Political Parties and Power: A New Framework for Analysis

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1

Introduction

Despite question marks over their continuing role as a linkage mechanism between the public and institutions of government (van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke 2012; Webb 2009, 272), political parties remain important subjects of political analysis because they still perform vital functions in a relatively efficient way (Dalton, Farrell and McAllister 2011, 216). They are still the main means by which governments are formed, preferences are articulated and political activity is mobilised (White and Ypi 2010). Indeed, most studies of political parties have focused on these functional roles: articulating and aggregating interests (Ware 1996), mobilising and integrating populations (Duverger 1959), facilitating popular choice and control (Webb 2009) and recruiting candidates and elites, not to mention organising both government and opposition (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). However, this focus means that an obvious, and perhaps the most interesting, question about modern political parties is too easily overlooked: what is their relationship with power? Parties are, after all, primarily vehicles for the pursuit of political power (von Beyme 1985, 73), but crucially they are also entities within which the internal struggle for power is fundamental. This is something that has long been recognised in the literature from the fatalistic logic of oligarchy that Robert Michels (1968[1915]) elaborated, to Panebianco's (1988) notion of an 'unequal exchange relation' between leaders and led, and Katz and Mair's (1995) stratarchy, which describes a near autonomous relationship between the two.

However, references to power are more often oblique or go unexplained, at best a backdrop or assumption secondary to the consideration of functions. The explicit *conceptual* development of power in party settings is distinctly lacking. Furthermore,

even those that *do* address power more directly expose the growing gap between empirical political science and political theory, the sub-literature on party discipline being a good example. One key strand – including Bowler (2002), Heidar and Koole (2002) and Davidson-Schmich (2006) – sees leadership power as contingent and dependent on the effective deployment of institutional resources to limit the power of members. In a second, Owens (2006), Hazan (2006) and Jensen (2000) seek alternative explanations: recognising that party loyalty in an age of declining formal participation cannot be explained only by force and submissiveness but also by the values and common ideas that people share. This points tantalisingly towards a more structural and constitutive mode of power, but it is not fully recognised as such (at best these are recognised as *conditions* for the exercise of a more limited kind of power) and so never fully developed. More recent developments in theory about power have frequently been overlooked. Whilst theorists including Clegg (1989) and Haugaard (2003; 2012) have developed increasingly rich, complex and sophisticated analyses of power drawing on the insights of Foucault, Giddens and others, the party literature has remained focused on fairly traditional readings of the relationship between 'leaders' and 'led', behaviouralist notions of individual conduct, or elite-oriented models.

Why should we be concerned about this? Because the structures and relations of power in parties, how they affect members, leaders and activists, is crucial to their ongoing health and vitality. The modern 'catch-all' party, with its weaker, more pragmatic, electorate-oriented ideology may have downgraded the role of members (Kirchheimer 1966), reinforced by increasing professionalism in media and communications (Lees-Marshment 2001), but it cannot quite do without them. It still needs them to maintain organisation, its presence on the ground, to run local election

campaigns (Denver, Hands and MacAllister 2004), select candidates for Parliament and local government and provide it with legitimising democratic credentials (Seyd and Whiteley 2004). Parties must therefore find ways of attracting members and active supporters by making participation meaningful whilst, at the same time, making the best possible use of them to disseminate political messages. The importance of this has clearly been recognised by some politicians: for example, both Peter Hain, a former Labour cabinet minister and Douglas Carswell, a Conservative backbench MP, have argued that their respective parties' fortunes can be revived by redefining the relationship between supporters, members and party elites. Indeed, the signs are that parties are increasingly seeking to blur the distinction between 'formal' members and less formal supporters (Young 2013) in the hope of reviving participation.

Despite such developments, the problem for many parties is that they simply haven't adapted to the changing social and political landscape. Their structures and organisation are products of a bygone age when they were not only political machines but the centre of social life in many communities (Conservative Clubs and Working Men's Clubs for example), and – especially in Labour's case –working lives too. As this social role has diminished (Webb 2000, 226) so has the articulation of distinctive class interests, and thus their ability to mobilise (Scarrow, Webb and Farrell 2000). As a result, traditional notions of command and discipline as a means of keeping members 'in line' has become less relevant. Coercion may not be entirely redundant, but in modern consumer-oriented societies, voluntary organisations such as parties need more subtle methods to bring their members into line in terms of conduct, style and message.

If reforming their structure is essential to the continuing vitality of parties, the same is true of how we analyse them. A more sophisticated, comprehensive understanding of power in this context can provide tools with which analysts may identify: a) ways in which activists, members or supporters can be empowered to act on the party's behalf; and b) how party leaders can make the most effective use possible of its members and supporters. These kinds of questions are central, I would argue, to the ongoing relevance and flourishing of organisations which at their best can provide some form of linkage, however filtered or indirect, between the political elite and the ordinary voter (Dalton, Farrell and McAllister, 2011). Experimenting with new kinds of 'networked' relationship using social media, or developing new ways of involving members in decision-making may be essential paths to this, but without means of assessing their impact on existing power relationships and structures in the party as a whole it may not be possible to detect the extent to which such reforms are positive, merely marginal, or even perverse in their effects. What the analysis of parties needs is to recognise how coercive and more *productive* forms of power are interwoven and that the kinds of capacities produced in party contexts are at least as important as the limits and boundaries of conduct and behaviour. Furthermore, it needs to be recognised how power exercised by individuals coexists in organisations with power that is embedded in organisation, structure and social practices. The challenge, therefore, is to bring differing theoretical perspectives to bear on questions of party organisation that testify to the persistence and complexity of power relations in parties. Power needs to be understood in sufficient breadth and depth that it can be employed to answer questions pertinent to the full range of its operation in relations, structures and practices of party life. My task in this paper is to demonstrate how it may be done.

The Concept of Power

The essential contestedness of power (Lukes 2005) is demonstrated by the diversity with which it has been defined and interpreted: Dowding (1991; 1996) and Murphy (2011), amongst others, argue that power is intimately associated with agency, flowing from the conscious intentions and choices of individual actors. Giddens (1984), and Bourdieu (1977) challenge purely agentic conceptualisations by emphasising social structure: how, through the daily routines, rituals and practices of life, intuitive, 'common-sense' resources are generated which shape and produce actors, giving meaning to everyday activity. Foucault (1977) portrays disciplinary power as embedded in the instruments, techniques and procedures deployed in the organisation of bodies for specific purposes (for example political activity). This kind of power exerts a detailed control and discipline, but at the same time constructs subjectivities and capacities that contribute to the production of effective agents. Dowding (1991; 1996), however, questions whether power can be understood in these terms because fundamental to power is the ability to choose and act, which resides only in individuals (Dowding 1991, 8-9; 1996, 29). A further dimension to this debate centres on the extent to which power is seen as coercive or positively enabling. Lukes (2005), argues that power can only be understood as being a phenomenon of conflict, coercion and 'power over'. Haugaard (2003; 2012), however, has drawn on the work of Hannah Arendt (1970) and Talcott Parsons (1963) to argue that 'power to', a *productive* force which, invests agents with capacities to act, is at least as important. Power is seen more as a social attribute, concerned with how meaningful action and effective agents are produced and made possible by the collective structures and arrangements of the social world in which we are situated.

Seeing power in exclusively individual, collective or structural terms is detrimental to an adequate understanding in my view. For example, the capacity of certain individuals or groups to wield social or political power is in part built through social processes such as parenting, education, legal rights or cultural practices. In short, how the capacities of agents are produced, reproduced and reinforced by social, political and economic conditions (as well as by apparently 'natural' ones) are surely essential to a complete analysis of power. For similar reasons, notions both of *power over* and *power to* also need to be incorporated into the analysis.

The Theoretical Framework Outlined

My proposed framework of power starts by recognising that a political party has many facets: a party is an organisation, but one consisting of competing and co-operating individuals; it is governed by formal and informal rules and cultural norms and practices; it has substantively rational goals (usually to control, share control of, or at least influence, government) supported by administration and hierarchy; in the pursuit of its goal(s), specific techniques of organisation and communication may be employed. A second premise that follows from this is that power, understood as means by which human goals may be shaped and obtained in these contexts, can refer to a number of different ways in which this might be done. Thus, I have drawn on different perspectives and traditions to provide an analytically rich framework for the study of power in political organisations. The framework accounts for the role of individuals, rules and norms, of the organisation itself, social structure and specialised organisational techniques. This can be accommodated by five means of shaping or obtaining goals, which I shall henceforth refer to as 'modes' of power::

i. *Individualistic Power*: exercised by individuals in the pursuit of specified goals or preferences;

ii. *Strategic Power*: the capacity of certain groups to secure advantage by instituting, reforming or reinforcing organisational rules and norms that limit the scope of conflict;

iii. *Administrative Power*: impersonal control engendered by parties as continuously administered organisations, which constrains, disciplines and excludes agents through organisational imperatives;

iv. *Constitutive Power*: power embedded within the practices and patterns of relations which help to shape organisational life and that provides a basis for agency through their reproduction and sedimentation;

v. *Disciplinary Power*: power at a micro-level, propagated and reproduced through fine-detailed techniques of control and normalisation, focused at the level of the body.

This brings me to a possible objection that it is important to deal with up front: that the framework attempts to combine what are generally seen to be ontologically and methodologically incompatible approaches. However, as Martin J. Smith (2009) argues, power is under no obligation to be philosophically consistent in all the contexts in which it operates (Smith 2009, 81) and, indeed, it does so in many different ways. It can be direct and clearly observable, as force often is, and indirect or obscured, for example operating more subtly through social organisation. I should also make clear that I do not suggest that this framework represents an holistic view of power with different 'faces' or 'dimensions', although it is also more than a

'kitchen-sink' approach that simply seeks to review different perspectives. My intention is rather to suggest that these modes of power can be used to illuminate how power operates in diverse ways in different situations and locations within the party. In other words, although the overall framework is designed to apply to the organisation as a whole, it is not necessarily wholly applicable to every instance of power within it. Specific incidents or aspects of party life may be identified as an example of one or more different modes of power but not necessarily all at once.

Rather than an easily definable object, therefore, power should be seen as a *heuristic tool* for analysing social and political relations (Smith 2009, 80-1). It is invaluable for examining the production and use of capacities by people and organisations (in the pursuit of goals, purposes and interests) and the conditions under which they may or may not be exercised. Hence, there is a case for incorporating different perspectives on power into the analysis of political phenomena, and particularly political parties. This is much needed because of the lacuna in the literature I have identified, and the purpose of the framework I propose here is to fill this by providing a means for thinking about political organisations in terms of power.

Each of the five modes of power prompts appropriate questions about how power is exercised and operates in political organisation in different ways and in different *internal* locations. This, it could be argued, neglects the important impact of external factors (such as social, economic and political change). However, my particular interest here is in the dynamics of organisation itself. This is important because power in the contemporary world, including political power, is mediated by organisations in which control and order are formalised and routinised through their disciplinary mechanisms (Clegg 1989). It follows therefore that to understand how

power works within parties is itself vital for understanding how political power operates more generally and widely within and across the political apparatus.

Explanation and Application

As I explain each mode of power, I will illustrate it with examples drawn from research on the British Labour Party during the 1980s and 1990s. This period was one of reform and change in the party in which the power of leaders was asserted, organisation and decision-making processes were reformed, and modern marketing techniques were embraced (Shaw 1994) and thus provides useful material for this kind of study.   However, this choice reflects my own knowledge and interests rather than the limits of the framework and I argue that the framework outlined here can be applied to the analysis of any sizeable democratic political party.

Mode 1: Individualistic Power

Parties are locations in which individuals seek to satisfy preferences or achieve particular goals (usually political, but sometimes personal). One of the clearest, most elegant expressions of this is Robert Dahl's 'intuitive idea of power' 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 definition pinpoints how power is expressed in struggles and confrontations between the preferences or goals of individuals, making use of whatever resources may be available to them (such as money or influential networks) in those struggles. Dahl's behaviouralism, however, lacks a coherent theory of action (Dowding 1991) which Rational Choice Theory (RCT) provides. RCT addresses this problem by

assuming that people are goal-oriented and choose optimal means to achieve them (Tsebelis 1990, 235). However, RCT's rather crude assumption of self-interest arguably contributes to a one-dimensionally negative view of political actors as self-serving and thus should be treated with some caution (see Hay 2007, 90-122). Therefore, whilst I take from RCT that agents are goal-oriented and that optimum achievement of those goals is a key motive for action, it is important to acknowledge that these goals cannot be reduced to purely selfish or instrumental impulses. The key point is that *Individualistic Power* looks for straightforwardly *visible* conflicts of preferences or goals expressed in an open confrontation between individuals with a clear outcome and the questions it directs one to ask reflect this:

   i.   What individuals were involved? What were they looking to achieve?

   ii.   How and where did the conflict play out? What resources did they use?

   iii.   Who won and who lost and were the outcomes intended?

Two examples illustrate *Individualistic Power* quite well, one from Westminster politics and the other locally-based, both dealing with potentially awkward problems for party leaders. In the first, a backbench MP ('B') sought a position on the Home Affairs Select Committee because of a genuine commitment to justice which he had demonstrated as a journalist, campaigner and writer before entering parliament. He sought the position against the resistance of a leader ('A') that saw him as an embarrassing, outspoken radical.   A, as the leader, had available to him resources which could prevent B from becoming a member of the committee because, at the time, membership of a Parliamentary Committee was effectively in the gift of the Party Leader.[1]   The preferences of A prevailed over those of B because his wishes were backed up by superior resources, namely the powers of patronage available to

him. B, in these terms, was relatively weak. He had no power to decide or persuade and was more or less entirely at the mercy of A. All he could do was ask. This constitutes an exercise of power by A over B, the key point being that A gets what he wants and B is prevented from getting what he wants, or fails to prevent A from getting what he wants (which in this case is the same thing). Thus it can be said that A demonstrated power over B by denying him his desire.

The second example is less clear cut. A long-standing member of a Labour Group ('C') mounted a successful leadership challenge to the existing group leader ('D'). Conflict arose initially because of genuine disagreements about equality and representation for local minority communities. The result of the initial ballot was a dead heat, in which the regional party organisation ('E') had to intervene, eventually persuading D to step down in C's favour.

Viewed as a direct conflict between C and D, C won because he became Leader of the Labour Group, and D lost because he was forced to step down. C's resources included an issue around which to galvanise support from two factions which gave him the numbers to irrevocably damage D and the momentum to see it through. However, two important subtleties emerge from the application of the questions I set out above. Firstly, on the question of intention and outcome, the initial disagreement was in fact over a matter of specific policy, so whether it was C's *original* intention to challenge for the leadership is open to question. Nonetheless, this *became* the intention it seems, and this needs to be allowed for. If intentions develop or change then so does the desired outcome and thus the conditions under which an exercise of Individualistic Power can be said to have occurred. Secondly, whether the *means* by which the eventual outcome came about (i.e. with the intervention of E) was as

intended should also be questioned. What this reveals is how the initial resources employed by one actor in pursuit of a goal may have a knock-on effect on later ones. For example, with more initial support for his leadership bid, C could have achieved a decisive victory in the ballot, which would have not required the intervention of outside bodies.

Although brief, the analysis demonstrates the parsimony and clarity *Individualistic Power* offers to the examination of conflicts between individuals, which is its great strength. Firstly, by focusing on specific conflicts of interest, it is possible to pinpoint where confrontations over preferences may arise. Secondly, by analysing these conflicts and struggles and interrogating outcomes it can be categorically stated whether or not there has been an exercise of *Individualistic Power*, by whom and in what direction. By pinpointing each actor's preferences, and therefore their intentions, it can be determined whether one managed to achieve this at the expense of the other. Thirdly, by paying attention to the resources that are used in these kinds of confrontations it can be seen more clearly *how* that exercise of power was carried out and how superior resources can support success.

Mode 2: Strategic Power

Individual conflicts are an important part of party life, but they are not always even and not always representative of what goes on behind the scenes. There are those who are able to use the decision-making rules to their advantage, as a way of suppressing the preferences or goals of others and thus achieving their goals by *avoiding* conflict altogether. In parties, this may be achieved through control, manipulation or even reform of the party's decision-making arenas, such as conferences, forums and meetings so as to favour some voices and viewpoints and disfavour others. It

represents, therefore, something subtly different from *Individualistic Power*: a more *Strategic* kind of power focused on the *means* by which certain individuals are able to get their way over others. It draws on Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) proposal that a more subtle power is exercised by preventing those that would challenge the status quo from having their concerns or viewpoints heard in the first place, and Schattschneider's (1960) notion of organisation as the 'mobilisation of bias'. *Strategic Power* prompts the following questions:

i. How are organisational rules and procedures used to preclude certain issues or voices from getting a hearing? How does their exploitation secure the dominant positions of particular individuals or groups?

ii. What people or groups are seeking to reorganise these prevailing norms? What people or groups are committed to defending prevailing norms?

The way in which the Labour Party under Tony Blair reformed party decision-making structures is an example of this. Although a key point of the *Partnership in Power* reforms of 1997 was 'to win power at the next general election and to hold on to it at successive general elections' (Labour Party 1997a, 33), reform was also about heading off and preventing the kinds of conflicts that plagued (televised) Labour Party Conferences in the 1970s and 1980s.

The reforms achieved this partly by taking control of the decision-making agenda. The headline change was the establishment of the National Policy Forum (NPF) as the party's key policy-making body. This forum, in which the representatives of ordinary members had their say, was a deliberative one which embodied a rather different approach to decision-making from the adversarial debate that characterised Annual Conference. Its purpose was to seek consensus through discussion and workshop

activities. However, the NPF 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 laid out by Policy Commissions which, in turn, worked to an agenda set by the elite-dominated Joint Policy Committees (JPCs). These changes, alongside the effective emasculation of Annual Conference, ensured that certain voices were effectively excluded from policy-making, some because they could no longer access the process, others because they no longer saw any reason to.[2] Indeed, activists and officials recognise that the diminishing policy-making powers of Annual Conference may have contributed to declining membership and local activism because it undermined the perceived power – however illusory – of members to contribute to the agenda. In fact, the effect was perhaps more to take power from one set of powerful elites (trade union leaders whose votes dominated Annual Conference) and give them to another. Most important to leaders, however, was neutralising potential conflict in the publicly visible arenas of televised Conference proceedings, where it could damage the party's image.[3]

This mode of power supplements and builds on *Individualistic Power* by explaining how some groups or individuals are able to use rules to entrench their positions by excluding certain voices and closing off the possibility of challenge. Such moves, however, are not guaranteed to be decisive in ensuring victory, but may simply temporarily mute or displace the conflict. Rule changes, for example, may act as an insurance against future threats, but may simply displace those threats to other arenas such as the NPF itself. Furthermore, it would certainly be an error to read into this a crude conspiracy of elites. Reforms may be carried out in part for normatively 'positive' and desirable reasons. The NPF, for example, is (at least in theory) an important mechanism through which ordinary members can genuinely contribute to

the development of party policy. However, there was nonetheless a clear intention to re-engineer the role of activists in policy-making. In this case, the position of party leaders was strengthened by the exercise of *Strategic Power* because they were able to marginalise and silence voices or issues undesirable to them and, at the very least, keep them out of the public eye. The emphasis of *Strategic Power* is thus on the means by which decisions are made, conflicts are managed, and voices are included or excluded from decision-making. Further, it emphasises how these mechanisms serve to sustain the advantages of some actors over those of others because they are able to predict and control outcomes.

Mode 3: Administrative Power

The third mode of power reminds us that parties are self-evidently *organisations* and as such place restraints upon and shape the ability of individuals to act 'freely' at all levels. *Administrative Power* grows out of the regularisation and routinisation of mechanisms established in the first instance for specific purposes which may readily be explained in terms of Strategic Power. However these mechanisms, as they become established, soon 'bed-in', becoming routine and, moreover, a means by which the existing organisational order is strengthened and maintained. 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. Its effect is to control and direct the actions of individuals and cohere them to the administrative machine and (thus) the organisation's goals e.g. winning elections and forming and sustaining governments. The bureaucracy this kind of development entails (and that is characteristic of any large organisation) is problematic because of how it structures the activities of party life. Much time is spent by the most

committed political activists simply servicing the organisation's administrative and business needs rather than engaging in explicitly 'political' activity. This points us towards the following kinds of questions:

i.   How do the activities members participate in discipline and govern their conduct as political actors?

ii. How do positions people hold or the jobs they do restrict their freedom to act politically?

To be politically effective, the party organisation needs functionaries, administrators and workers following set codes of conduct, gathering clearly defined administrative information which, tragically, has a depoliticising effect on those individuals (or more specifically on their activity). Hence, party activism becomes a bureaucratic function rather than a political one. For example, Labour Party guidance on voter identification (Labour Party 1997) explicitly and expressly steers activists away from engaging the public politically. '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, therefore, not as a political activity because 'it's organisational' (Labour Party 1997, 11). In other words, however effective this may be for the pursuit of political office, the process is depoliticised and individual initiative is kept firmly in check.

This understanding of power draws heavily on the work of Robert Michels (1968) and, especially, Max Weber (1948; 1978). At the heart of it is a paradox and, as Michels related it, a tragedy too. Organisation can be positive and enabling because it can provide a collective voice for the otherwise voiceless and a structure for political activity. Without organisation or direction, most, if not all, individuals would lack the

capacity to be effective political actors. However, it also shows how organisational management strengthens at the expense of individual political initiative. This leaves us with a dilemma: such a logic suggests that organisation is ultimately ineffective as an emancipatory tool whilst, at the same time, abandoning it leaves individuals with no capacity at all to resist the powerful. The answer to this dilemma, surely, is in reframing the question: from one of whether organisation is a means of empowerment or a tool of domination to ones of, first, what shape it should take and how it should be employed in different times and circumstances in order for collective goals to be achieved effectively and, second, how can the widest possible range of actors be empowered in the achievement of those goals.

Mode 4: Constitutive Power

The fourth mode of power shifts focus towards how parties play a role in reinforcing and reproducing patterns of relations and structures of power. Drawing on Giddens' (1984) theory of 'structuration' and Bourdieu's (1977) notion of 'habitus', *Constitutive Power* is embedded in the accepted or 'instinctive', 'common sense' ways of doing things that people draw on in every day life and that form what Giddens describes as 'practical consciousness' (Giddens 1984, 7). Through this unreflective activity agents reproduce prevailing social structures. However, individuals cannot do this alone. The meanings that underpin everyday activities and actions, such as shaking hands, are held collectively and thus can be recognised and responded to. In other words, 'structuring' activity must be accompanied by the 'confirm-structuring' of other participants – for example, by offering one's hand in return – and through this process existing patterns of relations and structures of power are reproduced. In political parties, the modes of participation in certain activities –

campaigning, becoming an officer, or speaking in a party meeting for instance – reproduce and reinforce structure through the habits and practice contained within them.

Parties cannot, therefore, be seen in isolation from society as a whole. However, this is not to take a deterministic view of structure. Social forces may at times be overwhelming but they are never completely irresistible. Culture *can* be challenged through critical reflection and consequently adjusted (as Giddens suggests). In other words, practical consciousness can be accessed and brought into the more deliberative purview of discursive consciousness where it can be critiqued and challenged. Furthermore, as the composition of a party changes, so does its culture or *habitus*, for example with the social backgrounds of party members: as more university educated, business oriented workers replace traditional working class members, new habits and practices enter into the organisation. Thus, an individual approaching her participation in the party as a career ladder, in which the purpose is to gain specific experience to include on a CV and qualify for the next rung, is symptomatic of the way in which the culture of modern business and its practices has permeated the sphere of organised politics. However, this must not be overstated. Individuals are also absorbed into the party's existing culture and so there is an interaction between influence and change When people join and become involved in any new organisation, whether a new workplace, religious institution or political party, a process of learning and absorbing its values (by which I mean the accepted norms of behaviour that govern the conduct and actions of members rather than a body of doctrine or political goals and principles) occurs. This process may be quite direct through techniques including training and education, but it may also happen through assimilation, in the very act of participating in practices such as canvassing, meetings

and conferences. The questions that this particular approach to power prompts are therefore as follows:

i. What are the informal rules of conduct, patterns of behaviour, rituals and performances that people follow in different aspects of party life?

ii. How does their sedimentation as habits and practices reproduce the *habitus* and produce certain kinds of political actor?

iii. How does this process empower individuals with capacities to act within their milieu?

Modern training programmes, using techniques such as participant-led discussion and role-play is an interesting and uniquely visible example of *Constitutive Power*'s embeddedness in party practice. It demonstrates how actors can be imbued with new habits of thought and practice by being encouraged to reflect discursively on the patterns of behaviour and activity that they may be familiar with and embed new ones in their practical consciousness. A sample of the kinds of training materials the party began to use in the 1990s illustrates this point well. A training pack for potential councillors (The Labour Party 1992), contains role-playing exercises on how councillors could work together in a contentious decision-making situation. The emphasis in both 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. The purpose and effect of this is to produce self-disciplined political actors with a 'mainstream' approach to politics and political problem-solving, the very things that the modern, professional, electoral party needs to be.

Training programmes of this kind are therefore part of a process by which the party instils habits and conduct, not through mechanisms of hierarchical command, but by the actions of agents themselves, who (in this case) explore these issues via discussions and exercises. 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. Thus, in structuring and confirm-structuring, these individuals are constituted as effective agents with useful capacities. In other words, they *learn* how to become certain kinds of agent through a directed process.

Mode 5: Disciplinary Power

Finally, in the pursuit of practical goals (winning election campaigns for example), parties (or rather actors within them) adopt techniques (of, say, organisation and communication) that support their efficient actualisation. Chiefly, in parties, this means effective campaign organisation and strategically directed communications, marketing and public relations. Although these techniques are adopted for specific purposes, they have embedded in them a distinct mode of power that is meticulously controlling in its focus on bodily discipline but at the same time productive in its shaping of effective political agents. Drawing on Foucault's (1977) account of discipline, this mode of power is highly salient to political parties although it has rarely, if ever, been used to analyse them. Such detailed techniques of power are a feature of modern society which is itself shot through with organisation at every level. Two aspects of disciplinary power are relevant here: firstly, the detailed organisation of bodies in relation to tasks through control of activity; secondly the 'normalisation' of physical appearance, expression and gesture.

I) Control of Activity

Three broad questions are of concern here:

i.   What technical problems does modern political organisation seek to solve?

ii. What kinds of solutions have been designed and applied to those problems?

iii. What is their disciplinary effect (e.g. through surveillance, examination, management, organisation, classification and ranking)?

To an election campaign, the Campaign Plan is crucial. It indicates how every aspect is to be managed, leaving little or nothing to chance – when certain leaflets should be delivered, when car calls and tannoy tours should take place, and when knocking-up starts – and ensuring contingencies are prepared for. Key to this is the timetable, detailing the roles, tasks and functions to which agents are allocated, the process and a precise routine to be followed. As well as time, agents are also organised in relation to space, 'allocated' according to calculations of required outcomes, and moved around where they can be most effective. Through their distribution according to timetables, tasks and targets and their subjection to continuous monitoring, individuals are disciplined into efficient party operatives.

The accompanying accumulation and organisation of knowledge about voters, especially their ranking by voting intention is the basis for which messages are targeted at them and how they are to be communicated, thus providing workers with what to say as well as who to say it to. This also provides a measure by which their performance can be evaluated (who has been contacted and, with information from polling stations, who has actually voted) which, in turn, determines the ongoing allocation and distribution of volunteers throughout the day. Monitoring is thus

fundamental: the committee rooms are the central supervisory point, observing and monitoring activity whilst recording, collating and processing information which feeds back into the overall scheme. For the duration of the campaign, the streets themselves thus become part of a disciplinary mechanism, a 'functional site' (Foucault 1977, 143) in which power operates, distributing and monitoring individuals.

In this way, 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. They are, in short, invested with the capacity to be self-disciplined in the pursuit of the goals of political organisation. However, this does not mean they are automatons, 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 makes it less desirable too. For the party activist, a sense of empowerment, a feeling of being 'part of something' that is pressing towards a goal can be stimulated by such organisation and discipline. Thus, the fine-detailed control of activity that *Disciplinary Power* engenders has an apparently paradoxical effect of empowering individuals as agents because it invests them with appropriate capacities to be effective on the party's behalf.

II) Normalising Judgement

Two questions are of interest here:

i.   How are individuals and their bodies exposed to surveillance and judged?

ii.   How are bodies made conspicuous, scrutinised and subjected to exclusion
        and/or normalisation?

Here, emphasis is placed on politics as a publicly performed act of constructing identity and subjectivity through self-discipline. In modern politics, the role of candidate or politician is frequently played out on television and other visual media and the press has, with its greater use of 'paparazzi-style' photography, also become more visually oriented. Associated with this is the application of presentation techniques, marketing and branding strategies and image control to politics, defining how politicians and even grass-roots participants in party politics were expected to look, sound and behave (see for example Richards 2001). This becomes important to the way the party presents itself publicly because how an individual expresses and presents him or herself reflects on the party's message and 'brand'. Politicians are therefore required to pay more attention to the way they look and act in public, right down to the gestures they employ, how their voice sounds, the clothes they wear, their hair-style and so on. They thus become subject to what Foucault calls 'normalising judgement' which judges, ranks, punishes and corrects the body's appearance to fit with norms and expectations, and marginalises and excludes those that do not. Self-discipline is rewarded by putting compatible individuals forward as media spokespersons, thus gaining further exposure. Those incompatible, perhaps because of the way they dress, their age or racial characteristics are sidelined, marginalised or 'reconstructed' to fit.

The further exposure of those selected subjects them 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

24

and unacceptable shape, size and hairstyle via the exposure and criticisms of the tabloid press. These disciplinary mechanisms apply especially to women who are conspicuous in relation to the masculine norm (Puwar 2004, 78). Female bodies are expected to conform to particular ideals. Mo Mowlam, for example, was at one time referred to as 'raunchy'[4], a 'femme fatale'[5], but when her looks began to change as a result of undergoing treatment for cancer she was subject to hostile and 'unpleasant' attention[6] (Mowlam 2002, 41). Finally, when it became known that she was ill, her body became more acceptable, but still subject to ongoing attention in that light.[7] In other words, attention is *always* on the body and its incongruity or otherwise with political life. 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 initially used to describe the *Daily Mirror*'s scantily clad cheerleaders for Labour's election efforts[8]). In short, politicians must fit the 'brand': be a certain kind of male, a certain kind of female; they are marked out, classified and primed for conveying messages that manifest that 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 excluded and marginalised or subject to petty, invasive and sometimes cruel humiliations.

These two aspects of *Disciplinary Power* expose the micro-processes which the macroscopic concerns of *Constitutive Power* and the broad institutional sweep of *Administrative Power* overlook. It demonstrates how, through detailed, specific means of control and normalisation, power *produces* agents who are both congruent with the party's values and helpful to its objectives.

Tensions in the Framework

Because this framework seeks to explain how power works in organisation by accounting for the different elements of the latter in which it might be identified, I have drawn on a wide range of theoretical resources that represent different modes of power, a series of overlapping means by which goals are shaped and obtained in organisations. There are nonetheless tensions in the framework that need to be acknowledged, not least the apparently uneven treatment of individuals, who are variously understood as conscious actors, bounded agents or subjects of power. Both *Individualistic* and *Strategic Power* assume the individual is a conscious actor able to confront others, although, in the latter, some lack the ability positionally to express their preferences. *Administrative Power* understands individual choices and capacities to act as more restricted, shaped to some extent by a more anonymous power of which they may not always be directly conscious and thus unable easily to confront. *Constitutive Power* is obscured from day-to-day consciousness, embedded in practices that have social meaning beyond the internal preferences of individuals. It shapes them in a way that empowers them to act in the social (and political) world, whilst investing them as agents for its reproduction and reinforcement. Finally, *Disciplinary Power*'s relationship with individuals is one of detailed control, but (paradoxically) has an empowering, productive effect. Individuals are so invested with techniques of control over their detailed activity and even appearance, that they are constructed as self-disciplined political actors, appropriately skilled, well-presented and therefore effective.

This eclecticism in the framework's treatment of individuals and their relationship to power is, I would argue, its great strength. It enables the conceptualisation of an

acting individual, alongside consideration of the influences that shape that particular individual with his or her own particular set of prejudices and preferences. It points us towards the role of the organisation itself in shaping their characteristics and their goals, the way they express them and their capacity to do so. Furthermore, it enables an analysis of the contribution people make to reproducing the milieu within which they act, how they confirm and conform to existing mores and to what extent the latter are challenged through reflection and deliberate action. It provides us with tools with which the importance of an individual's conscious choices can be considered alongside his or her entanglement in an ongoing disciplinary network of relations. It allows for the examination of structure, but it also provides the tools with which to consider how it is that individuals make choices and act within its boundaries and how they therefore not only reproduce it but contribute towards change in it and what the role of organisation is in this.

Conclusion

Whilst there are undoubtedly analytical benefits for committing to just one of the perspectives I have included here, my purpose has been to argue that a more sophisticated understanding of power is both possible and necessary if we are to fully understand its operation, distribution and exercise within political organisations. A diversity of theoretical insights provides greater richness to analysis by expanding the scope of investigation and generating questions to support it. Whatever else they are, parties are organisations with all that entails: they include individuals who co-operate and compete, they are governed by rules and customs, have hierarchies and administrative needs, and they make use of techniques of communication and organisation. In order to fully understand power in organisations therefore, analysis

must take all these aspects into account. Thus, I have suggested that as well as being conceivable as a property of individuals or hierarchies, there are also less immediately visible forms of power – in the manipulation of rules, the dynamics of organisation and routines of party life, for example – that can both affect and effect political action, in the first case by amplifying, augmenting or dampening existing capacities, and in the second by shaping and producing new skills and capacities.

I have argued that the framework is designed as a heuristic tool, a lens for analysis rather than a unified concept of power in which to squeeze real world phenomena. Indeed, I have profound doubts as to whether such a unified concept is possible. Power is such a complex, contested idea that any attempt to boil it down to a single concept is bound to lead to a tortured series of theoretical tangles that produce only partial answers. However, I would also emphasise that my purpose is more than simply a review of different perspectives. Each of these modes of power is in operation within the party as a whole, and each may be more or less relevant in different situations and locations. Thus in one incident we may see, for example, individualistic and administrative power at play, in another strategic and disciplinary power and so on. Understood in this way, the tensions that these differing perspectives may have with one another can be used creatively to provide an analytical richness that the existing literature on parties lacks. Others may seek to challenge or add to it, to adjust and adapt it. Nonetheless, activity and the pursuit of political goals in and by parties is a product of individual actions, of rules, of organisation, practices and techniques, and the interactions between them. My framework, in accounting for this, therefore adds to the sum of knowledge by providing theoretical tools with which non-reductionist, comprehensive analysis of power can be carried out in these settings.

Table: Summary of the Framework

Mode of Power	*Location:* Description	Identification Questions	Examples
Individualistic Power	*Individual Conflicts:* Individuals employ resources to secure preferences at the expense of those of others.	Which individuals were involved in the conflict? What resources did they use? Who prevailed?	Leadership use of patronage to reward and punish; deploying resources to displace a political rival.
Strategic Power	*Decision-making arenas / bodies:* Control and manipulation of rules in one's favour / ability to set agenda and control the scope of conflict.	How do rules and procedures disfavour some and benefit others? Which groups?	Altering or manipulating decision-making rules, to displace conflict / exclude rival voices
Administrative Power	*Formal Structure / Bureaucracy:* Rational, impersonal, routinised control; 'obedience' of an automated, mechanised kind.	How do activities govern conduct? How do official positions restrict freedom to act?	Party officers diverted from political activity by administrative jobs and routines.
Constitutive Power	*Day-to-day party activity* Reproduces patterns of relations and structures of power through the everyday material practices.	How does sedimentation of conduct/ patterns of behaviour constitute actors with certain skills and capacities? Does this have an empowering effect?	Training potential representatives, equipping them with useful or effective capacities.
Disciplinary Power	*Application of technical knowledge:* Detailed organisational and surveillance techniques that discipline and control individuals at a level of fine detail.	What technical solutions are applied to problems of organised political action? How are bodies exposed to surveillance? What is the disciplinary effect?	Campaigning management via timetables, audits; application of marketing and PR techniques.

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