving up smoking a few months earlier. Alongside 'before' and 'after' photographs (Ibid., 41), Vicky Ward in the *Daily Mail* wrote:

> As she wins the war of the weed, she is losing the battle of the bulge. When she sat next to Jack Straw at the Labour Party's manifesto launch on Thursday, some speculated that Mr Blair had found himself a new front-bencher. With her striking new bob hairstyle and dramatic weight gain, some observers needed a second look to confirm she was indeed the party's vivacious 44 year old Northern Ireland spokesman … In the three months since kicking her 20 Silk Cut-a-day habit, her weight has ballooned from 12 stone to 14 … Miss Mowlam has always been fond of food and drink but only started to become slightly

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[10] Stephen Castle, 'Press Taunts Force Mowlam to Reveal Secret Illness.' *The Independent,* April 13 1997

overweight five years ago when she moved in with banker Jon Norton,

whom she married in 1995.[11]

Nuala McKeever in the Sunday Mirror suggested that her 'drastic makeover' had 'left her looking like the twin brother of alternative comedian Eddie Izzard.'[12] Lynda Lee-Potter in the Daily Mail drew attention to the fact that 'she's developed several chins' had shoulders 'like Frank Bruno' and 'bears an undeniable resemblance to an only slightly effeminate Geordie trucker.'[13] Once she decided to reveal that it was her treatment for a brain tumour that was the cause of her changing appearance, it suddenly became acceptable: instead of a 'Geordie trucker' she became 'a born fighter - and a winner'[14] and 'Queen of Redcar' who 'since she revealed a few days ago that she has had a non-cancerous brain tumour, she has acquired something near the aura of a saint'.[15] And so the press that 'only woke up at the election when I was still fat and had a wig on'[16] maintained close attention to her appearance, especially her almost legendary disarming of intransigent Unionist and Nationalist negotiators in Northern Ireland by 'throwing off her wig',[17] ongoing speculation and stories about how much she 'detested' it,[18] her weight, whether her hair was growing back or not and so on.[19]

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[11] Vicky Ward, 'Mo Mowlam Pays in Pounds for Giving Up Her Cigarettes.' *Daily Mail*, April 5 1997.

[12] Nuala McKeever, 'Mo's a Stand-Up Joke.' *Sunday Mirror*, April 6 1997.

[13] Lynda Lee-Potter, 'Christine Gets Her Claws Out.' *Daily Mail*, April 9 1997.

[14] Leader. *Sunday Mirror*, April 13, 1997

[15] Simon Hoggart, 'Sketch: "Oo, Yer Are Looking Good." A Regal Progress as the Queen of Redcar Takes to the Streets.' *The Guardian,* April 16 1997

[16] Emma Cook, 'Desert Island Mowlam's Choice.' *The Independent on Sunday*, March 21 1999

[17] Andrew Rawnsley, 'The Best Man to Lead Everyone Through a Minefield is the One Who Doesn't Know How Much Danger He is In.' *The Observer*, April 12 1998

[18] Sue Carroll , 'Mo: I'm Tough, But I Listen. Like Most Women, I Trust My Gut Instincts.' *The Daily Mirror*, April 23 1998

[19] 'My Fight With Cancer By Battling Mo.' *Sunday Mirror* March 21 1999

And indeed, her appearance became a focal point of her representation as a politician and her 'unfeminine' behaviour became a kind of positive attribute. A description of her written in 1998 by a sympathetic journalist described her thus:

> she acts like one of the boys but, because she is not one of the boys, she both gets away with things that none of them would and insulted for things they wouldn't. Her sheer bravery over her illness, her matter-of-factness about her appearance, the famous slapping of the wig on the table reveal a woman who knows that there is more to life than feminine vanity. She is thus curiously vulnerable and unbelievably hard at the same time.[20]

This is a pressure that comes from outside the party initially but which becomes internalised as a means of disciplining party actors. Appearance, image and presentation were at this time becoming an increasingly important part of political life, especially as visual media, particularly television, proliferated. Frank Dobson, a former Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet minister and party campaigns co-ordinator, sees it as having had a crucial influence on many of the changes that the Labour Party made to its decision-making arrangements, for example. He argued that because what the public *sees* through the media is highly influential on what they think, there was a subsequent focus on presentation as well as policy. The exposure of events like conference through television and press made their control and alignment with that strategy crucial. The party leader, Neil Kinnock

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[20] Suzanne Moore, 'Mo Mowlam's Disarming Ways May be Just What is Needed Today.' *The Independent*, January 9 1998.

pointed out that we must have been the only party in the Western world

who got all that exposure on television for a week of conference and

actually went down in the polls as a result. So there was a real effort

on how to present, a lot of thought put into the whole package of policy

and presentation: thinking more strategically.[21]

Another former minister and a leading member of the 'soft-left', Michael Meacher, argues similarly that key political figures were willing to subject themselves to such discipline:

there were great, profound changes needed and Kinnock knew this,

and he was willing to play down some of his left-ness to do this and

most in the party would go along with that. [22]

The key to this was developing a professionalised marketing approach, in which the Party needed to 'identify our target audience, have a simple central logic which underlines everything every spokesperson says, [and] repeat it over and over again' (Shadow Communications Agency Strategy Note, 22 January 1987), which had huge consequences for how and by whom the message was communicated. At the centre of this was strategy was television. '*We needed to make people like us*' said Meacher, and therefore

it was important who was put on television.   It was sensible to put

people up that the public liked. The way people looked, dressed, the

way things are presented and designed became more important. [23]

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[21] Interview, Frank Dobson

[22] Interview, Michael Meacher

Thus, there was a certain amount of favouring those who fit a certain mould and an increasing importance attached to personal presentation and 'likeability' rather than passion and political talent. Thus some, like Mildred Gordon, a left-wing, Jewish woman of pensionable age from a working class background, were excluded from the process altogether. Her selection as Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Bow and Poplar in 1987 had surprised many:[24] '*obviously, the establishment really hated my selection*,' she said, because instead of someone young and 'respectable' they had a new candidate who was '*sixty four by the time the election came, Jewish, radical*' and with undeniable Trotskyite associations.[25] Not surprisingly, she was '*the last person they wanted*'.[26] Thus, she says, when journalists contacted the Communications Directorate to ask who they would recommend to interview on one issue or another, '*they would never ever recommend me … I was never put forward.*'[27] Peter Mandelson, who became the Party's Director of Communications in 1985 '*was important to this*' new approach to the media.[28] It meant that a more calculated approach to communication which was more than just about the 'content' of the message. Mandelson underlined this point when he explained that

> communications means throwing your net much wider than publicity.
> It means deciding what we say, how we say it, and which spokesmen
> and women we choose to say it.[29]

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[23] Interview, Michael Meacher

[24] Interview, Mike Tyrrell

[25] Her first husband was founder of the American Socialist Worker's Party and the Fourth International.

[26] Interview, Mildred Gordon

[27] Interview, Mildred Gordon

[28] Interview, Michael Meacher

[29] Kathy Myers, 'The Media: Mandelson's Overtures for a Labour Victory.' *The Guardian* , November 25 1985.

Vital to this, is appearance, which is emphasised strongly in the detailed advice that Paul Richards, a former Labour candidate and communications professional gives to candidates appearing on television:

> If you are appearing uninvited in people's living rooms via their television set, the least you can do is look smart. Put a suit on, and look professional and business-like. For men that means a shirt and tie; for women a suit and blouse … You should go for neutral, unfussy colours and patterns, and avoid anything too bright or lively. Go for dark suits, and pale shirts or blouses. Women should avoid distracting brooches or Pat-from-Eastenders ear-rings … Men should avoid clunking cuff-links, bracelets or tie-pins … If it is sunny, take off your sunglasses − you are a candidate, not a member of U2. (Richards 2001, 128)

For Mandelson image and branding, such as the dropping of the red flag as the party's symbol and the introduction of a red rose as its new logo in 1986, was about more than just appearance but a clear statement:

> The red flag symbolised everything Labour represented in the public mind: socialism, nationalisation, state control. Everything, that is, that voters now liked least and mistrusted most about us. The red rose wasn't just a design change: it represented a transformation in how the party would present itself (Mandelson 2010, 92).

More than simply changing policies and 'image' behind which 'conventional' activity continued, the application of marketing techniques represented the entry of a particular logic, a set of techniques which therefore had implications for the character, style and look of leaders and members of parliament; the behaviour, opinions and activities of members too (Lees-Marshment 2001, 27). As Meacher put it,

> *we went from the 'heaving heart' of the Labour movement to something much more accommodating, well-behaved and with a more presentable image. It was about ameliorating the party's jagged edges.*[30]

The experience of the 1983 election and that of candidates like Mildred Gordon, were exactly the kinds of dangers that the Party wished to avoid and they made use of all the tools of modern political communications and campaigning to transform Labour's approach (Mandelson 2010, 127). However, whilst the Party's 1987 election campaign was a great improvement and recognised as highly professional, it was felt to be something of a compromise (Ibid., 89). '*It wasn't quite the comeback, but it was the beginning,*' as Gerald Kaufman puts it, '*which allowed us to maintain a holding a position.*'[31] By the time of the 1997 campaign, however, things had changed more fundamentally. A professionalised marketing approach was absolutely at the centre of the campaign, with the party's representation in the press and the media at the forefront. This was exemplified by Philip Gould's focus groups, which he ran for six nights per week for the entire six-week campaign. Almost every night Gould 'wrote two notes, one to the campaign … and a second, personal one to Tony Blair' (Gould 1999, 344).

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[30] Interview, Michael Meacher

[31] Interview, Sir Gerald Kaufman

Below, I reproduce a selection of some of the typical comments from Gould's memos, as reported in his account of the campaign:

20 March 'Day one excitement has fizzled out … five of the eight did not like you' (Ibid., 349)

24 March 'We easily won the news … Major looked tired and carping. TB was fresh, confident and positive. This contrast swamped the Tory message.' (Ibid., 352)

4 April 'This was not a good day for us, probably the least successful day of the campaign. People felt you looked defensive and momentarily wrong-footed … This one incident is not a problem for us, [but] if a pattern develops of Labour policy uncertainty … we will be harmed' (Ibid., 361)

9 April 'People have lost some confidence in us; they are getting fed up with the campaign and disconnected. They see it as over-managed, over-packaged, and obsessed with point-scoring. People are thinking we are taking victory for granted … they want to see more fight and grit from us … People want to renew their faith in Tony Blair. They want to see him tested in real situations, facing real pressure' (Ibid., 365-6).

16 April 'There is uncertainty about us. People do not know what we stand for. We do not look confident enough' (Ibid., 371)

25 April 'In general your attacking stance of the last week has been effective. But soon you must make the turn and focus on your positive message. In general your position is very strong. But it is not yet secure.' (Ibid., 381)

28 April 'You got your message and tone absolutely right … There is a discernible sense of a deeper turn towards us … They still have doubts, but they are going to do it' (Ibid., 383)

30 April 'Even today you should not let up … You are still taking nothing for granted, you are still dismissing the possibility of a landslide … You must never deviate from your New Labour project' (Ibid., 387)

Thus, news media, which is so vital to the practice of modern politics, keeps politicians under constant surveillance. Through the internalisation of norms and their application in marketing and public relations techniques, parties themselves develop the means to discipline their own members, excluding those that do not look right or fit the 'brand'. Women, especially if they do not conform to the acceptable face of femininity (because, say, they are old and Jewish, or fat), are subject to a particularly insidious kind of surveillance. However, it also shows how the leader, even when exemplary material, conforming precisely to the white, male, middle class norms of politics, is subject to a detailed level of surveillance and discipline on an almost continuous basis.

Having now presented some examples that illustrate how this second aspect of *DC* operates, I will now analyse its strengths and weaknesses as a dimension of power by discussing the examples in relation to the criteria I have set out earlier in this chapter and the framework as a whole.

Strengths of Disciplinary Control as an Explanation

Second Stage: Surveillance and Normalisation

a) How are individuals and their bodies exposed to surveillance and judged?

b) How are bodies made conspicuous, scrutinised and subjected to exclusion and/or normalisation?

Politics is a publicly performed act of constructing identity and subjectivity through self-discipline. Discipline is applied by the monitoring of performances, for example, through the attentions of the press and the use of research techniques like focus groups. Each of these examples highlights ways in which what Foucault calls 'normalising judgement' accounts for, judges, ranks, punishes and corrects. In other words, they illustrate how 'the gaze of the other' recognises and characterises certain bodies in certain ways so that they are disciplined into a certain configuration of performative acts that constitute their subjectivity as a politician. Politicians need to sell 'themselves', but *DC* is a means by which 'themselves' is restructured as a faithful representation of the party's brand which is itself aligned with powerful external norms. In these cases, discipline articulates itself on the body: the actions it takes, the way it speaks, the way it looks. Through the 'art' (or perhaps science?) of presentation and marketing, which is part of party political life at every level, bodies are disciplined to fit with norms and expectations and marginalised and excluded where they do not. The way they look and sound and the gestures they employ are important aspects of communication.

Presentation techniques, marketing and branding strategies and image control became increasingly applied to politics in the 1990s especially in how politicians and even grass-roots participants in party politics were expected to look, sound and behave. As

Peter Mandelson's words and Paul Richards' advice suggests, the way in which an individual expresses and presents him or herself is an important carrier of the party's message and brand. Politicians are therefore required to pay more attention to the way they look and how they carry themselves in public, right down to the gestures they employ, how their voice sounds, the clothes they wear, their hair-style and so on. The role of candidate or politician is frequently played out on television and other visual media such as advertising, and the printed press has, with its greater use of 'paparazzi-style' photography, taken a similar route, as Mo Mowlam discovered. With the development and application of marketing techniques, focus groups, for example, have become important ways in which the images and words of politicians in the press and on television are reflected back at them through the prism of marketing.

The process of marking and inscribing bodies brings into view their differences and delineates between those acceptable and appropriate for the delivery of political messages and those who are not. The former are selected to act as spokespersons for the party in the media, thus gaining exposure and representation. Their self-discipline is rewarded and they are held up as an example, a disciplinary tool to be applied to the latter, rejected as incompatible with the party's requirements, perhaps because of the way they dress, their age or race. They are sidelined, marginalised or in need of 'reconstruction'. Even those selected are subject to ongoing discipline: as to acceptable and unacceptable gestures, appearance and attitudes which comes via the consumer feedback built into marketing-based approaches to politics; as to acceptable and unacceptable shape, size and hairstyle via the exposure and criticisms of the tabloid press. Subjected to the gaze of the 'other', bodies are marked, categorised, ranked, favoured and disfavoured, reconstructed and disciplined into acceptable norms.

These disciplinary mechanisms apply particularly to women who are conspicuous in relation to the masculine norm. Female bodies are expected to conform to particular ideals: Mo Mowlam is at one time seen as a raunchy femme fatale, and when her looks begin to change as a result of her illness she is subject (initially) to hostile and unpleasant attention. Finally, when it is known that she is ill, her body becomes acceptable, but still subject to ongoing attention in that light. In other words, attention is *always* on the body and its incongruity or otherwise with political life. This is why *DC* and particularly this aspect of it is such an important and salient addition to my framework of power. This kind of attention became even clearer later when, once in power, women Labour MPs, almost regardless of the context of the story became 'Blair's babes', a term which was initially used to describe the *Daily Mirror*'s scantily clad cheerleaders for Labour's election efforts.[32] To summarise, politicians must fit the 'brand', be a certain kind of male, a certain kind of female. They are marked out and classified, primed for conveying messages that manifest the party's brand through gestures, appearance and conduct. Those that do not fit – because they are ethnic minorities, women, or 'deviant' men who do not conform to a 'respectable' heterosexual norm – or fail to adjust to it are, like Mildred Gordon, excluded and marginalised or, like Mo Mowlam, subject to petty, invasive and sometimes cruel humiliations.

My final point here highlights an important marker of difference between *DC* and *BC* in particular. Unlike *BC*, *DC* is something that even the leader of the party is subject to, perhaps even more so the 'charismatic' leader. The internalisation of media norms in modern research techniques like focus groups have become ever more precise disciplinary tools applied at the highest levels of the party hierarchy, exemplified by the

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[32] *The Mirror*, 1 May 1997.

observation and judgement of the behaviour and appearance of the party leader, Tony Blair. Blair's subjection to daily observation during the 1997 election is an excellent example of how in this fifth dimension, elitist notions of power are turned on their head. Whereas in Weber's scheme, the leader is the one individual that has some freedom of action, in this one he is still a subject, perhaps the ultimate subject. Under constant media attention, this modern political leader is a great individualisation, a production of power and power relations, created, shaped and scrutinised under the panoptic gaze of media, parliament, public, party. Thus, he is not in reality a sovereign or a hero, but a subject and a production of disciplinary forces. All the way through the campaign, the performance, looks, and sound of the leader is directly scrutinised, criticised and made over. Subjected to ongoing surveillance, observation and judgement, requiring a daily adjustment and correction of the body, its movements and behaviour are adjusted and reorganised in line with the findings of research. The 'prince', who was the symbolic expression of sovereign power, its display and representation, expressed in spectacle and demonstration, is replaced by perhaps the ultimate subject: individualised, scrutinised and documented. This 'leader' is subject to the fullest expression of disciplinary power, distinguished from the 'mass' and singled out, not in order to command, but in order to be exposed, penetrated and known.

Limits of Disciplinary Control as an Explanation

In this example, *DC*'s departure from other conceptualisations of power is again demonstrated by its micro-level of analysis. It shows its value once more as a dimension of power that supplements and brings alive another, in this case providing the empirical detail that the more abstract structuralism of *CP* cannot. Rather than an approach that stands on its own, therefore, *DC* provides a level of analysis that makes it

an essential supplement to the other dimensions of power in my framework. It enables the analyst to detect how the more elusive power of structural forces operates at the individual level. Conversely, what *DC* by itself lacks is a wider vision of structural and organisational logics, not to mention individual action and their relationship to power. *DC* therefore is best used in conjunction with the other dimensions of power in my framework rather than by itself.

However, another potential problem with this approach lies precisely in one of its key points of difference with other conceptualisations. This concept of power, derived from Foucault's work is centred on *relations*. That is, power is not to be found in the possession of individuals or immanent in structures but in the relations between them. There are many analysts who have objected to this idea. Dowding (1991) has argued from a rational choice perspective that 'individuals' relations to objects and other individuals cannot have power' (Dowding 1991, 7). However, I would counter that briefly by arguing that it is not so much that relations themselves *have* power as that they are indicative of it. The *effects* of power can be detected, as I have argued, through the analysis of documents or by its appearance on the bodies of individuals. Furthermore, power in this dimension operates very differently to individualistic conceptions in particular which makes its possession or otherwise less relevant here. It is not just concerned with how behaviour is affected by actions or structures but how individuals are invested with capacities and empowered to act.

Example 2 Conclusion

The kinds of problems to which this approach to power has been applied (by Foucault and others who have used his work) are practical, day-to-day questions to which power in behavioural or structural terms are rarely applied. It is this that makes it an especially

valuable tool for understanding some of the less noticeable, yet potent and intense power that operates in the detail of political life. This part of the analysis has given an account of how parties discipline members through the internalisation of media norms and the application of marketing-oriented strategies and tactics. What it demonstrates is how, in detailed ways, power works on individuals to produce representatives congruent with those norms, its brand and values. In this sense, it adds richness to the analysis of power because it brings to life the means by which such control is exerted, which more abstract approaches to structural power are unable to do adequately.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have elaborated a fifth dimension of power and demonstrated two salient aspects of it. Firstly, it shows that power operates in the apparently mundane and banal detail to control, organise and distribute individuals so that they are not only disciplined, but useful subjects, empowered to act effectively as party activists. Secondly, power is also something that can be detected in the practices of surveillance which are integral to modern politics. The conduct of politics has strong theatrical elements and norms of appearance. Performative behaviour, which is gendered and racialised, is a means by which bodies are disciplined or subject to normalisation, marginalisation and exclusion and is conducted at this level in a highly regulated way. The party's response to increasing external scrutiny is to internalise it, applying marketing and publicity strategies which attempt to anticipate the scrutiny that politicians may be subject to. As a result, the processes by which bodies are disciplined, corrected and adjusted are magnified and intensified. Training, advice and other material contribute to the internalisation of this kind of discipline so that eventually the actors themselves are the ones both administering and subject to it.

Together, these traits underline the detailed disciplinary aspects of politics that are often missed by those approaches that situate power in particular locations (such as individuals or institutions). Disciplinary Control enriches the framework because it reveals the micro-processes and 'hidden' relations in which power is immanent. It brings to life the abstract structuralism of Constitutive Power by examining the detailed, capillary forms that power takes in the production of subjectivities and it fills in the gaps left by the broad institutional sweep of Bureaucratic Control by pinpointing the specific means by which control is exerted on individual subjects. In short, it demonstrates how power produces agents who are both congruent with the party's values and helpful to its objectives.

Having now discussed and examined all five dimensions of power that constitute my framework, it now only remains for me to discuss its overall salience for the analysis of power in political parties. That will be my task in the next, concluding chapter.

***Seven*: Conclusion / A Multi-dimensional Framework of Power in Political Parties**

In this thesis I have outlined, discussed and analysed the five dimensions of power in my framework, applying them to my own research on the Labour Party. Each dimension offers a unique perspective of power and how it is exercised in political organisation: Individualistic Power is a property of agents deployed in the pursuit of individual interests and preferences; Strategic Power is mediated through rules and values which are subject to strategic manipulation and control by powerful actors; Bureaucratic Control is an inherent property of the anonymous functioning of organisation that disciplines and controls the capacity of individuals to act; Constitutive Power produces the specific subjectivities and skills the party needs in the practices of party life; Disciplinary Control organises and reconstructs bodies at a microscopic level of detail in order to produce disciplined and effective agents. In this concluding chapter, I will revisit and summarise the argument I have made throughout the thesis. I will begin by revisiting my initial assertion that power as it is understood in the context of the political party literature is under-theorised. I will then summarise the core argument before going on to revisit each dimension of power in turn, assessing its contribution to the overall framework. Finally, I will consider how effective the framework as a whole is by applying it to the specific example of the *Partnership in Power* reforms which significantly restructured the Labour Party's policy-making processes.

Power and the Party Literature

In chapter one, I used the framework that I outlined in my introduction to examine the assumptions about power contained in some of the most influential literature on

political parties. What I demonstrated was that although sometimes power is explicitly discussed, references to it are often oblique and explicit conceptual development is lacking. In terms of power, much of the literature is centred on the relationship between leaders and led and thus emphasises elitism, which was the subject of Robert Michels' study in the early part of the twentieth century (Michels 1962 [1915]): the accounts of Duverger (1959), Panebianco (1988) and Katz and Mair (1995), for example, all have a strong elitist vein running through them. However, that does not mean that they are all one-dimensional in their approach to power. To differing degrees, elitism and oligarchy are sometimes tempered and sometimes enhanced by other dimensions of power. Duverger, for example, seems to hint at more constitutive dimensions that intensify the power of hierarchy, whilst Panebianco's approach infuses hierarchical power with elements of more direct, individualistic conflict and strategic elements that keep it in check. Indeed, in contrast to Michels, even the more 'elitist' of modern accounts (such as Katz and Mair's) indicate that members are not simply submissive, but do have some power of their own. On the other hand, another tranche of literature specifically concerned with party discipline considers how leaders use the institutional resources available to them to support an exercise of individualistic power, and employ strategies to ensure that the individual power of members is curtailed.

Despite the range of approaches to power used, the conclusion I drew from my analysis was that they are limited and what the literature lacks on the whole is an explicit and systematic theorisation of power as it is exercised and operates in parties.   This is important because the key texts I have mentioned are and remain amongst the most influential on the literature on political parties and party organisation in general. The result of this is that the study of parties has not developed as it could have done, because whilst the analysis of power and power relations in political theory has become richer,

more complex and more sophisticated, the literature on political parties has tended to stick with a rather truncated account relying on older theories which originated during earlier phases of the development of parties. Furthermore, many of these conceptions are somewhat negative in their understanding of power. Being subject to power is to find oneself defeated or restricted; therefore the sense in which power can be understood also as positive, productive and empowering is under-explored, although it is hinted at in some cases. The failure to recognise how power works through constituting subjects who are empowered as effective agents with appropriate skills and capacities is, I would argue, a major shortcoming in the work on political parties.

My argument in this thesis has been that different ontologies of power apparently in tension with one another – as negative or positive; as agentic or structural – can be understood as different *dimensions* of power. An inclusive, multi-dimensional analysis can shed greater light on how power works in political parties in particular and contribute something to the debates about political power more generally. In this thesis I have developed a framework to facilitate just such an analysis and tested it on a real-world case. This has provided a unique and, I would argue, much richer perspective on the exercise and operation of power in political parties than has been offered elsewhere.

Summary of the Core Argument

At the outset of the thesis, I posed four questions: firstly, in what different ways is power exercised in a political party? Secondly, how can power adequately be theorised? Thirdly, how best can this theory be tested? And fourthly, what contribution does this make to the understanding of power in political parties and debates about power generally? In order to address them, I proposed a framework of power oriented

towards different dimensions of its operation in an *organisational* context, specifically political party organisation. Drawing on a wide range of theoretical resources, I argued that power is exercised and operates in five distinctive dimensions in which it becomes increasingly subtle and less identifiable in the terms that conventional political science addresses the concept. In its first dimension, Individualistic Power, power is understood in conventional, agentic terms focusing on individuals who act freely on their preferences. However, as the analysis goes on, power is turned *upon* individuals in increasingly insidious ways: Strategic Power is mediated through rules and values which are subject to manipulation and control; Bureaucratic Control is inherent in the anonymous functioning of organisation. However, at the same time as it becomes progressively more anonymous, power also becomes more productive and positive. In the first three dimensions, power is a negative force that is exercised by defeating others, or by blocking or suppressing action in different ways. The fourth dimension, Constitutive Power, empowers agents to act by investing them with the capacities the party needs, and Disciplinary Control, the fifth and final dimension of power in my framework, exerts control at a micro-level so as to normalise subjects and produce effective agents who are disciplined down to the finest detail of appearance, gesture and activity.

In order to test this theory, I applied each dimension in the framework to different aspects of Labour Party life during the long period of reform, roughly between 1985 and 1997. I chose this period because it immediately follows the end of the Miner's Strike – which Neil Kinnock argued 'lost a year' out of the party's reform and policy renewal process (Jones 1994, 207) – and covers the period up to the *Partnership in Power* reforms which entrenched many of the organisational changes that were made after 1985. I wanted to see how, in relation to a particular phase of the party's development,

different modes of power are simultaneously at work. Conversely, I also wanted to examine how a multi-dimensional analysis enhances the understanding of how political parties operate in terms of their internal power relations. My task was not to conduct a comprehensive analysis or a detailed history of Labour Party reform, but to use this phase of the party's development as a point at which to situate an analysis of power. I drew on interview research, using the experience of Labour Party members, activists and representatives at both local and national level to help demonstrate my argument that the complexities of organisational life cannot be satisfactorily explained with a one-dimensional approach to power, but requires something more sophisticated. Within this period the changes that took place had a significant effect on the party at different levels – individual, organisational, cultural and technical – which my framework of power is designed to illuminate. In the next section, I will review the framework as a whole before going on to discuss its application.

The Framework of Power

In reviewing the overall framework, I will briefly re-examine each dimension of power, summarising five things that my analysis has shown: firstly, the basic characteristics of power including its relationship to agents, institutions and structures of relations; secondly, the existing theory it draws on and how it was adapted for use in the framework; thirdly, how it can be identified, what kinds of questions need to be asked and where analytical attention should be directed; fourthly, how those questions can be applied to real-world examples that illuminate this dimension of power; fifthly and finally, what each contributes to the framework as a whole. For the convenience of the reader, I re-present below the tabular summary of the framework originally presented in my introductory chapter.

Table 7.1: The Framework of Power

Dimension of Power	Description	Characteristics	Identification / Questions	Examples
Individualistic Power [*IP*]	Centred on individuals and their preferences, power is exercised when an actor is able to secure interests at the expense of those of others.	Agentic, rational, causal, decision-oriented, voluntarist, resource-dependent.	Identify key issue(s) over which there is clear conflict; examine parties involved and decision outcomes. Who was involved? Who prevailed? What resources did victors use?	Leaders rewarding and punishing through control of patronage; deploying resources to overcome a rival in conflict.
Strategic Power [*SP*]	Actions are mediated by rules and norms, power is exercised by their control and manipulation and by the ability to set and control the agenda. How rules used to gain and maintain advantage.	Conflict-oriented, subject to rules, mobilisation of bias (via norms, rules and their manipulation).	Identify unheard conflicts / grievances; use of process and rules to block or engineer defeat. Who is disfavoured? How is power perpetuated by rules and their manipulation?	Alteration of rules, manipulation of decision-making procedures, formal and informal barriers preventing access to influential positions.
Bureaucratic Control [*BC*]	Rational, impersonal, routinised power; works against agentic and strategic power by subsuming individuals *under* rules. Associated with control and obedience of an automated, mechanised kind.	Process-oriented; anonymous and routine; formal and conservative; constrains, disciplines and excludes; driven by organisational imperative.	Exploration of key party procedures: how do key party functions become formalised? How do bureaucratic responses to problems impose control and discipline? How does this impact on the freedom to act politically?	Formal centralisation and intervention; rule-based 'non-political' disciplinary mechanisms or decision-making processes with exclusionary effects; administrative jobs and routines.
Constitutive Power [*CP*]	A 'structural' force which constitutes subjectivity and reproduces power through the everyday material practices of party life.	Immanent in practices; constitutive, positive and empowering.	Examines practices and habits of party life. How do they constitute loyal political actors with appropriate skills and capacities?	Meetings as repetitive, structured rituals of communication; developing capacities through the 'career structure'; training potential representatives.
Disciplinary Control [*DC*]	Power as a micro-level phenomenon which works in detailed practices and knowledge and surveillance to discipline and control in fine detail.	A relation rather than a property; produces disciplined, effective agents through fine-grained control of conduct and normalisation.	What technical solutions are applied to problems of organised political action? How are bodies exposed to surveillance, inscribed and marked? What is the disciplinary effect of these processes?	Management of campaigning activity through timetables and audits etc.; application of marketing and presentational techniques.

Individualistic Power

My analysis has shown how the first dimension, which I have called Individualistic Power, can be understood as a dispositional property of individual rational agents. Power is exercised by these agents episodically where situations of interest-driven conflict with other individuals arise. In such conflicts, agents make use of available resources to secure their own interests over rivals. Theoretically, I drew largely from the behaviouralism exemplified in the work of Robert Dahl (1957; 1968), supplemented with the insights offered by rational choice theory (Dowding 1991; 1996). Rational choice theory in particular contributes a sense of how the ordered preferences of individual agents are translated into conscious goals, thus providing a coherent theory of action that strengthens the behaviouralist approach. These approaches are largely designed to tackle methodological problems: that is, the different ways in which phenomena (like power) can be observed and measured (Farr 2003, 443; Parsons 2005). However, these methodological priorities have ontological implications from which I drew the component characteristics of this dimension of power. Through my analysis, I constructed an account of Individualistic Power which is behavioural and rational in that it is concerned with action based on the ordered preferences of agents. It is also voluntarist because it is a function of the will: power is exercised by an individual in order to secure interests and this cannot occur unless an individual *chooses* to do so. Furthermore, because this dimension of power is decision-oriented, it requires a clear, decisive outcome in which one protagonist defeats another by deploying resources in his or her favour.

In order to identify Individualistic Power, then, I had to identify, first of all, a key issue over which there was a clear conflict, examine the parties involved and the outcomes.

In short, I needed to find out who was involved, who prevailed and what resources they used to do so. I tested this with two cases. The first one, a backbencher's thwarted attempt to be appointed to the Home Affairs Select Committee, was a demonstration of how an individual protagonist with superior resources is able to exercise power over an adversary by preventing him from fulfilling his preferences or desires and thereby achieving his desired goal. The Party leader did not wish the backbencher concerned to be appointed, apparently because he felt that it would reflect badly on the image of the party. He therefore used his resources of control over patronage to ensure that the appointment did not take place. The second concerned a conflict between two members of the Labour Group on Tower Hamlets Borough Council over an important point of policy. This initial conflict precipitated a tussle between them over the leadership of the Group, which was clearly resolved in favour of one of them (albeit with an important role being played by a third party). These are both excellent examples of individualistic power because they clearly pinpoint conflicts between preferences and therefore where power relations between individuals come into play. Modelled like this, they are both clear-cut and parsimonious: confrontations between two actors with opposing preferences and a decisive, zero-sum outcome. These are precisely the kinds of situation to which this dimension of power can be applied effectively.

My argument, then, is that Individualistic Power is important to the overall analysis because, despite the organisational context, power in parties cannot be fully understood without accounting for the acts of individuals. This dimension of power is built around the pursuit of interests and conflict, and it is effective for understanding how power relations operate between specific actors in clearly defined and observable conflict situations. Because of its emphasis on the deployment of resources, it can also help the analyst identify what the respective strengths and weaknesses of the protagonists are

and how that supports a successful exercise of power. Thus, a party leader with the appropriate powers of patronage and appointment is clearly in a stronger position than a newly elected backbench Member of Parliament *vis à vis* committee appointments. However, on the downside, it does not easily accommodate additional influential participants who may have interests that differ from the two main protagonists. Nor does it account for some of the more structural inequalities that may make the outcome of an exercise of power, if not a foregone conclusion then certainly heavily weighted in favour of one over the other. These can always be included as resources that support or undermine the goals of participants, but the result is that the approach cannot always distinguish easily between what genuinely are 'resources' and what actually might be another potential source of *power*, e.g. another actor or the organisational context in which the confrontation takes place. Furthermore, the parsimoniousness which is its chief analytical strength can also be a source of weakness: in order to access this dimension of power, situations must be structured in a certain, formal way, and although this is a helpful simplification tool which cuts through complexity it ignores important aspects of power's operation in parties. Firstly, it fails to account for the wider context in which conflicts and decisions might be taking place, and secondly, unobserved elements are overlooked (for obvious reasons, given this dimension's emphasis on visibility). This means that conflicts are analytically isolated and any possible underlying influences on them (such as other ongoing conflicts, hidden tensions, differing social and cultural attributes and so on) are ignored. Therefore, whilst it shows its value in pinpointing power relations between individuals, there are ambiguities in its ability to explain some of the complexities of power's exercise in parties. It treats the party as no more than an aggregate collection of individual actors, each with their own interests, rather than as a *party*, which is a collectivity with shared

interests. It treats a specific conflict as a closed system, ignoring the point that beneath the surface may be many battles and struggles, alliances between groups and factions and other complexities.

Strategic Power

The shortcomings of Individualistic Power are addressed in part by the second dimension of power in my framework, Strategic Power. This approach is in part an attempt to explain the structural inequalities present in situations of conflict and how particular individuals or groups predominate. What my analysis demonstrates is that although power is still centred on interest-driven conflict, it is mediated through organisational rules and norms in which a pre-existing inequality is embedded. It centres on how this advantage is used by those in a position to do so in order to gain and maintain advantage over others and how this affects the capacity and opportunity of actors to express interests. Power is more occluded because it is exercised by manipulating rules and norms in order to foreclose certain issues or exclude certain voices from the political process.

To develop this dimension of power, I drew initially on the work of Schattschneider (1960) who argued that power is identifiable in *means* rather than ends. All organisation, he said, is a 'mobilisation of bias' that benefits some individuals and groups over others. This argument is built on by Bachrach and Baratz (1970), whose approach was initially a response to Dahl's behaviouralism. They argued that power has a 'second face' which accounts for how certain groups can exert power by preventing potentially threatening issues or voices from being heard in decision-making arenas.

This dimension of power is still based on conflicts of interest but it understands power as more mediated and complex than a mere confrontation between two individual agents. Indeed, a successful exercise of power means that conflicts may not always turn into confrontations because they are ruled out, excluded or go unrecognised. Strategic Power is therefore concerned more with the scope and the means of decision-making than ends because power is dependent on the ability to control aspects of the process rather than open conflict. Using power to avoid confrontation may be seen as far more effective and successful than being forced to confront rivals directly. Power is therefore not always observable, being 'hidden' to the extent that it is not exercised in open conflict. However, this does not mean that it is anonymous or invisible; in fact, it can be detected and attributed in a relatively straightforward way.

In order to identify Strategic Power, analysis needs to establish how prevailing organisational norms support the ability of some groups to block and exclude certain voices and perspectives or engineer the defeat of others. It is also concerned with how manipulating existing norms or challenging and adjusting them affects this ability. In other words, analysis needs to ask what opportunities members have to express preferences and at what point these may be thwarted and thus fail to make their way into open confrontation. Rather than who wins, it asks who is *disfavoured* and how existing inequalities are perpetuated by norms, rules and their manipulation.

I used three examples to illustrate the different ways in which Strategic Power can be exercised. In the first, I examined how key reforms to the decision-making process had the effect of shoring up leadership authority: the replacement of the conference-based system of policy-making with one built around the National Policy Forum altered the prevailing organisational norms in such a way as to make the policy process more

predictable and easier to control. Decision-making would now (at least ostensibly) be more deliberative, consensual and considered in approach than confrontational and adversarial. This helped to prevent public confrontation, but at the expense of silencing voices that may have been able to get themselves heard under the old system. This had the effect of thwarting demands and silencing non-mainstream views and voices unacceptable to the leadership before the process of policy-making even began.

My second example was concerned with the introduction of One Member One Vote (OMOV) as a means of electing leaders and selecting candidates. I found that the reform itself thwarted or reduced the influence of certain voices by altering organisational norms. The influence of both trade union leaders and the hard core of activists was circumvented whilst that of the mass of ordinary members was extended. The effect of this (it was expected) would be a reduced potential for challenges to the leadership and a broader, more mainstream membership to counterbalance the influence of the more committed (and left-wing) activists. However, this particular case adds to the understanding of Strategic Power in particular because its passage into the party constitution provides an example of how procedures can be manipulated in order to engineer a favourable result. The OMOV rule-change was only narrowly accepted by party conference, and it may have been defeated had resistance not been neutralised by the manipulation of procedure. By combining in one composite two key questions on which the MSF trade union delegation had contradictory instructions, the latter were forced into a position where they either had to abstain or be forced break their mandate. This dilemma and the negotiations within the MSF delegation on how to resolve it demonstrates that exercises of power cannot be limited to straightforward public confrontations with binary outcomes but may also be mediated by a more subtle and complex series of negotiations and manipulations. In this case, the manipulation of the

decision-making process by party officials on the one hand and covert bargaining within the delegation on the other effectively blocked the MSF from being able to freely express their mandate to oppose the leadership's favoured policy.

In the third case I showed how Strategic Power can be deployed to exclude particular voices from the party altogether by putting up barriers to membership against those considered threats the status quo. I also showed how changes in rules and procedures restrict access to 'sensitive' areas of influence and authority (such as becoming a candidate for elected office). However, this example also points towards the effectiveness of formal rule-based power over the informal kind. The old system of locally organised membership recruitment allowed paternalistic local party elites to control access to party membership, but with some effort this could be overcome by a determined enough opposition, as the new generation of activists coming through in the 1980s demonstrated. The eventual replacement of the old system with a relatively open, centrally organised one, supplemented by a rule-based system of candidate selection, was a much more effective tool for restricting access to crucial elite positions. The example demonstrates how informal authority can be used up to a point, but that rule-based processes for excluding undesirable voices can be much more effective because they are entrenched in party rules *and* norms.

My analysis of these different examples thus showed that although individual agents are important to the exercise of power, they do not act in a closed system. Context is an important consideration because inequality is embedded in the organisational structure of the political party. It is an institution with rules and procedures, over which some have more influence than others. Strategic Power notices organisational procedures as vehicles that give agents subtle modes of power. Securing one's interests is not just

achieved by prevailing in confrontation but by preventing others from doing so through the deployment, manipulation and reform of organisational rules and norms. Strategic Power accounts not only for the confrontations between individuals therefore, but for who benefits from or has control over rules and norms and who is disadvantaged by them. It is therefore not just a question of whether demands are met, but what opportunities exist for certain groups to *make* those demands in the first place.

To the extent that it is concerned with how power operates at a more strategic level (i.e. with the *means* by which party actors attain desired ends), Strategic Power is an advance on Individualistic Power. However, it is not adequate on its own because it adheres to the same agentic ontology. What it does not explain is what happens when rules and norms are 'bedded-in' as routines that function independently of agents and might actually *shape* human behaviour and courses of action. The third dimension of power in my framework illuminates this.

Bureaucratic Control

Bureaucratic Control focuses on the anonymous, structural ways in which organisation itself might function as a form of power rather than an instrument of particular actors. It draws on Max Weber's preoccupation with societal rationalisation in which rational calculation overtakes all aspects of life, in particular the way in which human beings organise themselves. This is typified by bureaucracy which, for Weber, is the exemplar of a disciplinary power that suppresses individual agency in favour of the functional needs of the organisation *per se*. Substantively rational goals like, say, implementing Social Democratic policies, are supplanted by structural ones concerned with supporting and maintaining the organisation itself. As a dimension of power it is therefore oriented towards anonymous process rather than conflict. It is intimately associated with control

and obedience, but of an automated, mechanised kind. As such, it is inequitable and conservative because it supports hierarchy, and exclusionary because it rules out certain voices, ideas and interventions. I used this dimension to argue that power is immanent in anonymous, depoliticised process, in which the structural logic and imperatives of organisation suppress the individual's capacity to act freely.

To identify Bureaucratic Control therefore I undertook an analysis that was focused on the party at an organisational level. I examined the development and functioning of key party procedures, such as disciplinary regimes, and selection processes, how they become proceduralised and formalised in ways that empower some and marginalise others, and thereby entrench inequalities. Furthermore, my analysis also accounted for how the official activities that people participate in and the jobs they do for the party actually restrict their capacity to participate in properly political action and discussion, because their time is taken up by official routine and business.

I used two examples to illuminate this dimension of power: the first concerned the oligarchal tendencies of bureaucracy as demonstrated by the party's tendency towards greater centralisation and administrative control; the second, how individual conduct is governed by organisational imperative. What the first example revealed was that as the party becomes more sharply electorally focused, there is an increasing intolerance of independent activity, especially of an unconventional or unorthodox kind. As a result there is a greater willingness on the part of the party leadership to intervene or interfere directly in local party affairs, backed by new rules and procedures. The processes through which such discipline is delivered are effective because they are depoliticised, related to organisational and procedural concerns rather than political ones. Interventions are procedural; discipline is conducted for violation of organisational rules

rather than ideological views. This also has the effect of supporting existing inequalities of power which underlines the conservative nature of this dimension of power. The second example showed how the mundane and rather prosaic activities of party life direct the conduct and activities of party members. The conduct of meetings, the organisation of canvassing and the roles and tasks members are expected to fulfil are depoliticised and bureaucratic, oriented more towards supporting the organisation's administrative needs than political imperatives. This has the effect of suppressing agency under routine tasks and administration and substituting political discussion with official business.

My analysis of Bureaucratic Control thus demonstrated the sense in which power is not always a matter of conflict, but one of process which carries individuals along and uses them. The effect of this is to reproduce and perpetuate inequalities whilst choking off initiative. It is an enlightening addition to my framework because it helps explain how certain inequalities of power between leaders and members are reinforced and perpetuated without the direct intervention of agents: individual behaviour is constrained and disciplined not by the action of an 'opponent' but by anonymous organisational processes; leaders are empowered and alternative, maverick voices are ruled out or excluded not because an elite 'wills' it but because of the direction in which the organisation functions. It also shows how activists are overwhelmed by organisational imperatives as they direct their energy and attention into functional roles rather than political ones. However, despite the insights this approach brings it still sees power in a negative light, as almost exclusively *potestas*: a restrictive, repressive force that undermines agents and does not account for the possibility that power might be productive and constitutive too. For this reason, a fourth dimension of power that could address these more positive characteristics was necessary.

Constitutive Power

Constitutive Power emphasises power's positive side as *potentia,* which does not suppress or restrict capacities but actually *produces* them. This approach accounts for how the everyday practices and rituals of party life constitute subjects with the kinds of capacities and skills that enable them to be the kinds of effective agents that the party needs. This dimension of power is strongly influenced by Althusser's understanding of ideology as a material practice which constitutes individual subjectivity – the kind needed to reproduce the current system (Althusser 2009 [1971]). However, although Althusser is concerned with the production of subjectivity *per se*, I extracted and developed from his work the notion that practices construct belief through the habitual repetition of everyday practices. Thus I argued that Constitutive Power is characterised by its immanence in the material practices of party life. It exercises a very subtle level of control through customary actions, patterns of behaviour, shared repertoires and norms, but at the same time empowers individuals and endows them with the skills and capacities to act according to its political objectives.

In order to uncover Constitutive Power I directed my attention towards the habits and practices of everyday life in parties, including the repetitions of and in meetings and in the way in which members are trained. The point of this was to examine how these different practices not only act as a subtle means of control but also as a way of producing effective agents with useful capacities that support the party's objectives. Meetings, for example, are structured rituals of communication that reproduce through practices the structure and relations of authority in parties. They establish norms of language and conduct and, through the configurations of practices and habits, constitute participants in their particular roles. This empowers agents because it provides them

with the knowledge and skills to be effective political actors. This dimension of power is therefore structural, but it is not static: developments in political and technological spheres are reflected in the way that practices change, allowing parties to produce new kinds of subjectivity and new capacities. This is demonstrated by my second example which suggests that as politics has become more national and the organisation more centralised and controlled, the means by which the party constitutes subjectivities also changes. Finally, my third example suggests that training is a means both by which subtle control is exercised and by which the party builds capacity for itself at the same time: moderate, pragmatic councillors are constituted not through command but by instilling the habits and practices of decision-making congruent with party norms; loyalty is forged, not to specific leaders (who may come and go), nor to particular rules, but to the party as a culture and a way of life.

What the analysis in chapter five demonstrates is that Constitutive Power brings an entirely new perspective which explains more than just control and discipline. Parties are voluntary organisations and so the extent to which force and repression can be effective is limited. What this dimension of power helps illuminate is how parties constitute *voluntarily* loyal subjects who play a vital role in the party's perpetuation and development. Loyalty to the party is not a pre-disposition nor are shared values *a priori*: they are constituted in practices. This dimension of power is especially valuable in its elucidation of how activists and members are empowered with capacities and skills that are *useful* to the party's objectives. In other words, it offers a more nuanced, sophisticated view of power because it does not simply assume that being subject to it is the same as being repressed, blocked or defeated. However, at the same time, Constitutive Power acts as a very subtle form of control because as repetitive practices become sedimented, subjects are imbued with the party's priorities, its norms and

modes of behaviour, and even appearance. Individuals freely accept their subjection because they experience themselves as being empowered and making choices, but they are empowered only to the extent that they act within the party's scheme and reproduce its structures. This dimension of power adds much to the overall framework, particularly because it illuminates this positive and productive side that other dimensions of power overlook. However, its rather abstract, structural focus means that what it lacks is a detailed account of exactly how these subjectivities are constituted at the bodily level. One final dimension helps fill this lacuna.

Disciplinary Control

Disciplinary Control, the fifth dimension of power in my framework, supplements and helps complete the analysis. It shares with Constitutive Power the idea that power is present in the day-to-day activities of party life and is productive of effective agents, and with Bureaucratic Control a concern with the consistent and regularised operation of systems of control. However its uniqueness lies in the micro-level of analysis which focuses on how agents are trained, supervised and normalised by means of surveillance and detailed organisation: subjects are thereby disciplined at a fine-grained level. It is characterised by a meticulous organisation of conduct and a focus on the body which is trained and surveyed in fine detail and reconstructed and normalised so as to become disciplined and effective. These characteristics are drawn from Michel Foucault's notion of Discipline (Foucault 1977) which he conceives as a specific technology of power. Through organisation and surveillance, discipline reaches right into the detail of the body, organising it in relation to space, time and other objects and reconstructing its appearance, gestures and speech.

I identified Disciplinary Control as operating on two different levels. Firstly, my analysis considered an example of the detailed, often mundane, practical problems of organisation and the disciplinary effect of the kinds of solutions applied to them. Secondly, I alighted on the question of how, in contemporary political life, bodies are exposed to surveillance (in for example by news media and modern marketing techniques) and thus marked out, disciplined, excluded and restructured in accordance with the party's imperatives.

I drew on two examples to support these points. The first supports an account of how useful subjects are produced by organising bodies in relation to time, space and specific tasks and investing them with useful capacities through training. It distributes bodies carefully, monitors and measures them, adjusts and corrects them in accordance with the party's needs. Bodies are invested with detailed techniques of continuous control that ensure not a moment nor a gesture is wasted. Secondly, it enables an analysis of how bodies are disciplined in fine detail and reconstructed to become useful subjects that represent the party through their very constitution as agents. The constant gaze of colleagues, media and marketing marks bodies out and classifies them by how they look, what gender they are, what clothes they wear, how they sound, what gestures they employ and so on. It marks out sick bodies, fat bodies or old bodies, and assesses whether they 'fit' with the party's brand. It highlights how bodies are primed for conveying messages that manifest the brand through reconstruction by homing in on gestures, appearance and conduct. In other words, it 'normalises' bodies by constant adjustment, construction and reconstruction under the gaze of colleagues, public and press. It excludes those bodies that do not fit and keeps those that do under surveillance, even (or perhaps especially) the party leader.

The importance of this fifth dimension of power is that it accounts for aspects of modern politics that would otherwise remain neglected in analysis. It focuses on the low level, minor and often banal details of day-to-day party life in which subjects are constructed, disciplined and empowered to act effectively and obediently. This dimension therefore brings a more detailed microscopic eye which further emphasises power's constitutive side whilst providing detail of how subjects are subtly controlled in fine-grained detail. It also highlights how the kind of routinisation that was discussed at an organisational level also occurs at a micro-level. As such, it completes the framework.

The Framework as a Whole

Each dimension I have elaborated provides its own unique perspective which helps to illuminate different aspects of power in political parties. However, a question of some importance to this thesis is whether it all works together as a framework, especially given some of the ontological tensions present. I stated at the outset that whilst I do not expect to resolve the very deep controversies that underlie them, part of the task of this thesis has been to use these tensions in a creative way. My argument is that power in parties should be understood as a multi-dimensional concept in which the agentic and structural operate at different levels which are therefore not mutually exclusive. I would summarise the exercise and operation of power in political parties, therefore, as follows:

Power can be a means by which individuals can secure their preferences over others by deploying resources. These resources might include particular prerogatives (such as a leader's powers of patronage), knowledge or know-how, access to influential networks,

social standing and so on. Some individuals may also be able to strategically employ organisational rules and norms in their favour so as to avoid challenge or conflict, thereby securing and perpetuating positions of authority or advantage. This may be achieved by manipulating rules and norms in order to prevent certain issues from being addressed, or to exclude certain voices from decision-making arenas. Individual ability to act freely and address political issues, however, may be suppressed by the imperatives of organisation which removes power and initiative from individual members by centralising authority and procuring obedience. It also diverts political energy into functional, administrative roles that serve organisational priorities rather than political goals. Even so, party members are not mindless automatons simply awaiting commands and leaders are not omnipresent or omniscient beings able to directly control the activities of individual party members in such detail. At a more subtle level, members are invested with the kinds of skills the party needs which they are then empowered to use to the party's benefit. Through the practices in which they participate and the habits instilled into them, members are constituted as loyal and empowered subjects. This is not, therefore, the same as obedience, but subjects members to a very subtle level of control. How this is achieved is through the detailed disciplining of individuals at a micro-level in two particular ways: firstly, through the specifics of organisation which disciplines bodies in relation to time, space and tasks; secondly, through surveillance which examines and reconstructs bodies, turning them into finely-tuned political actors that carry the party's imprint and communicate its brand effectively.

Thus agents are invested by discipline, constituted as effective subjects, repressed and controlled by organisation but nonetheless capable of action and of securing influence and control. Through action, agents may gain victories which secure influence and

authority and the means with which to deploy rules and norms that further consolidate this position. However, rules and norms eventually take on a life of their own and become instruments of control detached from individual agents. Such levels of control are supported by the subtle constitution of effective and loyal political actors who are disciplined into the party's scheme. The framework therefore recognises that whilst power is all pervasive and inescapable, it has a variety of dimensions which both serve the party's imperatives and provide individuals with the capacity to act. In the next section, I will demonstrate in outline how the framework as a whole can be effectively applied to one particular example: the reforms that were made to the Labour Party's policy-making process in 1997.

Applying the Whole Framework: Reform of Policy-Making in the Labour Party

The *Partnership in Power* reforms of 1997 were the culmination of the long phase of party reform from which this thesis has drawn its empirical material. Before this time, the Party's Annual Conference had been the central focus of policy-making. Resolutions came up from constituencies and, after being subject to compositing, were debated on the conference floor. During debates, resolutions were moved and seconded by delegates, opening speeches were followed by open debate and to close, a reply from a Member of the NEC giving 'guidance' on which way to vote. Finally, a vote was taken (by hand or by card) and, if passed, the resolution would be accepted as party policy.

The *Partnership in Power* reforms were designed ostensibly to ensure that policy was well thought-out and discussed rather than simply constructed out of a range of local party resolutions, but the initial proposals were very clear about their most important

focus which was 'to win power at the next general election and to hold on to it at successive general elections' (Labour Party 1997a, 33). Party leaders were certain that 'continuing modernisation of the party's decision making and participative structures' was central to this (Ibid., 14). But reform was also about heading off and preventing the kinds of conflicts that plagued Labour in the 1970s and 1980s and the reforms achieved this partly by taking control over the agenda. The role of the elite-dominated Joint Policy Committees (JPCs) in setting the agenda and thus deciding what is discussed or not discussed in the first place is a prime example of this (see Chapter Three). In this respect, *Partnership in Power* demonstrates how Strategic Power was exercised in response to what the leadership felt to be problematic displays of Individualistic Power: by changing the process in order to exclude undesirable issues from the agenda. The new National Policy Forum in which the representatives of ordinary members had their say only came into play once the policy had already been defined, and although it could amend and suggest alternatives, it had to work within the boundaries set by the Policy Commission (who worked to the agenda set by JPCs). Furthermore, the effective emasculation of Annual Conference also ensured that certain voices were effectively excluded from the process of policy-making, some because they could either no longer access the process, or because they no longer saw any reason to.

As much as they demonstrate Strategic Power in action, however, these reforms also reflect the tendencies in the party towards centralisation underpinned by Bureaucratic Control. The process was subject to control from above and reflected the greater centralisation of the party in the 1990s. But the benefits to the party elite that ensued also underline the dangers for the party as the reforms have set-in and become routinised. Although the concentration of internal power has been important to the capacity of the party to achieve its electoral goals, the more controlled party that has

emerged from the operation of Bureaucratic Control means that there is an associated danger of a loss of vitality in party life, especially at a local level. This is demonstrated in the scepticism some activists and MPs feel towards the reforms.

However, despite this, the alteration of decision-making practices has some contribution to make to the production of *new* kinds of subjectivity that a modern party requires. Therefore, this is a point at which Constitutive Power can be uncovered too. The new process, for example, is more deliberative and consensual, but also more controlled: NPF meetings are conducted in a 'workshop' format, rather than adversarial debate; they do not vote on or send authoritative resolutions to the next stage of the process, but are observed by officials, who take notes of the discussion and forward them. Some suggest that what is sent through is ignored or not taken seriously by party elites. What is certain is that it represents a big change in practices that has fundamentally and irrevocably altered the party's 'traditional' culture of policy-making and, therefore, the kinds of people who enjoy participating in it. The new approach represented a more professionalised, business oriented culture, reflecting a different world in terms of communications and media. Twenty-four hour news and the proliferation of visual media make greater demands on the party's decision-making capacities than ever before. Modern political decision-making is conducted under the constant gaze of visual media which means that the way policy is discussed and presented in public, and more specifically *by* whom, what they look like, sound like and act like is at least as important as its content. In other words, Disciplinary Control comes to the fore making the kind of robust, open debate and participation that many of the activists I spoke to seemed to appreciate, and even long for, all but impossible. It has been all but supplanted by an approach to politics driven more than ever by the party's internalisation of media and marketing imperatives. The ongoing gaze of the news

media, focus groups and the detailed strategies of brand marketing engender a particularly pervasive, modern form of party power in which individuals are disciplined down to their very gestures and appearance.

This brief example shows in outline terms how my framework of power might be applied as a whole to a specific aspect of party organisation (i.e. policy-making). It allows for a truly in-depth and wide ranging understanding of the different dimensions of power at work in the party at any one time and thus provides insights that less developed approaches fail to offer.

Conclusion

In this final chapter I have demonstrated three things: firstly, how the framework that I have developed throughout this thesis addresses the lacunae I identified in the literature; secondly, I have summarised and assessed the effectiveness of each dimension of power to the overall framework; thirdly, I have demonstrated how the overall framework might be fruitfully applied to a particular issue or situation.

My thesis as a whole has demonstrated that power is a much more complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon than mainstream approaches to political organisation assume. My aim was to introduce some of the more nuanced and sophisticated insights of political theory to the analysis of political parties without dismissing the benefits of some of the more established ways of looking at power. I have done this by arguing that as well as being conceivable as a property of individuals or hierarchies, there are also more covert forms of power. For example, the manipulation of rules and the dynamics of organisation itself can be important sources of power in parties. Furthermore, positive, more productive dimensions of power can be identified in how

the practices and rituals of party life, and the mundane duties and details of political activity constitute effective party actors. Thus the framework accounts for the distinction that Spinoza long ago identified between power as *potestas* (i.e. in its more negative sense of 'power over') and *potentia* (in its positive sense of empowerment).

Although there are analytical benefits for committing to one particular perspective, my objective here has been to show how it is possible to make use of a diversity of theoretical insights to analyse a problem from different points of view. In this case, I have brought diverse approaches to power together into a single framework in order to address the question of how power is exercised in political parties. I have demonstrated that whilst power can be evident in action and in manipulation, it can also be revealed in the functioning of organisations, buried in ritual and practices or hidden in the day-to-day detail of organisational life. The different perspectives I have drawn on may be regarded as being in tension with one another, or even contradictory at times; but if they are understood as different *dimensions* of power, these tensions can be used creatively to provide an analytical richness that the existing literature on parties lacks. My thesis therefore adds to the sum of knowledge by providing a framework within which a non-reductionist, multi-dimensional analysis of power can be carried out in these settings.

Finally, I would argue that the framework of power I have developed has wider implications too. Understanding how power works in organisation is an essential part of understanding how it works in modern society more generally because as human beings we are all participants in organisation, willing or otherwise: in work, where we socialise, in our daily interactions with businesses and services and the way we communicate, we move in and out of different organisations all the time, from one to another. In other words, organisation is everywhere and we are sometimes explicitly,

sometimes subtly, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, subject to its power and discipline.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Members / Activists

Stephen Beckett

An activist in Tower Hamlets, he came to the Labour Party via the trade union movement, joining in 1979, inspired by the analysis of people like Ken Coates and Tony Benn. He was a member of the constituency General Committee for a short period, but for most of the time, he was a branch level activist, involved in local campaigns on housing and anti-racism. He became a councillor at his second attempt in 1994, but was excluded from the panel in 1998. He successfully appealed and he ran again (unsuccessfully) in 2002.

Jan Burnell

A former Hackney activist, now in Hertfordshire, she joined the party whilst at university. Moving to Stoke Newington, she (along with her husband John) became active in the local party. She became chair of the Local Government Committee in 1986 and was elected to the council in 1990, becoming Chair of Social Services. She was deselected in 1994. Today, she runs her own business, a management consultancy (mainly but not exclusively for the public sector).

John Burnell

John Burnell is a lifelong organiser in the Labour Party. He joined at a very young age and became an organiser in Kent before he had even finished university. The family moved to Stoke Newington in the 1970s where he and his wife Jan (see above) both became actively involved in the local Labour Party. In 1986 he became a councillor for the first time (for two terms), and in 1987 he was Diane Abbot's agent for her successful election campaign in Hackney North and Stoke Newington. He was

deselected as a council candidate in 1994. He remains involved in organising for his local Labour Party in Hertfordshire where he and his wife now live.

Julia Coleman

Julia is a committed trade unionist who joined the Labour Party in Hemel Hempstead in the 1980s. She first stood as a candidate for Dacorum Borough Council in 1987 in an unwinnable seat. However, she stood again in 1991 and won, becoming Deputy Leader of the Labour Group. In 1995, they produced a stunning result by winning the council, by which time Julia had by then become leader of the Group and therefore Leader of the Council

Mike Davis

Mike Davis was a left-wing party activist who joined the party after leaving the International Socialists in the 1970s. He became an active campaigner within the party, espousing a left agenda, but one which developed radically over time, from Trotskyism to 'new left'/ identity politics, pro-Europeanism and democratic reform. He was a member of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and now edits *Chartist*.

In Hackney, he was involved especially in the Local Government Committee which was suspended by the regional party in the 1990s. In 1996 he played a role in the campaign to save Hackney Downs school which, combined with other problems, precipitated a major split in Hackney Council Labour Group.

Phil Maxwell

Phil Maxwell originally joined the Labour Party whilst at college in Liverpool. After moving to London, he became active in Tower Hamlets, becoming a councillor in 1986 when the party was riven by splits, staying on until 1998. He was leader of the Labour Group for a period and became Chair of the Housing Committee after the party's

victory in the 1994 council elections. He is no longer a member of the party, preferring to concentrate on film-making and photography projects.

Marjorie Paling

Marjorie is a member of the Labour Party in Gedling in Nottinghamshire. A former Communist, she eventually joined the Labour Party after a divorce and became heavily involved. She is still active in her local party today.

Mark Taylor

Mark Taylor moved to Tower Hamlets in 1982. He was a member of the Labour Party but didn't get especially active until 1990 over the poll-tax. He was asked to run for the council in 1994 to take on the mayor at the time, John Snooks, and he won. He is best known among Labour activists for writing increasingly sardonic reports to ward meetings. He is no longer active in the party but still a member. He is also a Trade Union activist and a school governor, which he says he would never have had the chance to do had he not been a councillor.

Dennis Twomey

Dennis Twomey joined the party in Tower Hamlets after returning home from university in the 1970s. Having become a councillor in 1978, he lost his seat in the Liberal victory of 1986, returning as a councillor for Blackwall in 1994. He became council leader in 1995 as the result of a coup engineered between left-wing and Bengali councillor. He is still a member but not active at all. He was throughout, and is still today, involved in local charitable and educational projects, including a school governorship.

Mike Tyrrell

Mike Tyrrell joined the Labour Party in Limehouse in 1981 after completing his A levels. In 1983 he became the ward agent (an innovation at the time). He became Branch Secretary of his local party, a GC delegate, and by 1985 Vice-Chair of the party (in his early twenties) and was selected for a council seat in 1986. He lost and Labour lost control of the council to the Liberals. He was agent for Mildred Gordon at the 1987 election. He eventually took a back seat in party affairs in order to concentrate on his work in housing. He is now Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Community Housing.

Members of Parliament and Former Members of Parliament

Hilary Armstrong

Hilary Armstrong became MP for North West Durham at the 1987 General Election (a seat her father had also held). Between 1988 and 1992 she was Opposition Spokesperson for Education and from 1992-94 she was Parliamentary Private Secretary to John Smith when he was Party Leader. During this time she played a crucial vote in securing the One Member One Vote (OMOV) reform to Labour Party elections. She held a variety of posts in Opposition and Government, eventually becoming a Minister of State in 1997 and between 2001 and 2006, the Chief Whip

David Blunkett

In 1983, when still leader of Sheffield City Council, David Blunkett became the first non-MP since Harold Laski to be elected in the Constituency Section of the NEC. He remained a member until 1998. Although he initially allied himself with the Bennites, he demonstrated his independence from them and emerged as a pivotal figure on the so-called 'soft-left', seeing himself as a bridge with the leadership and the right. He was elected MP for Sheffield Brightside in 1987, soon becoming an Opposition Front-bencher. In 1992 he was elected to Shadow Cabinet, becoming Shadow Secretary of State for Health and later Shadow Secretary of State for Education, a portfolio he was to

take in Tony Blair's first government. He was later also Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Frank Dobson

Frank Dobson has been the MP for Holborn and St Pancras since 1979. He has held a variety of front-line posts including Shadow Leader of the House and Campaigns Co-ordinator between 1987 and 1989. In the latter position he played a key role in by-elections and in 1986 he was Deirdre Wood's 'minder' in the Greenwich by-election, an experience which convinced him of the need for the NEC to take a more active role in selections for such contests. He was also Shadow Environment Secretary from 1994-97 (when he supported the decision to suspend Walsall District Labour Party), and eventually Secretary of State for Health between 1997 and 1999, when he resigned to seek the Labour nomination for Mayor for London.

Paul Farrelly

Paul Farrelly is MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, before which he was City Editor of *The Observer*. He worked with John Golding (his predecessor but one as MP) on political campaigns in the area. Golding was a well known 'fixer' for the party's right-wing and Farrelly edited his memoirs, published posthumously in 2003.   In the 1990s Farrelly was also an organiser in Hornsey and Wood Green.

Roger Godsiff

Roger Godsiff was a union activist (in APEX and the GMB) before eventually becoming MP for Birmingham Small Heath in 1992. He was selected under the aborted electoral college system thanks to union votes which caused some controversy at the time. Before his time as an MP, he worked closely with John Golding and the St

Ermin's Group of moderate trade union leaders who were seeking to undermine the position of the left on the NEC.

Mildred Gordon

Mildred Gordon was MP for Bow and Poplar between 1987 and 1997. She had been a left-wing political activist for most of her life and a teacher who grew up in a working-class Jewish family in East London. She was also the widow of Sam Gordon, a founding member of the American Socialist Worker's Party. A surprise choice to succeed Ian Mikardo, she was sixty-four at the time of her arrival in Parliament.

Sir Gerald Kaufman

Sir Gerald Kaufman is a former journalist and writer and has been an MP for more than forty years. He was a member of Harold Wilson's informal 'kitchen cabinet' in the 1970s and a junior minister who wrote the widely consulted *How to be a Minister* in 1980. He was a key figure in Labour Party reform, being convenor of the Policy Review Group on Foreign Affairs and Defence which abandoned Labour's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. He held a variety of Shadow portfolios including Environment, Shadow Home Secretary and Shadow Foreign Secretary, in which position he formulated Labour's response to the first Gulf War.

Michael Meacher

Michael Meacher has been MP for Oldham West since 1970. A high profile figure of the left, he drifted away from the Bennites in the 1980s, supported Kinnock and backed OMOV by 1987. He was a leading member of the 'soft-left' and a key figure on the NEC (along with Blunkett and Tom Sawyer). He argued for a top to bottom reconsideration of the reason for the slide in Labour's appeal after 1987. He was replaced as Employment Spokesman after tensions with the leadership over union

rights. However, he held a variety of other posts as a member of the Shadow Cabinet between 1983 and 1997 and became an Environment Minister in Tony Blair's governments, a position he maintained until he was sacked in 2003.

Chris Mullin

Chris Mullin became MP for Sunderland South in 1987. He was undoubtedly a figure of the left, having been part of Tony Benn's close circle of supporters. He was (and remains) a supporter of the mandatory re-selection of MPs and even published a guide for activists on how to use their powers. In the mid-1980s, he was a high profile campaigner to free the Birmingham Six and also campaigned on other miscarriages of justice. After several failed attempts, he eventually became a member of the Home Affairs Select Committee in 1992 and its Chairman between 1997 and 1999, resigning to take up a junior ministerial post, the experience of which he has recounted in his well-received published diaries. He retired from the House of Commons in 2010.

Gavin Strang

Gavin Strang was MP for Edinburgh East between 1970 and 2010. He had been a junior minister in the 1970s and was a member of the Campaign Group of left-wing MPs. Between 1992 and 1997 he was an opposition spokesperson on agriculture, food and rural affairs and was an elected member of the Labour Shadow Cabinet until the 1997 General Election. After Labour's victory at the election, he was appointed to the Cabinet and was Transport Minister from 1997 to 1998.

Charles Clarke

Charles Clarke worked as a researcher and then Chief of Staff to the Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock from 1981 to 1992. He became MP for Norwich South in 1997 and was promoted to the Cabinet in 2001 as Labour Party Chair and Minister without Portfolio. He became Secretary of State for Education and Skills in 2002, and was Home Secretary between 2004 and 2006.

Dianne Hayter

Dianne Hayter is a former General Secretary of the Fabian Society and between 1990 and 1996 was Chief Executive of European Parliamentary Labour Party. She has been a member of the NEC since 1998 and was made a peer in 2010. She is the author of *Fightback! Labour's Traditional Right in the 1970s and 1980s* (Manchester University Press 2005) which charts the rear-guard action of party moderates against the left's ascendancy at the time.

Joe Irvin

Joe Irvin was John Prescott's Chief of Staff in Opposition and, before that, Head of Research at the TGWU for 10 years. He was later an adviser to Gordon Brown at 10 Downing Street.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTY MEMBERS

Interview Questions

Questions will not directly address the issue of power and / or discipline in political parties (although there is one question that asks who they felt held the most power or influence). This is so that identification of the aspects of power in which I am interested are free to emerge from the interviewees stories of general and specific aspects of party life.

I will ask general questions about their involvement in their local party– regularity of attendance at meetings, conferences attended, positions of responsibility held, campaigning and electioneering activities, relations with the wider party. The main aim is to gather some knowledge of their experiences during the period in which I am interested (1987-97).

More general statements will need to be probed for examples. As a backup, I will therefore keep a few prompts (such as times, places and key events) in mind which might help interviewees to open up. Useful areas for coverage in the interviews might include:

> Selection meetings and processes
> Policy – passing and putting forward motions and so on
> Involvement (volunteering, stuffing envelopes, delivering leaflets etc.)
> Campaigning – level of organisation, information, guidance
> Best of times and worst of times

This is neither an exhaustive nor a restrictive list. As far as possible, the aim will be to allow interviewees to talk freely, using prompts and probing questions to explore useful or interesting points and issues.

Analysis will be conducted post-interview and will take a critical approach, not merely looking for evidence that supports the framework, but for that which undermines or does not support it.

Outline of Questions and Prompts: Protocols

NB: this list is for the interviewer's guidance, rather than a comprehensive set of mandatory questions.

1. General / Membership

When did you first join the party? What was it that led you to do so?
[*may be, for example, something specific, may be a family thing, or more general feelings about society, politics etc. – or a combination of all of these things*]

When/how did you become actively involved?

[*What would you say was the primary purpose of the party (pursuit of government, implementing a world-view / fighting for particular policies; by whatever means at its disposal; campaigning on local issues e.g. housing, environment, planning; international issues and other)*]

Are you still a member / still an active member?
Tell me about when you left/ when you stopped participating/what you went on to do (instead, if anything)

2. Activities / Meetings etc.

Tell me about what your involvement in / relationship was with the local party by c.1987 onwards?

What kinds of things did you spend your time doing (esp. with any particular responsibilities they might have had)? [*NB: remember they may not have been doing anything!*]

[*be useful to know if on the GMC, was a local officer? Did you go to conferences – national / regional*]?

How often did you go to meetings? [*Branch meetings, GC meetings, etc…*]
What were they like? Do you think they were run fairly (how ensured)? How much were meetings about issues and how much about procedure?

Were you involved in local campaigns?

What activities did you enjoy the most / find the most satisfying? What did you dislike the most / find the most frustrating?

Greatest successes / failures / what most proud of / ashamed of (either as an individual or as part of a group)

3. Organisation

What relationships did you/the local party have with other parts of the party – e.g. local and national trade union organisations, parliamentary party (esp. local MP), other party affiliates / societies.[1]

(Did you take an interest in) Were you involved in any other political groups / internal party organisations / pressure groups etc.? (including trade unions, socialist societies, tendencies, factions etc.); *Read particular papers/publications/journals, attend meetings etc.*

→ how those groups then went about organising themselves (if at all)

Who / what people or groups (formal or informal) would you say had the most power / authority / influence in the local party? Can you give me examples of how this was demonstrated? How did this affect you?

What kind of influence did you feel that you had (as an individual or as part of a group)? The branch / the CLP had?

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[1] Remember what route they may have come through themselves (e.g. via Trade Unions)

Did you feel you had much say or influence yourself?

Did the nature of campaigning (in elections mainly, but also on local & other issues) change over time?

4. Beliefs and Issues

What do you think the party stood for when you joined it? Would you say what the party stands for has changed over time? In what way? Example? [might be handy to distinguish between local and national party for answering this question]

Would you say your own views / political beliefs have changed over time?
Do you think that the party represents those views (Still? Did it ever?)
[What is your view of the apparent tension between 'principle' and 'electability'?]

Some views on key developments in the party in the period:

> Clause IV
> Policy Review
> OMOV
> Re-branding 'New Labour'

4. Rules and Procedures
Party culture / atmosphere / the kinds of people / the way in which things are done (or not done)

Were you aware of changes in party rules and procedures and how did they affect you / the local party / the way things were done? [selection of candidates, the submission and making of policy]

Do you think that business was always conducted fairly? Do you think that rules get in the way or actually help in making decisions about activity or policy issues?

[Demonstration of how people and groups within the party used rules for selection, policy, election of officers (at any level) or anything else in order to get a result for them or against others (this might be through superior knowledge of the rule book, particular advantageous interpretations of the rules etc., lack of knowledge of others / failure to inform).]

5. Behaviour and Culture

Can you tell me about any particular conflicts in the party you were aware of at the time? Between people / groups / officers and members / national and local parties etc.

How were (these) conflicts resolved?

How meetings were set up – when did people arrive, what happened before the meeting started, during the meeting, when it was over and so on

How did people speak to each other? How were meetings conducted? Formalities?

Was there much of a social scene? (e.g. did people get together for a drink afterwards? Who did and who didn't) – Did you chat about things that had gone on in meetings, issues, personalities etc.?

Notes for behaviour, interactions (formal and informal), language, protocols, dress (officers, ordinary, elected representatives).

6. Other

What would you say are the main differences between being a party member now (or after 1997) and being a party member in the past [in (before?) 1987]? What's the difference between 'Old' Labour and 'New' Labour?

How would you have described the typical Labour Party member / activist?

APPENDIX 3: MODEL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MPs / OFFICIALS

1. Opening Question

Overall, do you think the party by 1997 was a different party to the one you first represented? What were the key ways, do you think, that the party changed between 1987 and 1997? [*Policy, people, behaviour and culture, balance of power, party structure, more disciplined / cohesive*]

2. [How Important Was] Policy Change

What were your feelings about the Policy Review in 1987-8? Was it necessary / useful / effective ?

(Extra questions if participated)

3. [How Important Was] Organisational Change

How important do you think were the organisational changes that happened in the party (structure of the NEC, the NPF & Conference, OMOV, Trade Unions and so on)? Do you think that these made a meaningful difference, or did they just entrench changes that had already occurred?

What were your feelings at the time about the reform of Clause Four? How important do you think that it was?

4. [How Did] Your Own Views Change?

e.g. you were a member of the Campaign Group until 1989: why did you join? What do you think the benefits of being part of such a group were? The downsides? Why did you leave?

5. [How Important Were] Leaders?

How were shadow cabinet meetings conducted? What would you say was the difference between the way decisions were made under Smith as compared to Blair?

How did you deal with collective responsibility? Can you give me an example of any conflicts or disputes that arose as a result of Shadow Cabinet decisions? How were they resolved?

What's the difference between being in a Shadow Cabinet by virtue of election by colleagues and being in the cabinet itself by Prime Ministerial patronage?

Different questions if not a member, member of NEC, policy sub-committees etc.

6. Loyalty and Discipline

How important would you say is the idea of loyalty in politics? (and loyalty to what or whom?) [*Personal loyalty, loyalty to ideals / principles, loyalty to groups, the party as a whole.*]

Is it possible in your view for an ambitious politician to both progress and maintain independence in a party political setting?

What, in your experience, are the kinds of tools and tactics leaders use to get their own way? What, on the other side, can be used to effectively resist?

7. Closing Question

If I were to ask you to nominate two events that were most important to these changes / were key turning points, what would you say? [also people or ideas]

Extra Questions

What about the social / clubbable aspect of politics: in party and in parliament? How important is that side of things and what was your attitude to it?

How important would you say have been some of the more 'presentational' aspects of the way the party developed during this period? e.g. Branding (rose etc.) – what effect did this have on the more 'substantial'?

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEWEE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

For my interviews I targeted local activists and politicians or party officials who were active between 1985 and 1997 and, given constraints of time and resources, reasonably straightforward to contact. I did this through a mixture of cultivating existing personal contacts and writing letters of introduction to potential subjects.

Identifying MPs and Party Officials

I initially identified and wrote to Labour MPs who were elected on or before 1987 and still incumbent in 2009 (when I carried out this stage of my research). I gave preference to those identified from my background research as having had some direct involvement in debates, controversies and events associated with party reform between 1985 and 1997. Where I could, I used a 'snowballing' technique to identify further interview subjects: asking MPs I had interviewed who else they would recommend I might contact. Three further subjects were recruited via this method, including two of the party officials I spoke to.

Identifying Activists

In order to identify activists, I began with a contact from the local Labour Party in Tower Hamlets (where I had lived and been an intermittently semi-active member of the party for almost a decade in the 2000s), who passed on to me names and contact details for individuals active in the party between 1985 and 1997 and some indication of what kind of role they had played in the party. Where I had postal addresses or e-mail addresses, I wrote an introductory letter to them, explaining where I had got their details and to request an interview.

From Prospects to Interviewees

Overall, from the initial contacts I made, I was able to conduct ten member / activist interviews and thirteen MP / official interviews.

In total, I wrote to 25 members and activists and 24 MPs and officials in two separate tranches of between twelve and thirteen each. Where I had biographical information, I included indications of why I was interested in what they might have to say. This demonstrated that I had some knowledge of their involvement in the party or particular

events and served to give a clearer idea of what I wanted to ask them about. As far as I could, I attempted to achieve a reasonable balance between those who were broadly regarded as being on the 'left' and on the 'right' of the party. Of course, this is to some extent relative and changeable: many of those who came to be associated with the 'right' of the party in the form of the 'New Labour' project had once been regarded as being on the left of the party. Others, including a number of activists I interviewed, claimed that they had become more left-wing in relative terms without actually changing their position on very much since the party leadership had tacked so far to the right.

I also attempted as far as I could to obtain a reasonable balance between male and female subjects. This was not straightforward, since there were relatively few (twenty-one) female Labour MPs elected in 1987. To tackle this, I extended my sample to include some women elected in 1992 (or in byelections between 1987 and 1992). However, of the nine women I wrote to, only three responded and only two were willing to be interviewed. As regards activists, I was somewhat limited by the contacts that were given to me. Through 'snowballing' I was able to ensure that at least a reasonable minority of women were interviewed (three out of eight women contacted).

I have included in these appendices the tables that I used to keep track of my correspondence with interview subjects (I have excluded contact information) and two sample letters: one that was sent to MPs and one that was sent to activists.

Danny Rye
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d.rye@pol-soc.bbk.ac.uk
███████████████

Home address:
████████████████████
███████████

Mike Tyrrell
████████████████████
███████

13 February 2009

Dear Mr Tyrrell

I am writing to you at the recommendation of James Grayson from Tower Hamlets Labour Party (Bethnal Green North), of which I was also a member until moving home recently. As well as being an officer once or twice in Bethnal Green North ward, I also served on the GC for a year or so and have been involved in a number of local and general election campaigns over the years.

The reason that I am writing to you is because, as well as my Labour Party activities, I am also undertaking a PhD in Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. My area of research is political parties and party organisation. In particular, I am concerned with the Labour Party between 1987 and 1997 and am especially interested in the experiences of grass-roots members, activists and officers during that time.

I am therefore looking for people who were active in and around the Party (whether locally, regionally or nationally) then and who might be willing to spare some time share their experiences as a party member. Since you were very active in the Party at the time, I am certain that you would be able to shed a great deal of light on the realities of party life.

I anticipate that any discussion will take no more than an hour, but whatever time you can spare would be greatly appreciated. I am willing to meet wherever is most convenient for you.

If you would be willing to help, please contact me using the details above.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Danny Rye

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT LETTER SENT TO MP

Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

22 June 2009

Dear Mr Dobson

I am writing to you as both a new constituent and long standing active member of the Labour Party. Before moving to Camden Town recently, I was a member in Bethnal Green and Bow. As well as being an officer once or twice in my ward, I also served on the GC there for a year or so, and have been involved in a number of local and general election campaigns over the years.

The reason that I am writing to you is because, as well as my Labour Party activities, I am also undertaking a PhD in Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. My particular area of research is political parties and party organisation and I am especially interested in the Labour Party between 1987 and 1997. It was, as you know, an important time of transition for the party politically and organisationally, and I am keen to explore the actual experience of MPs at that time. Since you were Shadow Leader of the House and then an Opposition Front-bencher throughout that period, I think your insights and impressions of party life would be particularly interesting.

I understand that you are extremely busy, but if you could possibly spare a little of your time for an interview to talk about your memories of that period in the party's history, I would be incredibly grateful. Whatever time you are able to give me would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Danny Rye
E-Mail: d.rye@pol-soc.bbk.ac.uk

MPs and Party Officials: Contact List

Name	Constituency	Biog	Drafted	Letter/ Mail Sent?	Response [Y=yes; N=no; X=no reply]	Follow-up	Interview Date	Notes
Mildred Gordon	formerly Bow and Poplar	Bow and Poplar MP for 2 terms to 1997. Now active in the Pensioners' movement.	Y	m	Y		19/4/09 @ 3pm - at her home	aged 85 now
Paul Farrelly	Newcastle-under-Lyme	MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme; edited / compiled John Golding's book	Y	e	Y		10/6/09 @ 2pm - Portcullis House	e-mail sent via researcher
Michael Meacher	Oldham West & Royton	Leading former Bennite / member of 'soft-left' on NEC, Shadow Cabinet perennial,	Y	m	Y	e-mailed questions to Monica Masson	14/7/09 @ 4pm - Portcullis House	half an hour only
Gavin Strang	Edinburgh East	Former Campaign Group member, Shadow Cabinet 1990s, briefly a cabinet minister	Y	m	Y	Initial date cancelled - need to rearrange.	10/03/10 @ 11am - Portcullis House	Need to ensure get date and time from office.
Chris Mullin	Sunderland South	Ex-Campaign Group member & campaigner, later Chair of Home Affairs SC, diarist of Blair years	Y	m	Y		7/7/09 @ 10.30am - Portcullis House?	check with constituency office on Mon 6th for meeting place.
Roger Godsiff	Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath	Former TU fixer / number cruncher alongside John Golding and John Spellar	Y	m	Y		15/7/09 @ 11.30am - 1 Parliament St	tell reception on arrival and RG will come and meet me
Kate Hoey	Vauxhall	Imposed' candidate for Vauxhall after NEC intervention.	Y	m	X			
Mark Fisher	Stoke-on-Trent Central	Spokesperson on various topics during Kinnock years, briefly a junior Arts minister under Blair	Y	m	X			
Clare Short	Birmingham Ladywood	Former Cabinet Minister and leading member of 'soft-left', active in Militant expulsions.	Y	m	N			
Harry Cohen	Leyton and Wanstead	Member of Campaign Group.	Y	m		responded after completion of process		
Frank Dobson	Holborn & St Pancras	Former Shadow Cabinet member, Health Secretary, Party campaigns co-ordinator.	Y	m	Y		13/07/09 @ 2.30pm - Portcullis House	
Charles Clarke	Norwich South	Kinnock's former Chief of Staff, later Education Secretary , Home Secretary.	Y	m	Y		19/10/09 @ 3.00pm - Portcullis House	twenty minutes only
Sir Gerald Kaufman	Manchester Gorton	Senior Shadow Cabinet member throughout Kinnock's reforming period, ran Defence Policy	Y	m	Y		31/07/09 @ 2.30pm - Palace of Westminster	Two books worth looking at ahead: How to be a Minister (1980) Renewal: Labour's Britain in the 1980s
Ann Clwyd	Cynon Valley	Shadow spokesperson during Kinnock and Smith period.	Y	m	X			
David Blunkett	Sheffield Brightside	Former leader Sheffield CC, NEC member, prominent 'soft-left' figure, later Education,	Y	m	Y		19/08/09 @ 2.30pm - by telephone	Book Paul Hirst seminar room; twenty minutes only.
Joan Ruddock	Lewisham Deptford	Former CND chair and Campaign Group member who resigned at Benn's 1988	Y	m	X			
Patricia Hewitt	Leicester West	Former Press Secretary to Neil Kinnock became MP in 1997 and Cabinet Minister.	Y	m	X			
Lynne Jones	Birmingham Selly Oak	Left-wing, rebellious backbencher elected as MP in 1992	Y	m	X			Says she is "an independent-minded member of the Parliamentary Labour Party "
Hilary Armstrong	North West Durham	Former PPS to John Smith when leader, member of MSF, leading reformer. Chief Whip	Y	m	Y		09/09/09 @ 3.00pm - Portcullis House	
Alan Meale	Mansfield	Backbench MP and former PPS to John Prescott.	Y	m	X			
Graham Allen	Nottingham North	Former member of Tower Hamlets LP, became MP in 1987	Y	m	X			
Ann Coffey	Stockport	Former Opposition Whip; PPS to Tony Blair in 1997.	Y	m	X			
Dianne Hayter	N/A	Former CEO of EPP, NEC and NCC member and LP historian	Y	m	Y		14/07/09 @ 5:00pm - her home	
Joe Irvin	N/A	Former adviser to John Prescott and TGWU official.	Y	e	Y		17/07/09 @ 12:30pm - 10 Downing Street	

Party Members and Activists: Contact List

Name	Blog	Drafted	Letter/ Mail Sent?	Response [Y=yes; N=no; X=no reply]	Follow-up	Interview Date	Notes
Belle Harris	Former ILEA Councillor 86 to 90. TH Councillor 94-8 / Former Polytechnic lecturer	Y	m	X	Telephoned in March, left message		Bumped into her at Progressive London - has given me her phone number abd asked me to call. Need to have a good outline /
Christine Shawcroft	Labour leader in opposition for a time, she is now on the NEC.	Y	e	X			no detail available
Dennis Twomey	Former Tower Hamlets Councillor; :Leader 95-7; ILEA councillor with Belle Harris	Y	m	Y		Thu 20 Nov, 11am at his home	
Dinah Morley	was a Councillor in Hackney and then worked for the LA	Y	m	N		N/A	was working for council at the time, so political backseat
Dr Fox	he was the Constituency Chair of BG & S; wanted to be MP but was excluded from the short	Y	m	X			Did quite a lot of recruitment for the party - some say too much / wrong kind of people!
Dr Restrick	Partner of Dr Fox and enthusiastic recruiter	Y	m	X			
Duncan Bowie	Currently a Reader in Urban Planning and Regeneration at London Met - was a member	Y	e	X	further e-mail sent 27/3		met via Mike Davis at Progressive London
Ismail Saray	?	Y	m	X			
James Grayson	Long-standing Tower Hamlets activist - excellent knowledge of key players in local party	Y	e	N			
Jan Burnell	Former activist in Stoke Newington and Hackney Councillor in 1990s	Y	e	Y		24/2/09 @ 7.15pm	Passed on by Dinah Morley. Will be interviewing her husband as well. Interviewed in a group with John Burnell and
John Burnell	Former organiser and councillor in Stoke Newington, now based in Herts	Y	e	Y		24/2/09 @ 7.15pm	husband of Jan; interviewed in a group with Jan Burnell and Marje Paling
Jenny Boswell-Jones	?	Y	m	X			
Jenny Fisher	former Constituency Chair	Y	m	X			
Joe Conneely	former NUPE/Unison shop steward	Y	m	X			
Julia Coleman	Former leader of Dacorum Borough Council, Trade Union and LP activist	Y	e	Y		17/04/09 @ 10am Euston Stn	passed on by Mike Dempsey
Mark Taylor	Councillor for Bethnal Green North 94-2002	Y	m	Y	Call 21/10 AM for date	Thu 6 Nov, 8.45pm The Approach	Councillor 1994-2002; has supplied me with a set of his monthly reports, which became increasingly 'sardonic'
Marje Paling	Member in Gedling, nr Nottingham; friend of Burnells; activist & has stood for council	Y	e	Y	e-mailed 26/3 re members in Nottingham	24/2/09 @ 7.15pm	Interviewed in a group with Jan Burnell and Marje Paling. Suggested that some members in Nottingham may be willing to
Mike Davis	Dinah Morley's partner; was involved with the Trades Council, he now edits Chartist	Y	e	Y	contact w/c 3/10 for date	Mon 24 Nov, 6.30pm	Dinah Morley's partner - was on S. Hackney & Stitch GC and LGC (until disbanded)
Mike Dempsey	Assistant Chief Executive [of..?] who left to become an Assistant General Secretary at Unison	Y	e	N	followed up 26/3/09 by e-mail		Says has nothing to offer - was not active but has a number of names that he may be able to pass on to me.
Mike Tyrrel	Mildred Gordon's agent at one election . Now CEO of Tower Hamlets Community Housing.	Y	m	Y	further e-mail sent 27/3	16/4 @ 2pm - 285 Commercial Rd.	likely to have retained documents
Peter Kenyon	Currently on NEC	Y	e	X			Met at Prog London via MD. Contact via blog: http://www.petergkenyon.typepad.com/ {not
Phil Maxwell	now in Respect but was a Labour Party Councillor throughout that time was briefly	Y	e	Y	contact w/c 3/10 for date	Wed 3 Dec 2pm at his office	web: www.philmaxwell.co.uk / He has said you can look at a collection of leaflets, papers and other documents from his
Ray Marney	Councillor 94-2002	Y	m	X			
Stephen Beckett	was a Councillor, LGC Secretary	Y	m	Y		Fri 28 Nov	has produced books ('In Living Memory: Photographs of Tower Hamlets'), former librarian. (I also helped on his election
T White	?	Y	m	X			no detail available

360