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Discourse and Political Strategy in New Labour Britain

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Abstract

As elsewhere in Europe and around the world, the discourse of globalization in the United Kingdom—the particular representation of the world as undergoing an epochal shift away from the traditional autonomy of the nation-state—has powerfully reshaped political debate. And this has had important distributional effects on the balance of power in the political party system, most notably in the return to power of the Labour Party as "New Labour" under the leadership of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. But while it is known that articulations of globalization are embedded in the political system, a systematic analysis linking such discourse with party competition is lacking. In this paper, I propose that many features of the globalist language invoked by New Labour can be explained in terms of concrete strategic aims. Working with concepts of "heresthetics" and "bricolage" drawn from a synthesis of literatures, I illustrate this approach through several representative texts. These findings are then used to make predictions about the kind of globalization discourse to expect in the communications of two nationalist parties in the UK—"least likely" cases for globalism—which can be explored further as part of a larger research program.

Over the past two decades, globalization has been a predominant trope of policy making in the West, at both the domestic and international levels.[1] The demands of the newly-globalized world have been invoked to legitimize substantial reforms of national economic structures, participation in increasingly powerful regional integration arrangements, and even revisions to core political party ideological commitments. Indeed, it has been shown that Western European electoral competition is being increasingly structured by globalization issues, along an "integration-demarcation" axis, compared to the conventional left-right divide (Kriesi, et al. 2008). Yet these developments have coincided with trenchant political-economic analyses showing that presenting globalization as a *new, external* constraint on states is misleading— current levels of international economic integration are not unprecedented, and are largely the outcome rather than the cause of globalization-oriented policies (Hirst and Thompson 1999; Hay and Rosamond 2002).

The particular power of this discourse, then, is the degree of consensus that has emerged around the central "fact" of globalization. This is particularly striking compared with other debates that appeal to objective political-economic facts: Though political and societal actors do not agree on questions such as the ideal balance of stimulus and austerity (issues are similarly assumed to have a basis in economic facts), they *can* agree that these debates must take account of a global environment characterized by the disciplining power of global capital, etc. And while this phenomenon can be usefully studied at a range of levels, from global diffusion down to the everyday practices of individuals (Antoniades 2009), the findings of Kriesi et al. are a reminder that domestic electoral politics are at least one key site where this discourse is embedded.

In this paper I propose that rather than inherent characteristics of the ideas, the strategic demands of party competition—which is to say, the primary practice of political parties—can explain much about the development and solidification of globalization discourse. I suspect that this is true of many countries with highly developed party systems, particularly in Europe, but I focus my analysis here on the United Kingdom as a representative case. As I will discuss, articulations of the external constraints on politics in terms of globalization were central to the "New Labour" project, which sought to build a new, viable center-left position without reversing all of the reforms of the Thatcher-Major era. At the same time, other parties have begun to use this language as well, including some rather surprising cases. Two of these are the Scottish National Party (SNP) and UK Independence Party (UKIP)—one a regionalist party aiming for independence from the United Kingdom, the other a national euroskeptic party advocating British withdrawal from the European Union. It is far from obvious that these parties should benefit from globalization discourse; both, from different directions, are making a claim on the urgent *importance* of national statehood. Moreover, Tony Blair and New Labour were already using these formulations to legitimate antithetical policies (*limited* devolution and European integration, respectively). However, a reading of the globalization discourse as a concrete political strategy, developed according to a relational rather than internal logic, could resolve this apparent puzzle. A full investigation is beyond the scope of this paper, rather here I aim to show how a strategic reading of New Labour's globalization discourse highlights the potential political functions that it holds, and how this might structure analysis of the SNP and UKIP discourses as "least likely" test cases.

Thus, in the following section I review the major theoretical literature informing this analysis, especially theories of party competition. This will show how the present approach

builds upon this continually-evolving tradition. I will then discuss the case of New Labour's globalization discourse: first outlining the competitive context in which it was produced, and then analyzing precise aspects of the discourse as exampled in a few representative texts. Finally, the concluding section will briefly explore the SNP and UKIP cases; these will be fully developed in future research, but the goal here will be to use the insights gleaned from the New Labour case about how aspects of the globalization discourse have operated in British party politics to predict how these smaller parties might use it to their own ends.

Literature Review

The Spatial Model of Party Competition

Systematic theories of party competition—that this, those that reason about the competitive dynamics themselves as opposed to the social and economic forces that bring about parties in the first place—have been largely dominated by variants of the spatial model, pioneered by Downs (1957). These theories posit an issue space characterized by one or more dimensions, each being a series of possible positions on a given issue that are finite and can be arranged in a fixed-order. For example, Downs's original representation of politics focused on a single issue "left-right" dimension, quantity of public ownership of industry, which had two finite extremes (100% public ownership or none) and where more public ownership was always to the left of less (Downs 1957; see also the review in Hindmoor 2004). Though it has been applied to explaining party behavior in a number of different ways, two features common to all mainstream spatial approaches are: (1) that the preferences of the electorate on various issues are relatively fixed and clearly-known; and (2) that party activity such as communication and

legislative voting can be understood primarily as parties placing themselves within this fixed issue space.

Integrated with the earlier median voter theorem (Black 1948), the Downsian approach produces predictions that have been useful in explaining the broad contours of party systems: notably the tendency toward policy convergence in two-party systems and stable, divergent policy positions among parties in a multi-party system. New Labour's "move to the right" in the 1990s, for example, was widely heralded as a reconfirmation of the basic principles of the median voter and convergence theorems (Hindmoor 2004: 20-22).[2] However, attempts have been made to adapt this system to capture a wider variety of political phenomena by extending the spatial model to multiple issue dimensions, which more accurately reflects the structure of preferences in the electorate and can explain party behaviors that do not conform to Downsian expectations. In principle, the theory operates similarly in multiple dimensions, with parties capturing votes by positioning themselves relative to the electorate, but with the distances measured in more than one direction. But mathematical work in social choice theory by Arrow and others has shown that where there are multiple dimensions, a clear equilibrium point is not likely to exist (Arrow 1951; Riker 1986: 142-43).

For Riker (1986), this image of potential "cycling" among different positions in issue space that can claim winning coalitions over this others is not a theoretical weakness but accurately captures the fundamental instability of politics—an instability amenable to manipulation. He coined the term "heresthetics," rooted in a Greek word for choosing and electing, to refer to the ability of politicians to control the procedures whereby one of many conceivable equilibria becomes a fixed outcome. The heresthetician will organize the system in

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[2] Hindmoor lists Blyth, Gavin and Sanders, Heath and Jowell, Kenny and Smith, Shaw, Heffernan, Norris, and Pattie as proponents of this claim in recent publications (2004: 21-22).

favor of his preferred outcome through one of several means, but the most widely-used, and most relevant to party competition, is the manipulation of issue dimensions.[3] This entails rhetoric and policy choices that affect which issue dimension(s) will be presented to voters. Riker argues that this form of political action "depicts politics as it usually is, with politicians continually poking and pushing the world to get the results they want" (1986: 142).

Though heresthetic is here presented as a framework for analyzing politics generally, this aspect has been explcititly rejected in some works inspired by Riker, particularly that of Ian McLean. His influential interpretation treats heresthetic skill as a rare political talent that can explain a small class of "surprising" political outcomes (McLean 2002). In this vein, historical case studies have shown that heresthetics offers a compelling counter-narrative in cases where predominant socio-structural theories fail to explain developments in British party politics, such as Baldwin's interwar revival of the Conservative Party and Thatcher's capture of working-class voters (McLean 2001; Taylor 2005). And this strategy does not only work for the largest parties: Dardanelli (2009) has shown that the SNP's heresthetic move to introduce the European dimension to the debate about Scottish devolution between the 1979 and 1997 referendums, in alignment with the Labour Party's changing priorities, was crucial in creating a favorable Labour-nationalist coalition.

Finally, this model of strategic choice *within* an exogenous policy space has been extended by Meguid (also drawing partly on the Scottish nationalist case) to cover interactive dynamics between dominant and emerging parties. Her theory of party competition synthesizes positional (i.e., Downsian), salience, and issue-ownership theories[4] to demonstrate that large

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[3] The others categories are strategic voting and agenda control (narrowly defined), which are more common in legislative/deliberative than electoral settings.

[4] On issue salience, see Enelow and Hinich (1984) and Budge, Robertson, and Hearl (1987); on issue ownership, Petrocik (1996).

parties have a wide range of tools available in dealing with the new wave of "niche parties" in Europe (Meguid 2008). However, this approach maintains the spatial model assumption that party activity largely consists of selecting issue positions in given space. The strategic decisions are thus largely in the hands of the larger parties because niche parties are tied, by definition, to a single issue position.

Party Competition, Issue Construction, and Discourse

The analytically-permitted range of action for political parties is significantly widened, however, if we relax the two assumptions mentioned earlier: if the electorate is not endowed with clearly-known, fixed, and well-ordered preferences about each issue, and if parties had a role in constructing and not just operating within issue spaces. Hindmoor argues that, even to the extent that voters are individual utility-maximizers, this does not imply that they can clearly differentiate between policy alternatives (2004: 31-2). Work in political economy has likewise shows that actors' unambiguous interests, like making more money, cannot be translated into preferences about *policies* without some exogenous set of beliefs about how the system functions (Hall 1993; Blyth 2003). Even sophisticated organized actors like unions and firms require that this grounding of "common knowledge" be established in order to bargain (Culpepper 2008).

Hindmoor's theory is that median voters (the "electoral center") resolve this information problem by systematically favoring what they perceive to be centrist policy options (the "political center"). In other words, the median voter theorem had reversed the actual mechanism behind its observations. What this means for parties is that, to win, they must construct issues in such a way as to place their position at the center and their opponents' at the extremes. Though constraints of plausibility do apply, this consists more in framing and rhetoric than policy

selection, because there is no inherent link between actual policies and abstract political spectra. He argues that a successful application of this strategy, rather than an objective move to the right, characterizes the New Labour project. For example, in contrast to Downs's conception of public ownership as an objective correlate for the left-right axis, Hindmoor shows that Labour focused on the *type* of public ownership (i.e., how the National Health Service should be run) in order to construct a political center between "Old Labour" and Tory extremes (Hindmoor 2004).

Not covered in this approach, however, is the degree of issue actual *construction* that underlies these strategies, as opposed to framing of relative positions *on issues*. As an example of the former, Hay and Rosamond (2002) show that the "economic imperatives" of a newly-globalized world were constructed from a selective reading of the relevant political-economic trends. It is from this carefully-constructed foundation that a winning rhetoric could be assembled: what is more centrist than obeying an economic imperative? Likewise, what is a more potent heresthetic manipulation of issue dimensions than discursively constructing some policy options as *a priori* impossible and others unavoidable? It is not necessary here to discuss the full sweep of literature on constructivism and discourse theory—for overviews see Fairclough (2003) and Torfing (2005)—except to note that even when trained on political speech these analyses have relied upon social-structural (i.e., ideological) explanations rather than looking to the dynamic of political competition itself (Finlayson 2004).

The limited work that has been done linking political language and party strategy, mostly in the rhetorical studies tradition, suggests that parties gain little benefit from using the same rhetoric as their competitors. Riker (1996) identifies the "dominance" and "dispersion" principles in campaign rhetoric, which taken together mean that a particular issue will be emphasized only when a given party knows that it is dominant in volume and persuasiveness of rhetoric on that

topic. Similarly, Meguid (2008) finds that when new issues enter into electoral salience, there is a limited window in which parties can contest ownership of specific positions; once ownership is established, further discussion only increases issue salience to the benefit of the "owner." But having been developed within an at least quasi-Downsian tradition, both of these findings are rather insensitive to subtleties in the way an issue is articulated.

Indeed, we might expect the dynamics of rhetoric to be different from the dynamics of discourse; the former implies direct attempts at persuasion within a fixed political space, the altter involves construction of the (literal) terms of reference for such a space. Constructing discourses that will take hold in the political space logically requires coherence as much as rhetorical persuasion requires distinction. This parallels the literature on bricolage and ideational change. Bricolage is a French term, referring to the work of a "handyman" as opposed to a skilled craftsman or engineer, that was introduced to social science by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962) as a characterization of human activity generally. It has been used more recently to refer to the gradual (rather than crisis-driven) change in public ideas brought about by the creative recombination of existing ideas (a "toolkit") in creative, improvised ways to serve the goals of the bricoleur (Carstensen 2011). And while this application emphasizes creativity in order to challenge paradigm-centered theories (*inter alia* Hall 1993), bricolage is also a theory of constraints on agency. A useful parallel is Swidler's (1986) theory of culture, in which she argues that cultural differences can explain behavior, not because they determine individual choice but because cultures offer a limited range of resources from which to construct strategies of action. In other words, bricoleurs may be free to transform the ideational environment but they are constrained in doing so by the discursive raw materials that are available.

A similar process in the context of party competition then might see parties constructing the underlying foundations of their issue space by leveraging a toolkit of existing political discourses. Integrating this literature on discourse production with the foregoing analyses of political party competition creates a framework for empirically analyzing *both* the strategic aims and the socially-constructive outcomes of party discourse. In other words, it enables us to see parties deploying "globalization" in British politics as they both choose *and* build; as herestheticians and as bricoleurs.

Methodology

Because I am interested in the way that the British Labour Party under Blair and Brown shaped its political context through textual representation, the primary method for observing the operation of heresthetic strategies through bricolage will be textual anaylsis. Sociolinguists, discourse analysts, and rhetoreticians have developed a wide range of tools for understanding the operation of political texts, many of which can provide insights into the party-competitive implications of globalization discourse. However, for the purposes of this paper I will limit myself to the qualitative, close textual analysis protocols laid-out in Fairclough's *Analysing Discourse* (2003). Though this work is within the critical discourse analysis tradition, rooted in a social theory quite different from what I am using, the individual sociolinguistic tools are applicable outside of that approach (Fairclough 2003: 191).

Thus, in the following section on New Labour I will first draw from the secondary literature and personal interviews that I have conducted to briefly sketch the party's main strategic aims in the terms of heresthetics. This will suggest the kinds of discursive constructions that we can expect to see in New Labour texts relating to globalization. In the textual analysis, I

will focus the way that social processes are represented as globalization (the "discourse" element of a text, in Fairclough's terms), and the way that New Labour and its leaders construct their own political identities in relation to it ("style," in Fairclough's system, or the "texturing of identities;" Fairclough 2003: 102). In specific, linguistic terms this will include analysis of grammatical mood (declarative, interrogatory, or imperative), semantic relations between clauses (or the lack thereof), and modality (what authors of texts commit themselves to in terms of knowledge or actions, the difference between 'certainly'/'probably' and 'must'/'should').

The objects of analysis are a handful of representative texts from the party's corpus that I find to be representative of the consistent threads in New Labour's language while being different types of text from different eras. Because there is not space to discuss the analysis of a fully-representative range of texts, these should be taken as illustrative of the general method. Also as a question of space, I will be focusing more on producing a heresthetical reading of party discourse and less on investigating the mechanisms of bricolage, which would require a more detailed history of the idea of globalization that can be included here.

It is important to note, in terms of broader questions of methodology, that I approach this project within the analyticist rather than neo-positivist tradition of social science (Jackson 2010). Thus I am not claiming that globalization discourse *is* fundamentally heresthetical in an objective sense. Rather, I propose that heresthetics provide an analytic framework that highlights specific aspects of the empirical case which are useful for understanding social processes. In this case, I hope to show that a reading of New Labour's globalization discourse in heresthetic terms will reveal concrete relations between discourse and strategy that will enlighten readings of UKIP and SNP texts as well. This, rather than the degree of correlation between precise expectations and findings in any one case, will be the test of my approach.

New Labour's Globalization Strategy

The Labour Party faced a challenging electoral environment at the time Tony Blair's election as leader in 1994: The party had lost four consecutive general elections, in the process barely surviving a challenge to its status as lead opposition party by the Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance, and losing the 1992 election after many assumed it was winnable. The consensus among party elites was that a thoroughgoing modernization of the party, beyond what had already been accomplished by Neil Kinnock and John Smith. In particular, the party's focus fell to the task of projecting competence as stewards of the British economy; the party's relatively novel adoption of polling and focus groups confirmed the conventional wisdom that the main anxiety that voters felt toward Labour was a fear of economic mismanagement. And while projecting economic competence was a complex task for the party, it promised a double-benefit in that it would both make Labour safe for the electorate, and differentiate the opposition from a Major government that had lost much economic credibility after the "Black Wednesday" failure of British participation in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) (Liddle, personal interview, 2012).

In terms of party competition theory, New Labour faced a highly-salient issue, economic competence, on which it was positioned unfavorably in the view of the electorate. Competence is a valence, rather than positional, issue because it is a question of whom the public trusts on a point where both parties agree in principle (Stokes 1963). However, in practice the question of competence in this period is closely linked to a set of positional issues. Most obvious is the magnitude of taxation and public spending, but these also include the rights afforded to trade unions, and the extent of Britain's engagement with European integration. In all of these areas

the party did move its positions toward the (perceived) median as classical spatial theories predict. On the matter of trade unions it even reformed its institutional structure ("one member, one vote") to reduce their influence and send a corresponding signal to the voters. But this strategy might have been electorally insufficient, as one of the perceived lessons of 1992 was that moderated policy declarations would not alone restore confidence. Rather, New Labour needed to convince voters of the long-term commitment of the party to its new trajectory. This meant that the party's new identity needed to be legitimated internally in a way that would restrain the demands of the left-wing (Diamond, personal interview, 2012), and communicated externally with a coherent narrative that marked the shift as something more than opportunistic.

The European Union issue was particularly complicated as a move toward Europe had been central to the first wave of Labour Party modernization under Kinnock; the party (and the trade unions) had moved sharply from opposite to embrace of Europeanization because it was seen as more compatible with social democratic aims than Britain under Thatcher. However, confidence even within the party in the European project was shaken by the failure of the ERM (Liddle, personal interview, 2012). Thus, while New Labour remained committed to Europe in broad terms it became essential that the issue be constructed to avoid divisive debates. Together, this was the party's dual heresthetic challenge: to change the terms of political debate such that issues that might divide the party were closed off, and that new positions could be framed as part of a new, responsible policy approach.

I propose that the discourse of globalization is central to the way that New Labour developed these heresthetics in practice. The core of this discourse is the appeal to objective and unavoidable external constraints. Such constraints function to transform debates about the management of the economy from left-right philosophical contestation to a non-ideological (or

post-ideological) process of managing global developments. This representation of Britain's external context could be used to deny calls by the party's left-wing for more radical economic policies (including even a return to pre-Thatcher policies), and thereby to construct Labour's external identity as a party that places realism above party ideology. Much of this I expect to take place through constructions of globalization as a fundamentally new phenomenon, operating at all levels, that by its nature supersedes earlier forms of politics; I refer to this as the temporal aspect of globalization. I expect another sub-discourse, the spatial aspect of globalization, to also appear. This aspect emphasizes the fact that challenges are increasingly transnational, and that key political-economic decisions are increasingly made at a higher level than the nation-state; such a perspective emphasizes the need for international cooperation and collective action. This would support the careful New Labour line on the EU by making active regional engagement essential without committing to any particular European policies or institutional arrangements (as, say, a normative commitment to the ideal of European unity might).

Textual Analysis: Britain and Europe in the Global Economy

This section will explore how the foregoing ideal narrative of a politically-informed globalization discourse appears in the concrete case of actual Labour political communication. Articulations of the globalization discourse can be found in texts throughout the New Labour era and there is a marked consistency in these representations even as other aspects of the party's rhetoric shifted. Detailed qualitative analysis of several extracts will serve to highlight the major aspects of the discourse and its connection to the party's dual heresthetic. In the crucial period of New Labour in opposition (1994-1997), the clearest encapsulation of the globalization discourse came in speeches Blair gave on a tour of Asia (Liddle 2013), which were explicitly directed at

the international business community. Communication with business was crucial to Labour's

electoral strategy, in terms of direct appeals for support (especially from the corporate media),

and indirectly as part of the heresthetic strategy—speaking the language of business is a signal of

the party's intentions to an electorate that might not be directly engaged with globalization

debates (Liddle, personal interview, 2012). The following passage is from a January 1996 speech

to a Japanese business association in Tokyo, reprinted in Blair's *New Britain: My Vision of a*

Young Country[5]:

> The driving force of economic change today is globalisation. Technology and capital are mobile. Industry is becoming fiercely competitive across national boundaries. Consumers are exercising ever greater power to hasten the pace of this revolution. Travel, communications, and culture are becoming more and more international, shrinking the world and expanding taste, choice, and knowledge.
>
> The key issue facing all governments of developed nations is how to respond. I reject protectionism as wrong and impractical. If this is so, then to compete in the global market two things must be done. A country has to dismantle barriers to competition and accept the disciplines of the international economy. That has been happening the world over, to varying degrees in what might be called the first era of response to globalization.
>
> (Blair 2004: 118)

Immediately striking in the first paragrpah is the purely declarative grammatical mood,

with each sentence a non-modalized statement of fact. In terms of style, Blair embraces the role

of politician-as-expert, laying out certain facts that are logically prior to the political positions he

lays out subsequently. This is reinforced by the structure of the second paragraph, where the

"issue…response" relation closely resembles a classic "problem-solution" framework

(Fairclough 2003: 91). New Labour here is, literally, a party that puts reality ahead of

convictions. But it is a particular kind of expertise: As with many non-academic descriptions of

globalization, the first paragraph consists of statements not linked by any explicit causal

expressions; this is a "logic of appearances" that obscures contingent relations among these

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[5] Though I refer to the 2004 edition, this collection of speeches was originally published in 1996, and was intended as a pre-election expression of Blair's political philosophy. This further reinforces the utility of examining this text.

features and thereby represents globalization as a given *in toto* (Fairclough 2003: 94-5). There are of course implicit relations, but these are discourse-dependent, relying on particular understandings of economic behavior. For example, though the role of social actors (albeit in the abstract) is acknowledged with reference to consumers, the potential that they might use their "ever greater power" to do other than "[make] travel, communications, and culture [more international]" is excluded. In the terms of the economic discourse on which this rests, that would be irrationally welfare-decreasing. The actual agency in this consumer empowerment is immediately curtailed by placing it as only a component of a process that follows its own globalizing logic.

This epistemic representation of globalization as a set of objective developments in the world drives the deontic modality of the second paragraph. Indeed, it is a strong deontic modality—not 'should' but 'must'—with the implicit question of the first sentence ("how to respond") being immediately answered rather than being presented for political deliberation. The international economy, connected in the first paragraph with positive images of consumers, travel, and culture is now shown in an alternative light as a source of discipline to countries. What this discipline requires (beyond "dismantling barriers to competition"), and how it operates, are left unspecified. But that question is rendered moot by the assertion that all this already happened in the "first era of response to globalization." Thus potential debate on whether and how to "accept the disciplines" is doubly-closed: This has already been undertaken (presumably in the form of Thatcherism in Britain), and it was done out of absolute necessity, so there is nothing more to debate on that account.

This paragraph also sees the first appearance of a subjectively-marked modality ("*I* reject protectionism..."). This is surprising, as it seems weaker than the objective claims made

elsewhere. However, the assertion that protectionism is *impractical* as well as wrong, and that the point is reiterated by the claim that "a country has to dismantle barriers to competition," clearly mark this position as more than a subjective opinion. Instead, the personal pronoun functions to highlight Blair's personal commitment to accepting economic realities, presumably in contrast to previous Labour leaders. On the latter point note that he does not invoke the party in this passage (as he does the next time there is a subjective marker, in the following paragraph).

In that subsequent paragraph, which it is not necessary to quote at era of length, the passivity of the "first era of response to globalization" is contrasted with New Labour's ambition to lead Britain into the second era. Extending his claimed expertise to prediction, Blair argues that the future world economy "will be dominated by those countries that save, invest, and above all develop the potential of […] their people" (Blair 2004: 118). Accordingly, his Labour party will supersede earlier political projects by actively investing in human capital and encouraging innovation, while recognizing that "some of the changes made by the Conservatives in the 1980s were inevitable and are here to stay" (Blair 2004: 118). Note that he acknowledges the necessity of those reforms without actually crediting the Conservatives ("inevitable"), and by specifically invoking the 1980s further reinforces that they belong to the now-closed earlier era of accommodation (as well as to the period of Margaret Thatcher and *not* of John Major). Consistent with the heresthetic aims of containing the left and outmaneuvering the Tories, these three paragraphs represent globalization as a real and unavoidable constraint on contemporary politics, and texture the identity of the *New* Labour party as having the combination of prudence and innovation necessary to be competent stewards of a modern economy.

Though not foregrounded as directly as this temporal logic, the spatial logic associated with the specific debate on European integration also appears later in this speech. "A policy of

perpetual isolation," Blair notes, "would be disastrous to Britain and to the EU, and my party has strongly rejected it" (2004: 128). This wording, in the context of the argument for closer ties to the EU, relies on the assumption that isolationism is the only alternative to European integration as currently understood. This obviously excludes from debate calls by Euroskeptics for a radically revised form of engagement with Europe. It is also consistent with a common rhetorical strategy by Blair to contrast isolatation with globalization, integration, and cooperation. For example, from his 2001 speech to the Labour Party conference: "The issue is not how to stop globalization. […] [T]he alternative to globalisation is isolation" (qtd. in Fairclough 2003: 175). Through such stark comparisons, globalization in that case and Europe in this one are effectively converted into floating signifiers (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 112-13): They are imbued with a positive evaluation by contrast with isolation (always a negative term in contemporary discourse), but in other parts of the text are attached to very specific entailments, thus eliding all of the other non-isolationist possibilities.

Though the EU's contribution to peace is duly noted, consistent with the overall logic of the speech, the danger of isolation is expressed more thoroughly in economic terms: "Finally, global financial markets bring new opportunities, but also new responsibilities for governments—*working together*—to ensure the world financial system remains solvent and stable. The sad story of Barings shows the importance of […] *closer cooperation across national borders*" (Blair 2004: 129; emphasis added). The role of the contemporary state now moves across borders as well as through time. By demanding "closer cooperation," this spatial aspect of globalization, like the "second era" on the temporal side, moves beyond dismantling barriers implies active engagement, such as through European integration. The European issue is not explicitly connected back to the temporal logic—at least not yet.

Such a move would be made in a text 11 years later. During Brown's short premiership, at very much the other end of the New Labour era, the Cabinet Office and the Foreign Office jointly produced a white paper on Europe during negotiations on the Lisbon Treaty. Titled *Global Europe: Meeting the Economic and Security Challenges*, the text explicitly linked the question of Europe's future with the discourse of globalization. The latter has become the "second era" of the European project:

> For the context of the European project has changed considerably. In the decades immediately after 1945, the challenge was to rescue Europe from the destruction of the Second World War: to help reconstruct the fabric of our countries, rebuild and strengthen democracy, and link the interests of Western European states by integrating their economies to secure a long-lasting peace. The emphasis was understandably on strengthening internal integration, moving on from the idea that decisions should be taken nationally to the idea that they could be made across the European. Many assumed that a common market would become a single market, that the single market would engender a single currency, and ever closer European economic cooperation would progress into political union.
>
> Today, however, it is the far-reaching and fundamental changes of globalisation to which Europe's nations need to respond. The issue now is not just how the enlarged EU of 27 Member States work effectively, but how these member states reach out to the rest of the world. As José Manuel Barrosso, the President of the European Commission, has noted, "…global Europe must be an open Europe. It must be an outward-looking Europe. And it can and must resist those whose response to globalisation is to retreat behind protectionist barricades."
>
> (Cabinet Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2007: 3)

This passage represents a dramatic intervention into the European debate at the domestic and EU levels. The substantial controversy that accompanied (and accompanies) the integration of markets is written-off as a debate for the past. As with the "first era of response to globalisation," necessary actions were taken that cannot be reversed, but a new direction is needed in response to the global economy. The narrative of the transition from common market to political union is ostensibly left open, and nothing in the ensuing argument invalidates it. But the sentence being in the past tense, modalized with "many assume", and followed by the

contrastive "however," all suggest without stating it that that project is no longer appropriate. Again isolation is invoked, here phrased as protectionism and accompanied by the words "retreat" and "barricades" that carry a negative (indeed, backward-looking) connotation. But the rhetoric has changed here, such that the sin of protectionism is now *associated* with the wrong kind of integration, rather than opposed to integration generally. This is a recontextualization of the discourse used to legitimate New Labour's commitment to Europe, now used to promote a specific vision of the European project. It is a vision that the document labels "a positive, pro-European but realistic approach" (Cabinet Office/Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2007: 1). This formulation connects convictions and economic realities in a different way from the 1990s discourse, but it serves the same purpose in rendering European integration largely inevitable—in this case rather explicitly closing the debate about institutional design in favor of a less-domestically-politicized one about external policy.

Less changed between these texts is the basic framing of globalization as a fixed and self-contained phenomenon. This is despite the fact that transpiring between the two were September 11th and other major terrorist attacks, and several wars in which the UK was engaged. In fact, these developments are largely subsumed by the discourse: "Globalisation also presents new security challenges for Member States […] including threats from international terrorism, organized crime and inter-state and intra-state instability" (Cabinet Office/Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2007: 6). Once again, the logic of appearances predominates, such that there is no explicit connection made between these various forms of insecurity and the broader globalizing processes with which they are purportedly entwined. The notion of presenting challenges is unclear; are these causal effects of economic integration, or something else? Later it is explained that "[t]errorists make maximum use of the tools of globalisation to realise their

aims, such as the internet, mobile communications and the media" (Cabinet Office/Foreign &

Commonwealth Office 2007: 10). While this does little to clarify the definition of globalization

in this context, it does suggest that terrorists exist outside of globalization proper, taking

advantage of it when they can. This construction, as opposed to an image of terrorism as an

inherent feature of globalization, is more consistent with rest of the text, which includes for

example a page on "The Benefits of Globalisation" without an accompanying discussion of costs

(Cabinet Office/Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2007: 7). The latter would suggest a weighing

of possibilities and therefore a debate on globalization itself, which is ruled out by this discourse

(as that would undermine its power to shape political competition); as Blair famously told the

Labour Party conference in 2005:

> The pace of change can either overwhelm us, or make our lives better and our country stronger. What we can't do is pretend it is not happening. I hear people say we have to stop and debate globalisation. *You might as well debate whether autumn should follow summer.*
>
> (Blair 2005; emphasis added)

Findings and Extensions

The foregoing analysis shows that there are three key aspects of the now-dominant

globalization discourse that can be seen to serve specific functions in the context of party

competition: First, the strong epistemic modality used with "logic of appearances" descriptions

of globalization suggest an external and relatively inflexible constraint on national politics. This

basic framing reinforces other rhetorical and discursive functions by effectively removing the

existence and fundamental nature of globalization from the realm of acceptable matters of

debate; indeed, in the Blair quote about autumn following summer it is quite literally naturalized.

Second, there is the more specific temporal aspect of the discourse. In this aspect, global

developments are constructed as a radical break with the (recent) past which is operating at all levels. This also operates to remove certain questions from the realm of politics (by reframing them as debates of the past), and allowed New Labour to project a distinct, modern identity without appearing to betray its ideological heritage (i.e., the context changed, not the values). Finally, there is a spatial dimension to globalization discourse, which depicts a world where meaningful decisions are increasingly taken at levels above the nation-state. Though not as prominent in New Labour discourse overall, this aspect is crucial to the rhetoric on Europe because it recasts engagement with Europe as empowering rather than restricting in the new global environment.

Turning to the puzzling cases of SNP and UKIP, I expect to find that the above formulations be repurposed to their ends. With these discursive tools available as "raw material" to those other *bricoleur* parties in the British system, it is likely to be more politically efficient to make use of them rather than reinvent the wheel. Below I will briefly outline the strategic aims and competitive contexts of these parties, which will suggest the ways we can expect each to make use of different aspects of the dominant globalization discourse.

The Scottish National Party: Towards a Global Scotland?

SNP has long built its call for Scottish national autonomy around the legitimating discourse of the "Scottish myth", which holds that Scotland has always been a fundamentally more communal and egalitarian society than England and thus requires distinctive public policy (McCrone 2001: 90-100; Béland and Lecours 2008: 101). This discourse constituted common ground around which Labour and the nationalists could converge and finally achieve the groundbreaking constitutional reform that had been debated for decades. But in the SNP's quest

for full independence, the logic of the Scottish myth is a problem: If the key to Scottish distinctiveness is (domestic) social policy, why would Scots need any more powers than that?

The potential for the globalization discourse here is to delegitimize devolution by asserting that in the globalized world, domestic autonomy is insufficient, and that only an independent voice in global governance will do. The party has long positioned itself this way, contra a small minority faction of isolationsists, as "nationalists *and* internationalists" (Fabiani, personal interview, 2012). A white paper on plans for independence, published in 2009 during SNP's first term as the party of government in Scotland, set out this position explicitly: "Independence would give Scotland the responsibility for making decisions about its future as part of an international, globalised environment, making a full contribution to the interdependent world" (Scottish Government 2009: 18). And this invocation of "interdependence" as a rhetorical conduit between notions of globalism and independence has recently been only increasing among party leadership (Fabiani, personal interview, 2012). Therefore, I expect to find representations in the SNP discourse of an inevitable "scaling up" of economic control—from national and sub-national to regional and global forms of authority—but without the often associated notion of an inevitable shift of power from political to economic actors. In other words, their representations of contemporary world order will emphasize what I have called the spatial aspect of globalization.

At the same time, the Scottish myth is still a powerful organizing principle, and key figures have argued that a distinctly social democratic stance is essential for the party's long-term viability, come what may on independence (MacAskill 2004, especially chapter 4). Thus, I would also expect the SNP discourse to assiduously deemphasize the temporal aspect, which would suggest that there is no room for a distinctly Scottish approach in the modern global

economy. Likewise, the party's rhetoric on the EU is likely to reflect the line on globalization: emphasis on opportunities for concerted global action rather than on the restraints imposed by the international system. Indeed, Europeanization is likely to be tied closely to their representation of globalization, because the embrace of Europe by the SNP is seen as being key to the achievement of devolution and their subsequent electoral success—Dardanelli (2009) even refers to this process as a heresthetic move.

The UK Independence Party: Globalization against Europe?

UKIP's articulation of globalization and Europeanization is likely to be quite different, of course. It was a commonplace of New Labour's rhetoric that, in an ever-more-globalized environment, Britain can no longer afford to part ways with the European Union (see James and Opperman 2009, as well as the texts discussed above). According to Labour's reasoning from the spatial logic of globalization, Europe is the key to the UK's continued success in the world, economically and otherwise. Yet UKIP has drawn upon the vocabulary of globalization, albeit in a way that paints the EU in quite a different light. Nigel Farage MEP, the party's current leader, has put this bluntly in the past: "I could not see the answer then and I certainly cannot see it now. To restrict trade in a global market, just as technology was liberating it, seemed and seems crazy" (qtd. in Daniel 2005: 13).

This appeal to the temporal aspect of globalization, framed as a matter of "common sense" as is popular with the party (Usherwood, personal interview, 2012), potentially answers a number of strategic needs. Most notably, UKIP needs to reframe the debate on Europe such that its stark withdrawal position is no longer associated with an atavistic nationalism, as it has often been (Sked, personal interview, 2012). This is an association that fuels, and is fueled by, the

party's (occasionally justified) tendency to be linked with the extreme-right British National Party (Daniel 2005). In other words, the invocation of globalization can be seen as a key attempt to 'texture' a distinctly modern identity, not unlike New Labour's explicit break with that party's past. UKIP can further be expected to heavily emphasize the temporal aspect in their discussion of globalization, despite the limits it places on national autonomy, because it fits a representation of the EU as placing undue restrictions on the modern economy. This is a key aspect of UKIP's rhetorical strategy that is politically valuable because highlighting examples of Brussels's "over-regulation" is more publicly-salient, and attracts more media attention, than other ways of critiquing the European Union (Sked, personal interview, 2012).

Conclusion

In both of these "least likely" cases, then, it appears that political strategy can explain the choice to invoke globalization, without assuming either that globalization is an objective and obvious fact or that it has become an internalized, hegemonic idea. Moreover, this reading implies specific and distinct ways articulating globalization from these parties—distinct from each other and from New Labour. The usefulness of this theoretical approach will be borne out by the degree to which these expectations help to make sense of the concrete texts produced by SNP and UKIP. And to the extent that heresthetic bricolage does appear to explain the choice of language, it will shed light on how we can expect the dominant discourse to evolve in the future.

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