

# **Discipline and Process: A Topography of Power in the Modern Political Party**

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## **Abstract**

The literature on party political discipline is relatively small and narrow in focus. It tends to focus almost exclusively on parliamentary parties. Where it does bring the extra-parliamentary party in, it is simply as a variable acting upon the behaviour of MPs. Furthermore, a general problem in the literature is that it lacks a developed understanding of power. For the most part, power is not directly theorised, and the underlying assumptions of much of the analysis seems to indicate a relatively simple agentic approach. This means that analysis often fails to grasp the extent to which discipline can be conceived as an underlying principle of organisation that working on a variety of different levels throughout the party as a whole. I argue that the study of discipline in political parties would therefore benefit from the utilisation of alternative understandings of power, its modes and sites of operation. For example, power can be seen as a macro-level force, operating through 'social structures' and the disciplinary effect of the routinisation of action. Alternatively, power works at a micro-level, through the productive, detailed application of techniques that sit outside of formal institutions and structures. I argue, therefore, that discipline in political parties works at a number of different levels, each corresponding to a different understanding of power, where it is situated and how it operates. To this end, I propose a 'topography', or map, of power that can be used as a framework for the analysis of discipline to be applied to the political party as a whole organisation.

## **Introduction**

The question of how parties, as a series of complex relationships between organisations, individuals and legislative structures, can generate enough discipline to sustain themselves over long periods of time is 'one of the mysteries of parliamentary government' (Gianetti and Laver 2005, 4). It is one that has been subject to a variety of explanations. Some argue that all we are seeing is the exercise of preferences by collections of rational individuals (Krehbiel 2000). Others have tempered this by suggesting that those preferences are directed by the careful structuring of incentives (Bowler, Farrell and Katz 1999; Cox & McCubbins 1993). Others still have emphasised how electoral and legislative rules-of-the-game, party decision-making and selection processes bind the rationality of legislative actors (McElroy 2001; Davidson-Schmich 2006). Some have further suggested that shared values and socialisation generate cohesion, which is a crucial foundation for discipline (Jensen 2000; Owens 2006).

On the whole, studies of party discipline focus tend to focus on the party in the legislature. Occasionally the extra-parliamentary party is brought into the picture, but only as a means of explaining parliamentary behaviour. This is unfortunate because it leaves whole layers of party life underexamined. Moreover, all of these approaches are broadly characterised by two things, the adequacy of which I seek to question. First, is that each is predicated on the subject in that, to varying degrees, the subject is

an individual that makes choices on the basis of information, in response to incentives, or in the context of institutional constraints that are relatively visible. On the other hand, the individual is limited by the intellectual and emotional tools available to her, which are a product of more nebulous and continuous processes of socialisation. Either way, to conceive this in terms of power, we might conclude that power operates on individuals negatively by constraining and contextualising, or framing, their choices in various ways. What is missed, however, is the extent to which power may be more than just a negative force of constraint. What if we saw power as productive, positive, or constitutive for example? Would that not lead us towards some different conclusions as regards the location of power, the production of political identity and the role of the subject in it? What this requires is a re-positioning. Examining parties from the vantage point of power, rather than vice versa will allow us to look differently at the question of discipline, how it is generated and sustained.

The second broad characteristic that I would question is that, although I have argued power is inadequately theorised across the range of literature, it is clear that there are underlying assumptions made about power. In general there appears to be an understanding of power as fixed, ordered and hierarchical. That is, power is generally invested in leaders by virtue of their position. It is leaders who therefore possess control over disciplinary tools and use them on backbenchers. Bowler, Farrell and Katz (1999) seem to head tantalisingly in the direction of a more strategic view of power, but this is not followed through. They argue that discipline is a 'two-way' process. This suggests, however, that it goes up and down a hierarchy in which it is still invested. I argue that we need to break out of a purely Hobbesian world of hierarchy and sovereignty, and understand power as much more contingent, as a field of forces to capture and occupy, rather than a thing to be possessed. We should, in Foucault's words, 'cut off the king's head' and develop an understanding of power as something that operates through strategy rather than ordered structure.

The positive-constitutive, and the independent and strategic sides of power deserve to be explored and developed further in the context of politics. The question of party discipline, how it operates at different levels in different ways, is one to which such ideas can be usefully applied. To that end, I will develop a topography of power which takes account of the variety of its operation.

### **Developing a Framework of Power**

Lukes (2005) has perhaps most famously argued for a multi-dimensional understanding of power, suggesting that power as well as having a behavioural dimension, and a more covert second dimension, has an 'insidious' third face. Whilst I am supportive of Lukes' aim, I disagree with him two points. Firstly, in building directly on the behavioural approaches of Dahl (1958) and Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) more sophisticated version, he makes spurious claims about individuals having 'real interests' that are concealed from them and seems to ascribe a certain kind of agency to institutions. This is because he retains the idea that underlying power is the premise that 'A affects B in some way' (Luke 2005, 37). Secondly, and consequently, I do not believe that he goes far enough in his extension of the definition of power. As well as sites of conflict between individuals, institutions like political parties can,

for example, be seen as an organisation *of* power. It should be recognised, however, that this is a power of a different kind, one that is an effect of structure rather than an exercise of preferences. Additionally, parties can be seen as containing within them a certain kind of routinised disciplinary power that is inherent in bureaucratic organisations. Power can be conceived as also working on a micro-level through the banal details and petty disciplines of party life (for example in the routine of meetings and canvassing).

I therefore argue that power works on a number of distinct levels. Each level is distinguished by its primary mode of operation: e.g. whether it is behavioural, or something that can be regarded as more structural in its origin. This multi-level idea of power takes the form of a 'topography', or map which can be used as a framework for the analysis of party discipline. This topography can be summarised as follows:

- > First Level: Overt Behaviour. This first element corresponds with behavioural approaches (such as that of Dahl) and rational choice theory. Power is observable in the prevailing of one interest or set of interests over another through direct action and concrete decision in public arenas. It is perhaps one of the most common assumptions made about power, particularly in studies of party discipline focused on the quantitative analysis of voting behaviour.
- > Second Level: Covert Behaviour. As well as being observable as above, the exercise of power can be more covert and found in indirect conflict and the concept of 'non-decisions' (as Bachrach and Baratz have elaborated). It includes the idea of authority, influence and manipulation as well as coercion and force. As well as overt behaviour, we need to examine how rules, prevailing values and practices might be manipulated to prevent some issues coming into the public arena, thereby avoiding potential defeat in an overt conflict.
- > Third Level: Structural Power. This element is derived from the approaches of structural Marxism. Here, power operates impersonally through 'social structures'. It is not conceived as a property of 'agents'. Individuals are, in a sense, 'bearers' of structure. Furthermore, the power that comes from structure is *organised* in institutions (like political parties). Wants and desires, preferences and actions are shaped by, for example, socialisation and the internalisation of norms and values of parliament and party. This power can be detected in the organisational structures of the party and in the conflicting practices of various groups within it. It means reorienting analysis away from the examination of individuals, and towards the cultural and social elements in which individuals are distributed.
- > Fourth Level: Routinised Power. Within the actual operation of organisation, power works through the routine of procedures and organisational practice, that is in bureaucratic organisation (which is a dominant form throughout society). This is derived from Weber's concept of discipline as a particular type of power, and its manifestation in bureaucracy. Although originating in the pursuit of substantively rational goals by individuals, the development of the organisation required in large societies to achieve those goals takes on its own kind of routinised, disciplined power. The individual becomes stifled and overwhelmed

by the formalisation and routinisation of relations through the growth of organisation.

- > Fifth Level: Micro-power. As well as operating through individual behaviour, structure and organisation, power can also be seen to be at work in day-to-day relations, the detailed and banal activities, events and routines of party life. It operates through knowledge, practice and technique such as approaches to campaigning, the way meetings are organised, what people wear, language and so on. This micro-power, which is drawn from Michel Foucault's ideas about power and discipline, can be seen as more positive and productive than the other four elements, in that they contribute to the production of a 'political identity'. They emerge not through the command of a hierarchy but in everyday and often banal or contingent phenomena.

I will briefly examine each of these elements in turn, whilst at the same time suggesting where evidence might be found to support their inclusion in the framework. A summary table of the framework can be found in Appendix II. Methodological issues are discussed in Appendix I.

### **The First Level: Behaviour and Rationality**

The first and perhaps most obvious thing to say about party discipline is that is that individual members and representatives behave in certain ways because it is in their interests to do so. A politician follows the party line because they gain some personal benefit as a result, or they avoid sanctions. An individual joins a political party and subjects herself to its discipline because it gives her the opportunity to run for office, or the satisfaction of seeing certain policies she supports carried out.

This aspect of discipline situates power very clearly at the level of the *individual*. The individual is assumed to be conscious of her own interests, which are (for the most part) internal to her (Downs 1957, 20). Power is also *rational*. Its exercise is tied to conscious goals and the ordered preferences or interests of rational actors (Ibid., 20). This might be evident in policy preference, or in ambition for status amongst other things. It is therefore intimately bound up with an methodologically individualist understanding of agency, i.e. the (exclusive) ability of individuals to have interests and to act according to them. At the same time, although power belongs to individuals, it cannot be exercised alone. To be manifest, power requires the participation of more than one individual, because it is a *causal relation* (Dahl 1968, 11), or is at least closely related to cause (Dowding 1996, 3). Thus it is demonstrated in Dahl's formula in which A gets B to do something B would otherwise not do (Lukes 2005, 16). In this respect it is also *oppositional*, i.e. power becomes apparent in a visible conflict of interest between at least two individuals in which the interests of one prevail over those of the other (Dahl 1958, 464).

Since political parties are regarded here as collections of rationally motivated individuals, there are collective action problems resulting from the existence of a variety of potentially competing and conflicting interests, which must be resolved by the application of selective incentives (Olson 1971). In parliament, the exercise of power by party leaders is a potential solution to such collective action problems in

political parties. Power is based on possession of or access to and utilisation of certain *resources* which are unequally distributed between individuals. Leaders have available to them resources with which they can offer incentives to the rank-and-file for following the leadership line on a certain issue. For example, control over the pay-roll, or patronage (e.g. appointments to committees), or mechanisms of formal punishment (Owens 2006), can be used as incentives to discipline the behaviour of MPs. Also, as Cowley (2002) and others have pointed out, the simple fact of the party label is incredibly important to the career prospects of MPs, and the concern not to see damage done to it ultimately ensures acceptance of discipline in a broader sense.

### **The Second Level: Covert Behaviour and Nondecision**

Discipline may also be maintained, however, by more manipulative means and the avoidance of direct confrontation. Concrete decisions are only one way in which power might be evident. 'Nondecisions' are also important vehicles of power. Nondecisions are 'the primary method for sustaining a given mobilisation of bias' (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 44). In this case, B's disagreement with A may be effectively suffocated and kept covert, it may be headed off, thereby failing to gain access to the decision-making arena at all, or destroyed in the 'decision-implementing' stage (Ibid., 44).

In this kind of scenario, discipline is maintained by keeping manifest conflicts of interest and confrontations out of visible decision-making arenas. For example, a policy issue may be referred to a commission or an enquiry. Therefore, the risk of a public split in the party, or defeat for leaders, over a particular issue is circumvented. Of course, force may be used to do this, but in most democratic situations it is more likely that this will be achieved through exercising sanctions and incentives or even by the co-optation of rebellious elements. Further, and most covertly, this mobilisation of bias can be achieved by invoking norms, rules and procedures which bat decisions away (such as commissioning studies or enquiries). Norms may also be re-shaped and strengthened by adding new rules and procedures to those that already exist, and new barriers that block the possibility of debate.

Procedural devices may be used to avoid a vote on a particular question, or debates may be 'swamped' (this happened over the question of student grants in recent years, for example), in order to limit expressions of dissent and fragment opposition. One can see this kind of behaviour at work in the way that the question of the mandatory reselection of MPs in the Labour Party was repeatedly referenced-back to the NEC during the 1970s<sup>1</sup>. Issues in this way can be 'organised out' of politics and the appearance of discipline maintained.

### **The Third Level: Structural Power**

Owens (2006) argues that the application of sanctions and incentives are not enough of an explanation for party discipline. He argues that some element of *cohesion* has to

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<sup>1</sup> Although of course, in this case, the issue kept coming back until it was finally adopted.

exist for discipline to be accepted in the first place. In particular, these may come from shared norms and values, the political culture and so on. However, he does not take this analysis much further. Where do these norms and values come from? How do party members become part of these shared values and practices? How are norms and values reinforced, reproduced and organised in party organisational structures? How do conflicts between different sets of norms and values play out within the party, for example if a party member and activist becomes a member of parliament or even a local councillor? Although, the work of structural Marxists like Nicos Poulantzas seems an unlikely source to draw on for the purposes of engaging in an analysis of party discipline, I would argue that such theoretical approaches to power can be of use to us here. This strand of theory directs us to consider broader, more 'impersonal' influences that might shape and produce political institutions and even political actors themselves. Poulantzas, standing at a different vantage point, sees power in a radically different way to the first two approaches I have examined.

All important in this approach is the idea of 'structure'. The endless 'structure-agency' debate in social science is not one I am inclined to recount here. However, I would argue that it is not enough simply to regard structures as a series of constraints on action and no more, as Dowding (1996) does. Such an understanding fails to grasp the extent to which individuals are not, and cannot be, independent of social organisation (of work, of social life, of political life, of ideas), institutions or culture. The practices in which people move, act and interact, in which they think and reflect, are worthy of examination as a means by which power might act upon them. It is not that I do not accept that structures might in some sense be the product of human action in the final analysis. Neither do I suggest that structures have 'agency' as such. Dowding rightly argues that 'structures' cannot choose whether to act or not. However, I disagree that this means they cannot be said to be a source of power. It is just that it is a different *kind* of power to that exercised by individuals.

The structure, although a concept sometimes hard to grasp (and certainly to observe empirically), refers very broadly to the organising principles of the social world. Poulantzas (1978) conceives power, not so much as something *in* structure, but as an *effect* of structure. Power expresses itself in the relations of conflict that are the result of the conflicts and contradictions in structure. At the same time, individuals (as 'agents of production') are 'bearers' of the structure and also inserted into these conflicting groups. Furthermore, power is also organised in institutions. Thus the political party, as an institution, can be seen as a site for the organisation of power. Agents, the members, officers, even the leaders of the party, are shaped by a more structural kind of power working on them. This power can be detected in the organisational structures of the party and in the conflicting practices of various groups within it. We reorient our analysis, therefore, from the examination of individuals, to the cultural and social conflicts of practices in which individuals are distributed. This means that we can examine how it is that agents are constituted and disciplined by structural forces.

These kinds of ideas can be more difficult to apply empirically. However, by way of example, the Labour Party can be seen as historically containing within it conflicting cultures of collective organisation originating in trade union/ working class norms and individualist liberal political culture. This, arguably, has been a key source of conflict within the party. It is a possible point at which some of Poulantzas' key ideas can be

applied to the study of discipline. First, the organisation of power in institutions and, second, its manifestation in conflict between practices, can form a framework in which we examine to what extent discipline is the product of structural forces. For example, how are relations of discipline between MPs and other parts of the party organisation affected by the coming into conflict of parliamentary and party organisational culture?

### **The Fourth Level: Bureaucratic Power**

The structural approach puts individuals aside, regarding them as products of structure, but there is little sense of how structural forces may, in fact, originate in human action. Furthermore, what many individually focused ideas of power often fail to ask is how does the power that is exercised by agents *become* organised? Further, if it does become organised, does it remain a property of agents? In other words, is there not a sense in which action and the exercise of power can *become* structured? Political parties are groups formed for the pursuit of substantively rational goals, whether those be particular policies or the quest for office for its own sake. To be successful, parties need to maintain some kind of continuous presence between elections with which they can fundraise, select candidates, maintain campaigning resources and so on. Therefore, in order to support these goals, parties have to become permanently organised and develop a means of administration. In short, they become bureaucracies.

The effect of bureaucratic organisation on political parties has been addressed many times in the past, not least by Michels (1968) and Duverger (1959). They argue that it is a means by which leadership elites come to dominate over a professionalised organisation, dislocated from those for whose benefit the party was founded. What they do not do, however, is examine the experience of those actually 'caught up' in the bureaucracy. How do such forces shape the actual experience of members and the nature of activism, for example? What is the experience of party as far as the bureaucrat herself, the paid administrator or party official, is concerned? What is the outcome of bureaucratic processes on the way in which the party functions at the ground-level? It is not enough simply to say that it is a means by which power is removed from the grass-roots to the top of a hierarchy (indeed, it is questionable in any case that the grass-roots were ever particularly 'powerful' in that sense anyway). It should be examined as a form of power in its own right.

Max Weber's analysis of bureaucracy as a specifically modern form of organisation can provide us with some analytical tools here. It is the 'most rational offspring' of the totalising, rational force of disciplinary power (Weber 1948, 254). He argues that as organisations in the pursuit of rational goals become larger, they quite naturally become complicated to administer, and need calculable rules and objective, qualified expertise to run it (Weber 1978, 975). What bureaucracy means for administration, whether in the state, a firm or a political party is the ability to operate continuously at the optimum level. First, tasks and functions are clearly separated and delineated. Then they are divided up into different positions in a hierarchy, in which authority is strictly delimited, and responsibilities fixed within carefully defined jurisdictions. Thus, being a set of depersonalised and functionalised tasks, allocated to roles, the methodical and continuous fulfilment of each of these tasks by each functionary can

be set in motion (Ibid., 956-958). It is *'the means of transforming social action into rationally organised action'* (Ibid., 987). It would be impossible to imagine a modern, large society without bureaucracy. Furthermore, it would be impossible for any organisation like a business, a hospital or a school, or indeed a political party, to operate in such a society without bureaucracy.

But despite the benefits, Weber warns that the development and growth of bureaucracy as a means of administration has potentially grave consequences for society<sup>2</sup>. The machine-like momentum of bureaucracy has a tendency to develop a life of its own and indeed *'the power position of a fully developed bureaucracy is always great, under normal conditions overtopping'* (Ibid., 991). It develops a specific kind of mechanistic power, he argues, which is underpinned by discipline (Weber 1948, 254), the primary purpose of which becomes the perpetuation of the machine itself. Thus, a functional machine-like rationality set in motion by individuals is turned back on the latter, overwhelming the substantive rationality of the individual. Individual human become cogs, elements of machinery and tools of processes with their own logic and momentum. Bureaucracy becomes increasingly impossible to replace or undermine and the system of domination that results from it becomes *'practically indestructible'* (Ibid., 987). The complacency of human nature is partly to blame, he argues. The *'settled orientation of man for observing the accustomed rules and regulations'* which the machine has set in motion means that *'the idea of eliminating ... [them] becomes more and more utopian'* (Ibid., 988).

Political parties are not immune from these kinds of forces. Parties, too, are organisations with staff and elected party officials, systems of management, processes and procedures. I am interested in how we can use the idea of bureaucracy as a kind of power as a tool within which to examine the way in which party members and officers in particular become caught up in and disciplined by the routines and rules of organisational life. Parties contain within them certain *'ways of doing things'*, rules & regulations, procedures, systems and process that structure and discipline individuals and their actions.

### **The Fifth Level: Foucault and Disciplinary Power**

Thus far, I have examined power as being in some way a property, whether of individuals, of structure, or of organisational processes. However, the final theory of power in this framework represents a radically different view. Michel Foucault argues that power cannot be regarded as a property of, or located in, any of these places. It is

*not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society* (Foucault 1979, 93).

Foucault presents power as an independent force that operates in the minutiae, the everyday relations and practices that might not always be noticed as power. He also,

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed as society, its need for and its dependence on organisation, grows (in work, governance, even leisure and culture) it begs the question of whether anyone at all is truly outside of bureaucratic machinery.

through his own concept of discipline, ties power closely together with knowledge. Power thus becomes not something that restricts and oppresses the individual, so much as *constitutes* her as an object of knowledge and control. Foucault can equip us with a unique set of tools for the investigation of power, which direct us to look beyond structures and agents to discern power in less obvious places.

Foucault rejects notions of ordered power, and argues that it should be deciphered on the basis of strategy immanent in force relationships (Foucault 1979, 97). As Foucault argued in a 1976 interview, 'we need to cut off the king's head. In political theory that still has to be done' (Foucault 1994, 122). We should reorientate our view of power, he says, seeing it as relational and as coming from 'below'. Foucault is in this respect quite close to Machiavelli's strategic and contingent understanding of power. For him, it is not a stable or fixed property. Rather, power relations are engaged in 'ceaseless struggles and confrontations' (Ibid., 92). Organisations, hierarchies and structures are, for Foucault, only 'terminal forms' of power, not sources of or forms of it in themselves. We will therefore not be able to grasp the nature of this power at work in political parties by analysis of the latter's structures, mechanisms and leaders. Analysis, therefore, circumvents the 'traditional' sites of what might normally be recognised as power and focuses on what might often be regarded as banal. Bypassing the hierarchy and structures of a political party, for example, we are instead drawn to the routines and details of party life. We need to look more closely at relations, at the techniques and strategies of discipline at work within them.

To uncover this kind of power, one would want to ask the question how particular practices and techniques emerge from particular solutions to specific problems and proliferate. Political parties can be conceived of as a set of techniques, codes and narratives as anything else. For example, we could examine 'New Labour' from the point of view certain practices, such as market research techniques or methods of communication. Moreover, party leaders are as much disciplined and shaped by these things as members. Examples might include, the documentation and recording membership, campaigning and canvassing techniques, the means of recording activity, the use of direct marketing techniques to communicate with members, the adoption of particular principles for the management of party business. The points of analysis might include things like the agenda of a party meeting, a dress-code, a particular way of addressing colleagues in meetings, a canvassing script, a form letter, a leaflet or a magazine.

These are the kinds of points at which disciplinary power could be produced and reproduced. It is at work in the day-to-day relations between members, the way they socialise, the conversations they have, the language they use in meetings and outside of meetings. For MPs we might be concerned with training, parliamentary language, self-presentation and image-projection including speech, hair and dress, and so on. The point is that the analyst's eye is turned to how these phenomena construct a particular type of individual or identity that behaves and perceives of herself in a particular way. We want to know if it is possible to discover, to unmask, the disciplinary power working through these detailed, often quite banal activities and relations.

## Conclusion

In the existing literature on party discipline, power, for the most part, is assumed rather than investigated. This is a pity, since there is a rich literature approaching power through the prism of the organisation of people and society in different ways. An investigation of the range of this literature, or at least a selection of it, will provide us with a wider, and more sophisticated selection of tools with which we can investigate power in parties. Power can be evident in action and in manipulation. It can be buried in apparatuses of socialisation and organisational operation. It can be hidden in knowledge, techniques and their practice. It can operate through the day-to-day detailed 'micro-processes' of organisational life. These different perspectives, often regarded as being in tension with one another, even contradictory, are in my view indispensable tools for developing a multi-dimensional understanding both of political organisation and of the concept of power itself. All too often the gaps and inconsistencies of one approach are used as a means of rejecting its insights all too cheaply. I eschew such an approach. There is a great 'toolbox' of ideas to be raided and it is short-sighted in my view not to make the best use possible of what is on offer. Using this topography as a framework for analysis, discipline as a concept can be defined more expansively and seen as a force and an idea with a much more extensive field of operation than is often understood. Perhaps then we will begin to solve the 'mystery' of party discipline.

## **Appendix 1: Methodological Issues**

This is mainly a theoretical piece of work. At the same time, however, I believe that it is crucial in any theoretical work to gather empirical information with which to support it. The Labour Party between 1987 and 1997 will act as a case study. During this period, the party, its organisation and its members were subject to dramatic change. The key theme or narrative running through this period of the party's history was the mission to make the party 'electable', for which 'discipline' within the party ranks was regarded as essential. A more expansive idea of discipline, based on the five levels of power I have elaborated, can in my view give us useful tools with which to examine the process of change. More than simple measures of unity in parliamentary voting, and observable obedience to the leadership line, party discipline should be examined as a cultural, structural-organisational and practical phenomenon. At the same time, it is also evident in the detailed practices and day-to-day petty banalities that are often ignored or glossed-over in analytical terms by analysts of parties and party discipline.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted, in order to allow for the relatively systematic gathering of information pertinent to the thesis, whilst at the same time allowing the possibility of exploring avenues as they open up in particular cases. Those interviewed will include a selection of ordinary party members and activists of the time, those employed party during the period, MPs who were in parliament during this period. I will also be consulting diaries, archives etc. to support some the evidence / information gathered during this process.

As regards the likely use of the information gathered from the interview process, the first, second and fourth types of power should be reasonably straightforward to identify. The third and the fifth, however, are likely to be more difficult to identify directly. Hence, for these I will be looking for clues and possible traces rather than any hard evidence. In any case, the purpose of the interviews is not so much to produce scientific evidence to prove or refute a theory, so much as to locate and identify empirical information that can shed light on the framework of power and discipline in political parties that I put forward. Another issue to be aware of is the danger of mistaking Dimensions 2 and 4. The manipulation of rules and procedures should not be mistaken for the operation of processes and bureaucratic procedure. Whilst one of these refers to the means by which decisions, and confrontations over them are avoided or by-passed using rules and procedures, the other is about how decisions (and problems) become structured and determined by the operation of bureaucracy .

My approach to interviews will sit somewhere between what Silverman (2001) calls an emotionalist and a constructionist one. That is, I accept that an interview is a unique situation in which a narrative and its meaning is constructed between interviewer and interviewee, whilst at the same time arguing that the experiences of the interviewee have meaning for him or her and require understanding and interpretation by the interviewer. In short it is a process in which questions are framed (consciously or otherwise) and in which answers are constructed around the narrative of the respondent, and within an overall framework set by the interviewer. This does not, in my view, undermine the process. It is the experience and the respondent's memory of it that I wish to examine.

## **Appendix 2: A Summary of the Framework**

Power Type	Characteristics	Process / Method	Rsch Questions	Finding evidence / clues
Dimension 1: Power as an overt force characterised by a direct causal relation between individuals or groups, securing the interest of one person or group over another.	Situated – visible / observable; Conflict – preference driven; Concrete decisions; 'key' decisions	ID key issue over which there is clear conflict; Who was involved? Who prevailed?; What resources did victors use?	Who wins? How? What resources do they use?	Confrontations over an issue, decision in which a person or group wins out in the teeth of opposition.
Dimension 2: Power as an indirect manipulation of organisation or rules in order to secure the interests of one group over another.	Mobilisation of bias; Observable conflict / grievances; Covert handling; Rules-of-the game (esp. formal); Power-Authority-Influence (PAI)	Examine decision-making processes: rules & prevailing values; ID key conflicts; Nondecisions: how rules etc used to win.	Who is disfavoured? How is that perpetuated by PAI; How are new sources of PAI generated?	Confrontations excluded from formal arenas, or issues over which decisions were avoided by the body of the party by by-passing them.
Dimension 3: Power as socially structured or patterned behaviour that shapes and determines people's understanding of their own interests and desires.	Not decision-oriented; Structured and patterned behaviour; shaping wants – inculcates & reproduces	Look for clues of dominant ideologies: how constituted and reproduced; political socialisation – relationship with (a) party culture. <i>Mainly via critical exposition of theory</i>	What ideolog(ies) are embedded in structures; how is it reproduced?	Evidence of accepted and basic premises of party beliefs and culture, appearance of socialisation into party norms / values: what the party and being a member of it is <i>for</i> .
Dimension 4: Power as a phenomenon that structures (and restricts) action through the operation of routinised organisational procedures and practices (bureaucratic power).	Process oriented; operation of machine (rules and procedures) over outcomes; Routine depersonalisation; 'De-agentification'.	Exploration of party rules & procedures in action; How feeding & filtering decisions / conflicts through system affects them; Routinised, structural discipline.	What is the impact of bureaucratic organisation on political action / decision; balance of power between leaders, members, party machine; in whose favour does it operate?	Rationally ordered 'social action', over 'community action' – evidence of the interests of the party machine (local or national) trumping others; against independent action, 'proper procedure'.
Dimension 5: Power as a micro-level phenomenon; an independent force which works in practices and knowledge, through which it produces identities and (certain types of) individuality.	Micro, detailed; Constitutive, positive; 'invisible' – through relations, knowledge.	Identification of practices, language, modes of behaviour; application of discourses (operating through these); how people 'see' themselves and others.		Informal party relations and culture; language and appearance (e.g. different strata of the party); techniques (knowledges) through e.g. training, programmes.

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