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**In Conversation with Norman Fairclough:
Introducing Neoliberalism into the
Television Policy of the Labour Party in the
UK, 1992 – 1997**

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Abstract

This thesis results from my first inspirational encounter with Norman Fairclough, his approach to position of discourse in the globalised economy and social change, and applies the methodology of CDA to a specific topic. This topic is the television policy of the Labour Party, 1992 – 1997. I explore the space of academic freedom transdisciplinarity and CDA provide in such a specific topic, posing simple questions within my reach: such as how far can entrance discourse into a policy prove influential for regulation of the market, how can a globalised discourse expand to national level or about the relationship between discourse and social change.

Keywords

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), transdisciplinary - Norman Fairclough, New Labour - broadcasting policy, television policy - Labour party, United Kingdom, 1992-1997, neoliberal discourse/discourse of new capitalism, television market – deregulation - UK

Prohlášení

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V Praze dne ...**20.5.2011**

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<u>Zdůvodnění výběru tématu práce (5 řádek):</u> Vysílání ve Spojeném království, podobně jako v ostatních zemích západní Evropy, dlouho podléhalo veřejné politice a regulaci. Kulturní a politické argumenty zůstaly nadále v platnosti, přesto vedl vývoj mediálních trhů po nástupu neoliberálních elit v 80. letech až do současnosti k jejich nebyvalému uvolnění, a to zvláště u (rozhlasového a televizního) vysílání. Diskurs vládnoucích elit rozhodně není jediným klíčovým faktorem při rozhodování o mediální politice, přesto po jeho proměně došlo k převratným změnám. Zároveň bývá ve společenských vědách v souvislosti s politickými stranami formování mediální politiky věnováno mnohem méně prostoru než politické komunikaci, ačkoli si toto téma zaslouží větší pozornost vzhledem k důsledkům, které přijatá legislativa má na produkci.
<u>Předpokládaný cíl:</u> Práce předpokládá zmapovat diskurs ve vztahu k regulaci vysílání u relevantních aktérů New Labour ještě před jejím nástupem k moci. Do jaké míry se odlišoval od diskursu vládnoucí Konzervativní strany?
<u>Základní charakteristika tématu (10 řádek):</u> Podíváme-li se do předvolebních programů z roku 1992, v manifestu Conservative Party médiím věnována pozornost není, v případě Labour Party se týká nijak radikálních opatření spíše v levicovém duchu. Conservative Party v té době již měla za sebou přijetí 1990 Broadcasting Act, který posunul vysílání o mnoho blíže ekonomickým ukazatelům a vzbudil tak řadu kontroverzí, jež se stále nesou v odborné diskusi o médiích. Strana tak zřejmě necítila potřebu se dále vyjadřovat k mediální politice. To ale neznamená, že by se mediální politika zcela vytratila z politické agendy či došlo k přerušení kontinuity v utváření pozic vzhledem k vysílání. Naopak, období do dalších voleb s sebou neslo předzvěsti nových technologií, jež strany ve volebních manifestech již nemohly pominout: zatímco CP hovoří o „information society,“ New Labour ve svém programu vyjadřuje podporu spolupráce státního sektoru s privátním s

příslibem rozvoje mediálního průmyslu a zabezpečení kvality a různorodosti divákovi.

Téma v sobě ukrývá výzvu v možnosti porovnání mediální politiky vládnoucí strany s diskursem strany, která se k moci teprve chystá. Rozhodně ale předpokládá základní charakteristiku ideových východisek obou stran pro formování postojů k mediální politice, identifikaci hlavních aktérů a klíčových dokumentů, reflexi diskuse o konkrétních krocích CP i během uplynulé vlády (kromě zmiňovaného Broadcasting Act, například i Peacock Report z roku 1986 a postup při jmenování do Board of Governors v BBC) a následně kritickou diskursní analýzu materiálů, které by obsahovaly diskurs relevantních aktérů obou stran v období, na které se práce hodlá zaměřit (předběžně 1990 – 1997 – možná bude upraveno).

Předpokládaná struktura práce:

3. Úvod (teorie, metodologie)
4. Diskurs v Conservative Party – ideová východiska, charakteristika, jaké konkrétní kroky a jejich hodnocení
5. Diskurs v New Labour - ideová východiska, charakteristika, co jej formulovalo, existovaly konkrétní koncepce kroků již při vstupu do vlády?
6. Porovnání obou diskursů: čím se New Labour v této oblasti lišila od „thatcherismu“
7. Závěr

Základní literatura:

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- 2 Freedman, Des (2008) : The Politics of Media Policy, Polity Press, 264 s
- 3 Franklin, Bob (2001) : British Television Policy: a reader, Routledge, London, 234 s (MUNI)
- 4 Crisell, Andrew (2002) : An introductory history of British broadcasting, London ; New York : Routledge, xxii, 322 s. ; 24 cm.
- 5 Curran, James; Seaton, Jean (2003) : Power without responsibility : the press, broadcasting, and new media in Britain / Jean Seaton.. -- 6th ed.. -- London ; New York : Routledge, 2003.. -- x, 459 s. ; 24 cm
- 6 Humphreys, Peter (1996): Mass media and media policy in Western Europe
- 7 Colin Hay (1999): The Political Economy of New Labour. Labouring under false pretences?, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- 8 Peter Golding , Graham Murdock The Political economy of the media. Vol.1/2 ,Glos, Elgar, 1997
- 9 Bradley, Christopher H. J. (1998) : Mrs. Thatcher's cultural policies, 1979-1990 : a comparative study of the globalized cultural system, Boulder : Social Science Monographs ; New York : Columbia University Press, Popis 415 s. ; 24 cm
- 10 1990 Broadcasting Act, BBC Charters, archive of Parliamentary debates, electoral manifestos, White Papers, pamphlets etc

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*Disciplinary specialisation is simultaneously necessary and insufficient, desirable
and dangerous*

(Norman Fairclough : 17)

1. Introduction

1.1. My „point of entry“ 1

In my mind, the dilemma of change in the globalised world, overfilled with information yet underinformed, has always inspired questions. What is it that makes certain patterns of thinking spread both horizontally and vertically, enter mainstream thinking and result in real actions? Mixing up a cocktail of different social scientific disciplines, there were two lines of interest that preceded the quest for the topic of my thesis and reached the point of intersection in my hypothesis:

Firstly, in democratic states, it is through media that the majority of information reaches the population/voters. In states with a decent democratic tradition, such as the United Kingdom, a stable management of the media environment is fixed. This allows both the governing and the opposition parties access to its voters and provides certain basic rules for the struggle in the field of political communication whereas, in a set media environment, „the public remains a largely passive force in the policy-making process“ (Freedman 2005 : 1). However, under the rule of Margaret Thatcher, large liberating changes were introduced to the previously tightly regulated media market, thus raising many critical voices, including the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, which even met with positive acknowledgement in the Labour Party. Can entrance into discourse in the party’s policies prove influential for the regulation of rules on the media market?

Secondly, after the unexpected death of John Smith in May 1994, the Labour Party voted for its new leader, Tony Blair. He and his team introduced a completely new style of leadership, strongly influenced by the neoliberal thinking of the US New Democrats (eg Seldon 2005 : chapter 11; King, Wickam – Jones 2002). But how does global discourse – in this case neoliberal – reach the national level?

In his long and formidable research developing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology, Norman Fairclough paid much attention to the language of new

1 Fairclough (2010 : 5)

capitalism, globalisation and also, in particular, New Labour. He supports the „transdisciplinary approach“ (Fairclough and Chiapello, Fairclough : 2002). In his own profile on the website of the University of Lancaster, he relays that his research is based on the „theoretical claim that discourse is an element of social life which is dialectically interconnected with other elements, and may have constructive and transformative effects on other elements. It also makes the claim that discourse has in many ways become a more salient and potent element of social life in the contemporary world, and that more general processes of current social change often seem to be initiated and driven by changes in discourse².“

In my thesis, I build on my hypothesis in the context of his theoretical claims. My topic is specific though, as I focus on the broadcasting level, which is largely neglected by Fairclough. I also test the relevance of his methodology,³ thus reaching the relevance of discourse and social change to the political economy of broadcasting. There is no doubt that the Labour Party went through a highly dynamic period between 1992 and 1997. CDA works in support of the view that social change and discourse are different, but not completely separate. Thus, the change in the Labour party naturally led to a change in discourse, including broadcasting policy.

This thesis aims to compare the broadcasting policies of the Labour Party during its preparation for the election of 1997. A detailed comparison of discourse and documents submitted under John Smith’s leadership, under Tony Blair’s leadership and the governmental discourse of the ruling Conservative Party should provide sufficient evidence to support Fairclough’s theoretical claims even on the level of broadcasting policy. Put simply, the hypothesis is that the need for change in the Labour Party and its new style of management engendered a change in the party’s broadcasting policy. The change in discourse of the policies should support the general claims of CDA on the interconnectivity and creativity of discourse.

In the first chapter, which is methodological, I focus on the position of discourse in theories of globalisation and its connection to social change, and also address points of departure for CDA. This allows me to elaborate on my hypothesis. The second chapter catches the development of the British television market away from the duopoly, as driven, yet not fully overruled, by the free market approach in the ruling Conservative

2 <http://ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/Norman-Fairclough> as of 25.4.2011

3 Fairclough prefers to use the word methodology rather than method, as his approach presupposes a set of given theoretical claims rather than follow a given procedure.

Party. The third chapter is devoted to the development of television policy in the Labour Party, particularly in the period of 1992 – 1997. The final chapter, I devote to language. I employ Fairclough's reflection of New Labour language and its position towards economy and then provoke thinking on the three texts I have representatively attached in the Appendix. Also, I aim to reach a concluding point through laying relevant pieces of general election manifestos of the Conservative and Labour Party in 1992 and 1997. These should be comprehensible for the reader by then and serve as a point of departure for the conclusion.

I chose the texts for analysis from a corpus of texts kindly provided for me by Dr Des Freedman. This corpus consists of policy documents, newspaper articles as well as a couple of emails mostly cited in his book (Freedman 2003), as they were relevant to the period covered in this thesis. It would have been complicated to obtain the materials from an archive given their recent nature (it also cannot be found in electronic versions as Labour published its first online policy paper only after it had entered government). Green and white papers published by the government are mostly, although not fully, accessible through House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.

For an outsider into the British political economy of communication, the *Power without responsibility* by James Curran⁴ and Jean Seaton (2003) as well as a reader edited by Bob Franklin (2001) into the television policy were an important point of entry, although this work does not cite from them as well as a couple of other, for this theme introductory articles and books.. The book by Peter Humphreys (1996) helped me understand the British duopoly in the wider framework of the European market. Both books by Freedman (2003) and Goodwin (1998) have proven invaluable for my thesis. For theoretical and methodological inspiration, Fairclough's large portfolio, especially the second edition of (2010) was useful, *Language and globalisation* (2006) and *New Labour, New Language* (2000).

4 Btw. James Curran even participated on creating Labour media policy in 1980's.

„-isms serve as indispensable maps because they guide people conceptually through the complexity of their political worlds“

(Roy and Steger 2010: 11)

1.2. My discourse explained

Criticisms may arise that I switch between „television“ and „broadcasting“ in my thesis. However, this is due to the relevance of the material I have been able to collect. With regards to radio, this went through deregulation in the time period under discussion, but has not attracted vital political controversies germane for this work.⁵

Also, I operate rather vaguely with the term „new capitalism“ although I explain it later in the terms of post-Fordism. For Fairclough, the term „new capitalism“ does not imply an exclusive focus on economic issues: „transformations in capitalism have ramifications throughout social life, and „new capitalism“ as a research theme should be interpreted broadly as a concern with these transformations impact on politics, artistic production...“ or broadcasting market. The common idea of new capitalism as a „knowledge driven“ implies that it is also discourse driven, suggesting that language may have a more significant role in contemporary socio-economic changes than it has had in the past. New capitalism carries its own vocabulary, such as „globalisation“, „flexibility“, „governance“, „employability“ and also „neoliberalism,“ as a discourse driven project of removing political obstacles. (Fairclough a : 1-2). My attitude to new capitalism and neoliberalism complies to the freedom of the term as provided by Fairclough.

5 A simple overview of UK radio deregulation history for example here: <http://www.mediauk.com/article/20411/the-history-and-development-of-radio-in-the-uk?page=2> as of 19.5.2011

„We find then not a reified „language“ or „society“ but an active social language. Nor is this language simply a „reflection“ or „expression“ of „material reality“. What we have rather is a grasping of this reality through language, which as practical consciousness is saturated by and saturates all social activity, including productive activity.“

(Raymond Williams 1977 : 37-8)

2. What Norman Fairclough´s CDA brings to the research of globalisation

This is a theoretical chapter that provides methodological background to the remainder of my thesis. First, I look at the relevance of globalisation, social change and discourse, then I approach Fairclough´s „methodology“ of CDA, finishing with a closer look into the use of CDA for my thesis.

2.1. Discourse as an element of social change : why should there be a need to address discourse as a facet of globalisation?

There is more and more literature on globalisation, more and more classifications and approaches, and the amount continues to grow. Based on the view of discourse as an element of globalisation, Fairclough (2006) divides academic literature into four approaches: „objectivist, rhetoricist, ideologist and social constructivist“, and yet stays well aware that these categories are very rough and serve only to provide background for his further argumentation.

The objectivist position (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Held et al 1999, Robertson 1992) treats globalisation as „simple and objective fact, which discourse may either illuminate or obscure, represent or misrepresent“ (Fairclough 2006:14). In this view, globalisation is a „set of processes,“ which is „in danger of becoming a cliché: the big idea that encompasses everything“ (Held et al 1999:1). He doubts whether the concept of it is defined by contemporary zeitgeist rather than academic analytical need.

The rhetoricist approach deals with how different discourses of globalisation can be used to support or legitimise actions and policies.⁶ Hay and Rosamond (2002) for

6 At this place, Norman Fairclough remarks how presupposed yet firmly set the „international market place“ and globalisation as „non negotiable external economic constraint“ in a speech of Tony Blair are, resulting in consequent policy priorities (2006:17).

example, draw a distinction between „globalization as discourses“ and „globalization as rhetoric“. On the one hand, there is the effect of globalisation on the „repertoire of discursive resources available to people“ or „effects of globalisation itself.“ On the other, globalisation as rhetoric describes „the strategic and persuasive deployment of such discourses...to legitimate particular courses of action“ or „effects of having internalized popular constructions of globalization.“ The authors show this deployment and its effects through various approaches to globalization in discourse between major EU countries (France, Germany, the UK) and in the case of the UK between domestic, European and international contexts. Thinking about rhetorics naturally provokes questions at a more systemic level: which social forces advocate certain discourses and how do discourses contribute to achieving and sustaining hegemony of certain practices?

In response to the question, the ideologist position focuses on „how particular discourses of globalization systematically contribute to the legitimisation of a particular global order which incorporates asymmetrical relation of power such as those between countries“ (Fairclough 2006 : 14). Steger’s (2005) term „globalism“ stands out as a highly discourse-relevant example; „This is a neo-liberal story which represents globalization as, and reduces it to, the global spread of the ‚free market‘ which neo-liberals advocate.“ This ideology thus refers to Gramscian views of hegemonic ideology (Gramsci 1971), which have gained enough acquiescence across society to gain power. Ideology distorts reality through the simplification of globalisation to the „free market“, legitimising the actions and policies of powerful social agents and contribution of integrative effect on their identity.⁷ While some highlight the effects of ideology and resulting „false consciousness“ in the reality of globalisation, Steger with his globalism goes beyond this. He points out the real effects and changes in the character of globalisation through a repetitive presentation of the ideology.⁸

Finally, Fairclough does not mean to discuss „social constructionism“ (Gergen 1999) as a particular philosophy of science, which „in its strong form claims that objects or referents of knowledge are nothing more than social constructions“ (Sayer 2000). Fairclough (2006 : 18) himself adopts a version of realism and points to the work of Cameron and Palan (2004) that „there is a covert acknowledgement of

7 Here Fairclough points to Ricoeur (1986), although being aware of recent discussions on Gramscian hegemony in Gray (1999) or Saul (2005).

8 He refers to Butler (1996:112).

globalization as discursively constructed even in some of the „objectivist“ literature.“ Again he selectively targets researchers who consider discourse primarily significant in the social construction of globalisation.

Cameron and Palan (2004) argue that believable narratives that are plausible for enough people can lead them to invest (in the widest sense possible) into the futures which these narratives project. There are two provisos. Firstly, the narrative needs to be plausible and yet suitable for a „reality check“ (Cameron and Palan 2004 : 8). Secondly, „the „reality“ that eventually arises from attempts to enact a theory that may bear little resemblance to what (people) actually predicted and prepared for (2004 : 4).“ In this context, they also argue that, while some narratives of globalisation are not attractive to academics, they may be highly plausible to politicians, businessmen or other practical agents involved.

Bob Jessop (1999, 2002) views globalization as a series of processes, running at many levels and in many fields, both strategic and structural in its nature. Structurally, globalisation is increasing interdependency among social processes and institutions. Strategically, various actors attempt to globally coordinate their activities „in particular sub-systems of the lifeworld“ (Fairclough 2006 :21). Both structures and agencies find themselves interdependent in the constant flow of development. Many old, many new and even newer strategies and changes compete in the flow, with rising intensity of the stream in times of crisis. Discourses and narratives have a particular and unavoidable role in the stream. They „simplify“ economic and political relations.

Which discourses and strategies indicate the main stream or rather achieve dominance or even hegemony depends on a number of factors:

„First, „structural selectivities“: structures are more open to some strategies than to others. Second, the scope and „reach“ of the other discourses of „globalisation“ or „knowledge based economy“ might be seen as „nodal discourses“ which articulate many other discourses (e.g. those we can sum up with the labels „lifelong learning“, „social exclusion“, „flexibility“). Third, there are the differential capacities and powers of the social agents whose strategy it is „to get their messages across,“ e.g. their access to and control over mass media and other channels and networks for diffusion. Fourth, there is the resonance of discourse with people’s experience of the world, and their capacity to mobilize people.“ (Fairclough 2006 : 21)

Specially relevant to this thesis is the claim that discourses and narratives have non-discursive effects. This claim is old, probably even older than the Thomas theorem (1928): „If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.“ Here it is applied to the discourse of globalisation within the context of political economy. It does

not imply that the state or economy would be „just discourse,“ but highlights the fact that „the economy as an object of regulation is viewed as an imaginatively narrated system“ and „the state is treated as an imagined political entity.“ Also, discourses may be used and function as rhetoric – thus neo-liberal narratives of globalisation (defined in the global scale) may serve to legitimize „social“ cuts. Agents and institutions are faced with structural contradictions inherent in capitalism. Fairclough points out that discourses need to reflect this.

A certain level of social constructionism is also reflected on by Harvey (1996), who conceives space and time as social constructs. These two aspects are „co-constructed“ and this social construction is further a part of mapping, in which different space-times are constructed with particular relations between them. Again, this social construction has a role in the construction of social life in the community. As such, changes in the construction of space-times are an equally fundamental facet of social change, no matter if transition from feudalism to capitalism or contemporary changes are discussed.

Harvey views discourse as one of six moments of the social process: discourse, power, beliefs and values and desires, social relations, institutions and rituals, and material practices. Each of these moments is distinctive but also internally constituted in relation to the other.

„(T)hus for instance discourses „internalize in some sense everything that occurs at other moments“, and „discursive effects suffuse and saturate all other moments“. But „internalization is always a translation or metamorphosis...rather than an exact replica or perfect mimesis“, a „gap“ always exists between different moments – which is why no totalitarian attempt to „sew up“ social life can fully succeed. Moreover, each moment „internalizes heterogeneity:“ in translating other moments – diversity in beliefs, values and desires for instance translate into heterogeneity in discourses, and the co-existence of contrasting and sometimes conflicting discourses.“ (Fairclough 2006 : 23)

Fairclough (2006) appreciates Harvey (1996 : 77 – 95) for his „explicitness and sophistication in the literature on globalization,“ being exceptional in the specification of discourse. There is numerous literature on globalisation. However, much less pays attention to discourse (of some relevance should be Tomlinson (1999) and Bauman (1998)), so Fairclough summarises the theory into just a set of rather general claims. Back to Jessop (2002) for instance, this author offers an interesting account of the political economy of capitalism, and yet pays attention to discourse in his introduction

and then in depth twice later (2002: 92 – 93; 132 – 133), keeping in mind target and balance. In his book, *Language and Globalisation* (2006), Fairclough focuses on the gap that had been identified on a higher theoretical level but needs a systematic approach.

Discourse is constitutive, but not in a determinative sense.

(Fairclough 2006 : 23)

2.2. A linguist minding the gap? Norman Fairclough and his theoretical level in approach to social change

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice and focuses on the ways in which social and political domination are reproduced by text and speech (Fairclough 1995). The area has in the recent three decades undergone a development into a fully acknowledged methodology with numerous contributors.⁹ To address just a single – no matter how key – figure does certainly not reflect the current status or all the views of and within CDA. However, for the purpose of this paper I have chosen Fairclough as a highly influential author on CDA who has been systematically working on and with the methodology from its early beginnings, and thus provides an elaborate version of CDA.¹⁰ Also, he deals with themes relevant to social change of language and power, discourse and sociocultural change, both theoretical developments and methodological developments of discourse, with the language of New Labour in the context of the contemporary capitalist and globalised world.¹¹

Fairclough writes that he has kept dealing with CDA with a broad objective: „to develop ways of analysing language which address its involvement in the workings of

9 Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, Lilie Chouriaraki, Romy Clark, Isabela Ietcu-Fairclough, Roz Ivanič, Jay Lemke, Gunther Kress, Ron Scollon, Eve Chiapello, Phil Graham, Bob Jessop, Simon Pardoe, Andrew Sayer just to mention some (see also Fairclough 2010, Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

10 Reaching out from the influential *Language and Power* (1989) to the second edition of his book *Critical Discourse Analysis, The Critical Study of Language* (2010), which provides a corpus of the text he considers advancing his own research.

11 Staff page at the Lancaster University, where Norman Fairclough holds the chair of an Emeritus Professor, provides a list of his keywords <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/profiles/263> (some materials even downloadable there).

contemporary capitalist societies. The focus on capitalist societies is not only because capitalism is the dominant economic system internationally as well as in Britain (where [he has] spent most of life), but also because the character of the economic system affects all aspects of social life.¹² I am not suggesting a mechanical „economic determinism“, but the main areas of social life are interdependent and have effects on each other, and because of the dominance of the economy in contemporary societies its affects are particularly strong and pervasive“ (Fairclough 2010 : 2). This broad objective links all the topics he has addressed.

Thus, when we decide to follow in Fairclough’s footsteps and embark on the way of CDA, we adopt a place in a systematic project. We do not pluck topics from thin air; rather, there is a need to fill a gap. Moreover, we make a political decision, as such a tradition guards the roots of critical social research.

The critical tradition comes out of Marxism and the Frankfurt school, trying to find improvements for society, inspiring academics towards more or less radical social-balance oriented approaches to research. Fairclough avoids taking a radical stance, often pointing out his realist position in his works. Similarly realist is his definition of the critical tradition in social research as „focused on better understanding of how and why contemporary capitalism prevents or limits, as well as in certain respects facilitating, human well-being and flourishing“ (Fairclough 2010 : 1). In the thinking of Fairclough, the theorists of ideology such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu meet the field of linguistics (especially Mikhail Bakhtin and Michael Halliday).

2.3. CDA today: three dynamic aspects

Over the thirty years of its development, CDA has been targeted by much academic criticism, some of it constitutional, some irresolvable and some inspiring its expansion (Chilton 2005; Naski 2010). Remaining well aware of the criticisms, both the topic of my research and my non-linguistic academic background have directed me to the „somewhat different“ inherent in CDA as mentioned by Gee (2005 : 116-117) in his introduction to discourse analysis: „Fairclough’s ,critical discourse analysis,‘ through

12 The link between Fairclough’s CDA and the neoliberal capitalism comprehensively concluded ibidem, 11 – 21.

drawing on somewhat different tools of inquiry and a somewhat different linguistic tradition, nonetheless bears important similarities to the approach sketched in this book.“

Fairclough presents three basic properties of CDA (2010 : 3 – 10): it is relational, its is dialectical and it is transdisciplinary.

It is a relational form of research, as it focuses on social relations rather than entities or individuals. For example discourse is not simply an object/entity, that can be easily defined. Rather it is a set of layered relations and „relations between relations“ (Fairclough 2010 : 3), and we can only arrive at an understanding of discourse through analysing sets of relations. In this thesis, the analysis of discourse should uncover the relations in the broadcasting market for a better understanding of social change related to the Labour Party’s quest for power.

Furthermore, CDA is dialectical. This indicates that the relations analysed find themselves (re)constituted in the instable and floating discussion within society. Again, let me return to the impossible definition of discourse as an „object.“ On the one hand, „discourse“ can be differentiated from „social change“ or „power.“ Yet, for a full understanding, these words cannot be separated. In the words of Fairclough again (2010 : 4): „[d]ialectical relations are relations between objects which are different from one another but not what I shall call „discrete“, not fully separate in the sense that one excludes the other. Due to the dialectical relations, language becomes the „point of entry“ into the dense network of power and social change. A researcher may not reach a perfectly precise picture but analysed texts provide at least a tool for orientation in the relevant space and time. Also this thesis will analyse texts as an expression/elucidation of power interests.

That we cannot find a precise definition of some of these terms (here discourse, power and social change serve as examples) does not mean that they do not exist or that there are no – be they internal or external – relations among them that can be targeted in research. So, „[w]hat then is CDA analysis of ?“ (Fairclough 2010 :4) It does not deal with discourse as an object but analyses the *relations*. This means that limiting the research only to the analysis of language would bring plain description rather than understanding. Dissection simply cannot bring as much information as vivisection. To gain a better understanding of relations, a researcher needs to observe beyond the primary level of descriptive language analysis to discourse practice and thirdly the level of society and culture.

Naski (2010 : Chapter 2) explains Fairclough's model of CDA based on the three levels mentioned in the previous sentence. He is aware that each of these levels involves a set of different theories, all of this coming into contact, interacting, becoming meaningful and problematic. So that the model does not fall apart, it is important to keep an eye on its key aspects. Similarly, Fairclough himself points out that findings of any particular study depend on the perspective of analysis. It is important for CDA to allow creative freedom – thus not having a methodology set in stone, the analyst must choose whatever seems relevant to the particular „problem“ at hand (Wodak and Meyer 2001).

This freedom of research is probably what Fairclough sees as the third basic property: interdisciplinarity or rather, in his words, „transdisciplinarity.“ „There is a real world, including social world, which exists irrespective of whether or how we know or understand it“ Fairclough (2010 : 4). Such an approach unlocks the borders of settled scientific disciplines. It does not search for excellency in a particular subject, it aims to interconnect the results of this excellency into a network of deeper understanding to complicated processes. So texts – such as mine - can be enriched with a view of political science and history although probably with a less deep linguistic background.

There is one more aspect of freedom in CDA: its challenge to set values. If social science is to serve, as the critical approach asserts, the researcher has to take sides. If Gee (above) has raised my interest in the „somewhat different,“ Fairclough (2010: 10-11) defines the difference when he „suggests the following characteristics for research and analysis to count as CDA:

10.1 It is not just analysis of discourse (or more concretely texts), it is part of some form of systematic transdisciplinary analysis of relation between discourse and other elements of the social process.

10.2 It is not just general commentary on discourse, it includes some form of systematic analysis of texts.

10.3 It is not just descriptive, it is also normative. It addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them.“

2.4. CDA tomorrow: the manifesto in a time of crisis

Sensitive to the signs of the global financial crisis, Fairclough challenged CDA researchers with a manifesto: „What is currently underdeveloped but needs to be developed in this time of crisis is a political strategy and movement to ensure that the social transformations which will result from it address the fundamental problems and dangers facing us which neo-liberal capitalism has either failed adequately to address or contribute to exacerbating: poverty, gross inequality, injustice, insecurity, ecological hazard. CDA can contribute.“

<p>Box 1 Manifesto for CDA in a time of crisis</p>	<p>Fairclough (2010 : 19 - 20):</p>
<p>CDA can contribute a specifically discursive or semiotic „point of entry“ to such critical analysis, maintaining a relational focus on dialectical relations between discourse and other social elements, but highlighting properties and features of discourse. It can particularly bring such a s specifically semiotic focus to analysis of the proliferation of strategies, strategic struggle, the dominance of certain strategies, and their implementation in social transformations. We might formulate and agenda in broad terms as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Emergence of discourses.</i> Identify the range of discourse that emerge and their link to emerging strategies. Show how the range of discourses changes over time as the crisis develops. Identify difference and commonalities between discourses in terms of a range of feature such as: how they represent events and actions and the social agents, objects, institutions etc, that they involve; how they narrate past and present events and action and link these narratives to imaginaries for future practices, institutions and systems; how they explain events and actions; how they justify actions and policy proposals and legitimise imagined changed practices and systems. Show the origins of discourses: for instance, how they are formed through articulating together (features of) existing discourses. Such analysis needs to be coloured by and integrated into transdisciplinary critical analysis oriented to an object of research constructed in a transdisciplinary way, and particularly the explanation of why and how particular strategies and discourses emerge in particular social circumstances. 2) <i>Relations of dialogue, contestation and dominance between discourses.</i> Show how different discourses are brought into dialogue and constestation within processes of strategic struggle, for instance in the manoeuvring for position that goes on between political parties. Show hoe particular discourse gain prominence or become marginalise over time, and how particular discourses emerge as dominant or hegemonic. CDA can provide particular insights into the struggle between different strategies for transforming society in different directions through rhetorically oriented analysis of how strategic differences are fought out in dialogue, debate, polemic etc. But again such analysis must be informed by and integrated within transdisciplinary critique which seeks to explain the success of certain 	

strategies and the failure of other, as is also „positive“ critique which seeks to identify strategies which are, as we might put it, both desirable (in that they may advance human well-being) and feasible.

- 3) *Recontextualisation of discourses.* Show, as part of the analysis of how particular discourses become dominant or hegemonic, their dissemination across structural boundaries (between different social fields, such as education and politics) and across scalar boundaries (e.g., between local and national scales), and their recontextualisation within different fields and at different scales.
- 4) *Operationalisation of discourses.* Show how and subject to what conditions of discourse are operationalised as strategies and implemented: enacted in changed ways (practices) of acting and interacting; inculcated in changed ways of being (identities); materialised in changes in material reality. Operationalisation is partly a process *within* discourse or semiosis: discourses are enacted as changed genres, and inculcated as changed styles. But again while there is clearly a discourse-analytical dimension to analysing these ways in which discourse contributes to social transformation, the concern is largely with relations between discourse and other social elements (as well as partly relations within discourse/semiosis) and therefore a matter for transdisciplinary critical analysis. Moreover, the operationalisation of discourses is always subject to conditions which are partly extra-discursive. So we are always pushed back towards articulating together different forms of critical social analysis (of which CDA is one) to analyse relations between discourse and other elements.

2.5. What having CDA at the heart of this thesis indicates for my hypothesis

From the three basic properties from above as well as the theoretical setting of discourse into globalisation, the following should be deducible for the discourse on broadcasting policy in the UK: discourse is given by actors involved and especially by power circumstances – discourse is both constituted and constitutes power. As power is related to social change, so is discourse. This relationship is directed both ways.¹³ As I want to test how applicable CDA is in the minor scale of broadcasting policy of New Labour in the United Kingdom between the installation of its leadership in 1994 and before its promotion to government in 1997, the following indicators should help direct me:

13 With a little more deducing, the Fairclough's claims mentioned in the introduction are also to be reached: „that discourse is an element of social life which is dialectically interconnected with other elements, and may have constructive and transformative effects on other elements. It also makes the claim that discourse has in many ways become a more salient and potent element of social life in the contemporary world, and that more general processes of current social change often seem to be initiated and driven by changes in discourse.“ (see above).

(1) Broadcasting policy should reflect a paradigmatic shift. The leadership of New Labour introduced a new discourse of so called „new capitalism“¹⁴ (Fairclough a) into the party. Moreover, the early 1990's were marked by a continuing revolution in digital technologies with rising market interests in large communication companies. My hypothesis thus expects a rapid turnover from a policy critical of the liberalising 1990 Broadcasting Act towards a more market-oriented approach. I aim to compare the Labour response to a green paper from April 1993, Putting the Citizen at the Centre of Broadcasting to policy after the change in leadership.

(2)

The broadcasting policy developed at this time was influenced by social change. My hypothesis thus further expects that together with Labour's shift to new capitalism, its broadcasting policy moved into a closer bind with free market interests. This will involve a closer look at the developments and discussions in the long term, especially in the run up to the 1996 Broadcasting Act. Consequently, I will analyse the discourse of policies in time, using three pieces of text as an example here.

(3)

Broadcasting policy also reflected the competition for hegemony, New Labour trying to reach and outstrip its greatest power rival, the Conservative Party. A comparison of the broadcasting policy within the Conservative Party with the policy taken by the Labour Party during the run up should provide another outcome. Thus, the discourse of the government is worth comparing to the discourse of the opposition party, which I use their general manifestos for.

This research dares to call itself critical, as it also aims to shed more historical light on the development of policy before the Labour Party came to power in 1997. Policy - as a certain record of discourse - is created to influence future political changes. Broadcasting policy, moreover, is often destined to influence the culturally sensitive arena of (political) communication in unexpected and unprecedented ways reflected in trends far from desirable for democratic societies. It is not only the Labour Party today who is looking for a way out of a crisis again. At a time of crisis and cuts, an eye should be carefully kept not only on the current cuts, but also on previous curtailments, not to neglect certain balances that purely economic media never aim to cover.

14 „New capitalism“ should be understood as a form of capitalism that has taken over after the post – Second World War model, „Fordism“ (see Jessop above or Bourdieu 1998).

3. Setting free market paradigm into British television: government's policy after, 1979 – 1996

This chapter reflects the step-by-step imposition of deregulating measures on the British market, as it was managed by discourse in the ruling Conservative Party.

3.1. British duopoly: the cradle of free media market in Europe?

Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, as in most states in Western Europe, has undergone a significant shift towards a deregulation/liberalisation of the broadcasting market in the late 1980's – starting to regard broadcasting as an economic sector like any other. Humphreys (1996 :160) writes that it involved (1) a trend towards the abolition of the public service monopoly and the opening of the regulatory gates to new private commercial entrants to the sector, (2) the waiving of public obligations for the new commercial sector, or the imposition of minimal obligations that do not concoct with economic requirements, (3) a critique of the effectiveness of regulation as a result of new opportunities to evade or circumvent national regulation (4) the rivalling of the public service doctrine by notions of 'consumer sovereignty'¹⁵ and the primacy of the 'free market' (5) and commodification of broadcasting (with programmes viewed increasingly as marketable products, programme libraries seen as commercial assets, etc.) and finally (6), to an extent varying between countries, a questioning of the future of public-service broadcasting, its legitimacy, its future funding, its place and orientations within the new paradigm.

During the shift, the high quality of the British system was used as an argument for deregulation internationally. However, such an argument was far from wise; the famous British duopoly presented rather a successful model where „private ownership could be reconciled with public-service broadcasting by regulatory means“ (Humphreys 1996 :129). In practice, the British private market was subjected to statutory obligations and a close hands-on regulation by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA).¹⁶ The IBA allocated franchises to a „federal system“ (ibidem :129) of fifteen commercial

¹⁵ The viewer would rather be seen as a consumer than as a citizen.

¹⁶ Between 1953 and 1973 it had been the Independent Television Authority (ITA).

independent television (ITV) companies¹⁷ and since 1973, a growing number of commercial independent local radio (ILR) stations.

The process of the franchise allocation involved prior public and commercial consultations, although the actual business of decision making was conducted behind closed doors (in detail see Briggs 1986). The IBA had the authority to withdraw or not renew the broadcasters' franchises,¹⁸ which provided discipline among licence holders as they were motivated not only by purely commercial criteria but also by the will to retain their licence in the next franchise round. The motivation to cooperate with IBA on programme scheduling and advertising was further upheld by the fact that it could also prohibit transmission of some programmes.

The British duopoly system was also directed more towards a public service through a strict division of sources of income for the BBC (licence fee) and the ITV/ILR (limited spot advertising). While the companies competed for ratings, it was not a cut-throat competition for economic survival. Not even the existence of the „minorities channel“, Channel 4, affected this status quo in 1982.¹⁹ The channel was created as a subsidiary of the IBA, which also prescribed an annual subscription for self-advertising or other advert placement on this channel to other channels.

With the reins of broadcasting being held in the hands of the BBC Board of Governors and the IBA, whose members were far from socially representative, and who were chosen in an opaque manner and from the ranks of the social elite („the Great and the Good“), political pressure on seizing such positions would be no surprise. On the contrary, although some subtle (and not always so subtle) manoeuvres to exert pressure were precluded, Britain in an era of post-war consensus benefited from an uncommon willingness to respect the independence of broadcasting. Even the British academic Marxist, Ralph Miliband (1969 : 200), concedes that the broadcasters „preserved a fair degree of impartiality between the Conservative, Liberal and Labour parties,“ though he went on to emphasise how undemocratic the system really was (Humphreys 1996 : 208 – 209). The effective buffer between the state and the broadcasters was subject to

17 The ITV companies served fourteen regional areas and London had two companies, one broadcasting at weekends and the other at weekdays.

18 This power was exercised notably in 1967.

19 Since 1982 regional Channel 4 Wales (S4C) has been broadcasting.

change during the Thatcher era. As Humphreys (1996 :150) aptly points out: „gentlemen’s agreements can go out of fashion.“²⁰

Even most ideological administrations do not suck their policies out of their own heads. (Peter Goodwin)

3.2. The change of discourse and policy in the Conservative Party: free market enters broadcasting

As Conservative Prime Minister in 1972, Edward Heath made his statement of Toryism: „In the kind of country we live in, there cannot be any „we“ or „they“. There is only „us“, all of us“ (quoted in Philo 1995 : 200). By the early 1980’s, such long established paradigms of the post-war consensus era were seriously in trouble. New thoughts and ideas were drifting across British politics, the Conservative Party gaining its full dominance in 1979 (for a quick account of thoughts on the right see Gamble 1979). Greg Philo of the Glasgow University Media Group suggests that rather than being a victory of political spin or publicly distorted ideas, it was the coherence of New Right that had attracted Conservative voters:

„If we think back over this period, it is not hard to make up a list of popular political phrases which explained Conservative political thinking: „there is no alternative“, a „shareowning/homeowning democracy“, „popular capitalism“, „enterprise culture“, „the miracle economy“, „one -sided disarmament“.

But if we try to make a list of political phrases associated with the Labour opposition, it becomes clear very quickly that it cannot be done. There are certainly general areas where the Labour Party „scores“ better in popular judgement than the Conservatives, such as on health or welfare benefits. But this is because of Labour’s traditional policies towards these issues. There are no „Labour phrases“ from popular political debate which are comparable in the sense that they explain immediately what the Conservatives are doing wrong and what Labour would do about it.“

(Philo 1995 : 184)

Similarly, in his book on television policy under the Tories, Peter Goodwin (1998 : 8) concludes the approach needed to be applied to Thatcherism when studied as: „(t)he issue is not whether the politics of the Thatcher governments were totally planned in

20 The BBC’s Board of Governors did become more politicised during the Thatcher era (Milne 1988:82; Franklin 1984:78-9). A study by Etzioni Halevy (1987) suggests that although British broadcasting was not colonised by political parties, it proved more vulnerable to political pressures than expected and this intensified later in 1980s.

advance or merely pragmatic responses to events, but rather just how coherent they were, or even more importantly, how coherent they became.²¹

The Glasgow University Media Group would be critical of broadcasting for not reflecting the full range of views within society, for a one-sided weighting of importance and for news and broadcasters' own canons of accuracy and impartiality to provide consensual views in its contemporary studies (Philo 1995b). But this was a loosely defined, radical academic and neomarxist position, far from the conventional wisdom which Thatcherism managed to settle its views in. Growing breaches on the surface of consensus slowly multiplied, encouraged by coherence on the Right. There was a call for painful measures even in socially-sensitive issues. For example with unemployment, Norman Tebbit's (the chairman of the Conservative Party) words about people „getting on their bike“ and looking for work, rather than complaining or rioting when they lost their jobs, became a political catchphrase,²² as the speech would be widely publicized, enhancing controversy. New or redefined socially controversial approaches are always destined for controversy, as those who present them tend to be stronger and more radical in their views. Also, the stronger and more settled the proponents, the less coherency they share.

A closer look at Thatcher's first term reveals mainly new developments in television policy. Under the ministerial auspices of William Whitelaw, Channel 4 would turn from a parliament-authorized concept into reality „embodying the spirit of Annan but on a firmer financial footing and with a more pragmatic structure“ (Goodwin 1998 : 34). In 1980, the IBA redivided the old ITV and a new breakfast franchise, though the opaqueness of the procedure raised criticism in the press and also a rapid rise of advertising revenues for the companies. Trying to reflect the adoption of new technologies in the world also from an industrial view, the policies for satellite and cable broadcasting were assessed by the government setting them into a legal framework of the 1984 Cable and Broadcasting Act. The new technologies were

21 Goodwin had compared hindsight studies by Andrew Gamble and Peter Riddell.

22 In 1981 on a National Party Conference, Norman Tebbit found a wording for the politically sensitive issue of unemployment, expressing thus generally a New Right attitude: „I know those problems. I grew up in the 30's with an unemployed father. He did not riot – he got on his bike and looked for work and he kept looking until he had found it.“ Tebbit also listed the „causes“ of unemployment: „So put it together: recession; other nations fighting to take our markets; overmanning; pay rises out stripping productivity year after year; profits, the seed corn of future jobs, being robbed and looted for pay unjustified higher wages; a bad record of industrial disputes; and...the Employment protection Act, too, cannot always help in these matters. In the face of that is unemployment a surprise?“ (quoted in Philo 1995 : 202).

supported but could not expect any financial support from the government, slowing down their future development.

After the victory of the second election in 1983 up to the 1990 Broadcasting Act, the Tories „radically but unacknowledgedly“ (Goodwin 1998 : 69) shifted emphasis – from new channels and means of delivery towards a reform of the television system in a commercially driven, consumer led and competitive direction. An ideological shift was advanced by increasingly influential free market think tanks. The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) published *Choice by Cable* by Cento Vlejanovski and W.D.Bishop in February 1983. The Adam Smith Institute *Communication Policy* as a part of its Omega report series (Goodwin 1998 : 69 -90). By mid-1980's, there would be fears among public broadcasters that the whole institute of public broadcasting might cease to exist, as the licence fee would be abolished, forcing the BBC to adopt advertising, at least such seemed the approach of Thatcher. The Iron Lady would consider the duopoly as the „last bastion of restrictive practices“ (quoted in Humphreys 1995 : 182).

Broadcasting, at its heart seized by old-line pro-consensus classes, was believed to be persistently biased in favour of the Left in the Tory political circles. These views were further supported by the reports of the Media Monitoring Unit, which followed media content including two highly controversial issues of the war in Argentina in 1982 and the support of the bombing of Lybia by the USA in 1986. Just to explain the contrast: Richard Francis, holding the position of the managing-director of BBC Radio, would say in May 1982 that: „The widow of Portsmouth is no different from the widow of Buenos Aires. BBC needs no lessons in patriotism“ (quoted in Philo 1995: 203). For Conservative critics, one widow was „ours“ while the other one was not.

With such contrasts and criticisms growing, the Prime Minister was able to effectively deploy her power to appoint BBC's Board of Governors. Stephen Hearst, advisor to the Director-General from 1982 to 1986, described the change in the following words:

„Until the eighties it wouldn't have occurred to the professional staff of the BBC to suspect that the governors were anything other than independent. After the eighties one began to suspect that the governors were more likely to be appointed for Conservative sympathies than for other reasons.“ (*World in Action*, 29 February 1988; quoted in Philo 1995 : 205)

Furthermore, the BBC felt compelled to propose an increase in licence fee in 1984 as the move of viewers from paying black and white to a colour licence fee was coming

to an end and the BBC could no longer cover the general rate of inflation. This politically sensitive question was further itched by a press campaign. Tom O'Malley (1994 : 36 – 46) suggests that the campaign was particularly strong with newspapers owned by Rupert Murdoch. A destabilised state-funded potential competitor might have been of interest for News International, considering a future entrance to the British market. Also, there were the interests of the advertising industry (eg Saatchi and Saatchi) – advertisement on the BBC would lower the costs in advertising. At the end of March 1985, Leon Brittan, successor of William Whitelaw at the Home Office, announced an increase in the licence fee from 46 to 58 pounds²³ and the establishment of a committee of inquiry into the financing of the BBC by Professor Alan Peacock.

When the Peacock Committee reported in 1986, it was for the first time a move from the public service itself to the notion that broadcasting should be organised as a marketplace for independent voices. Suggestions of the committee were communicated to the government White Paper, Broadcasting in the 90s: Competition, Choice and Quality (Home Office, 1988), which was still to be substantially modified before translated into the 1990 Broadcasting Act.

The initial free market coherence had mitigated in the meantime. There had been support for the public service principle among British Conservatives in the parliament. Also, although William Whitelaw no longer kept the Home Office, the Department of National Heritage drafted legislation, where traditional broadcasting Establishment had retained a very influential enclave. High public esteem for public service naturally played its role too. (Humphreys 1995 : 184-185). So although there might have been plans for a more radical reform among „wet“ Thatcherites, the final legislation did not reflect them fully.

As for the BBC, the Peacock Committee generated scarcely any important legislation to change it, except for a 25 per cent independent production quota. Instead, since the mid-1980's, three effective tools were deployed: a combination of financial pressure, political flak and appointments. The new management of the BBC managed to reorganise the news in „awkward political areas“ (Barnet and Curry 1994 : 85) and targeted the financial squeeze through pressure for efficiency and increased commercial

23 A 26 per cent increase rather than the 41 per cent the BBC had asked for (Goodwin 1998 : 76).

operations.²⁴ When the NHS started to address the BBC in its Green Paper *The Future of the BBC* (November 1992), less than a week later the BBC reacted with the publication of its own strategy statement, *Extending Choice* (BBC, 1992). „For a year and a half following the publication of the Green Paper and *Extending Choice* an extensive debate was conducted about the issues of the future of the BBC. But the debate rarely caught fire; it did not extend much beyond élite circles, and among these there was a remarkable degree of concensus“ (Goodwin 1998 : 132). On 30 April 1996, the new BBC Royal Charter came into effect, that would run until the end of 2006. No more pressure from „glinty eyed pamphleteers“²⁵ endangered the corporation, although in the 1996 Broadcasting Act the government privatised the BBC’s transmission and the financial squeeze would continue even though the licence fee formula was reassessed. Finally, the BBC could – aware of its new found security – bid for digital technology in advertising in *Extending Choice in the Digital Age* (Goodwin 1998 : 123-142).

3.3. Main changes of the 1990 Broadcasting Act on the market and extralegislativ change in the BBC

The steps of Thatcherism seemed incremental in the early nineties. The duopoly dominated the market. The rise of new media seemed dubious. The cable system did not attract British investment and it was only opened to more experienced investors from abroad (especially the United States) by legislatively allowing telephony in 1991.²⁶ BSB, the winner of the medium satellite broadcasting franchise from IBA (after previous political plans for an industrial consortium had been marked by the resignation of the BBC), had been launched late and soon had to compete with

24 Two key names figure in the period: Marmaduke Hussey was appointed as BBC Chair in October 1986. Within a few months, Michael Checkland – a BBC accountant rather than programme maker like his predecessor – was appointed as the new Director- General, John Birt from the LWT was brought in as Deputy Director-General. In 1992, John Birt was promoted to to the position of Director-General, and under his leadership so called „Producer Choice“ was introduced to the corporation. This encouraged producers to shop around within the BBC corporation for the cheapest production facilities or even to go outside the corporation if needed – this changed atmosphere in the BBC, which has often been criticised.

25 A phrase used by David Mellor, who as Broadcasting Minister piloted the ITV franchise auction, used as a warning against free market think tanks endangering broadcasting (quoted in Goodwin : 124).

26 In 1991, review of the government’s policy allowed to cable operators to interconnect and provide voice telephony of their own right. This modification enabled a rapid growth in cable voice telephony.

broadcasting from the high powered satellite Astra spilling over from Luxembourg.²⁷ The government turned a blind eye to the merger of BSB and Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV. This seemed the wisest thing to do, as colossal finances were needed to sustain the whole project - even News International had been brought to the verge of bankruptcy through its large investments. The industrial plans of the government that had stood behind the whole initiative simply did not reach fulfillment. Although as late as 1995 the auction of the Channel 5 franchise attracted offers from four international consortia, a fifth of British households accepted satellite and cable services (including BSkyB) and London had become a base for a number of „off shore“ satellite television services aimed at European markets (Humphreys 1995 : 185), in 1990 this would count as dubious visionary dreams.

Probably the greatest success in pushing through Thatcherite doctrine was the auction of ITV's licences. The „blind“ process under the previous IBA regulator would be overlooked by a new, officially more light-touch regulator, the Independent Television Commission. There were moderating measures given in the Broadcasting Act though, such as a „quality threshold“ and „exceptional circumstances,“ which were meant to avoid „overbidding.“ As a result, the only obviously different outcome to the race was in Carlton Television gaining success, rather than Thames TV, in the London weekday licence. Also, ITV companies had to re-prioritise operations from programmes towards profitability after the costs caused by the bid.

The Act also kept the minority function of Channel 4 and S4C. „Channel 4 was to become a corporation governed by a board part composed of ITC appointees and part drawn from its management. It would have to earn its own advertising but the Act did provide for a financial „safety net“ in case its revenue, in operating commercially, should suffer a shortfall which would otherwise prevent from fulfilling its special minority and cultural remit“ (Humphreys 1995 :184). „Channel 4 was, despite the safeguards, still allowed to compete for advertising directly with the ITV companies. In fact, so commercially successful did it prove to be, that controversy soon erupted because the channel was paying so much in seemingly unnecessary „insurance“ to the ITV companies“ (ibidem : 235).

27 For details of failures of British new media policies see relevant chapters in Goodwin, 1998.

The 1990 Act also provided the Broadcasting Standards Council with a statutory basis²⁸ and kept the media concentration and cross media ownership rules that had been set by IBA. The main cross media provisions of the legislation were as follows (cited from Humphreys : 223):

- (1) advertising agencies and associates of advertising agencies, including any body controlled by these, continued to be disqualified from holding broadcasting franchises,
- (2) also disqualified was any body in which a person falling within these categories was a participant with more than a 5 cent interest,
- (3) no owner of a national or local newspaper could have more than a 20 per cent stake in any body holding a broadcasting franchise, and vice versa ,
- (4) newspaper owners were prohibited from having a significant financial interest in more than one franchise, to be precise, this meant that no owner of a national newspaper who already had more than a 5 per cent stake (up to the permitted 20 per cent) in a franchise holding body could have a holding of more than 5 per cent in any other such body and vice versa and
- (5) owners of a local newspaper were debarred from holding above 20% of a body holding a local broadcasting franchise, and vice versa. These regulations were slightly more relaxed than those previously in operation under the IBA guidelines, but the 1990 Broadcasting Act actually now entrenched them in statute.“

The early nineties were a time of large investments into new technologies as well as economies of scale. For ITV, this argument was not simply in terms of the merits of concentration but also an anomaly in the ownership provisions. European broadcasting companies could control ITV licences. So, whereas a European giant could take over an ITV broadcaster, a large national broadcaster could not. „Granada, for example, was not allowed to take over LWT, but Silvio Berlusconi or CLT were.“ (Goodwin 1998 : 120). In order to avoid the British commercial TV spectre falling into foreign hands, the Heritage Secretary Peter Brooke announced in November 1993 that a single company could own two „large licences“ from then on. The NHS Secretary had come under intense business pressure „and also been leaned on by the Department of Trade and Industry, to relax the rules which were seen as an obstacle to development of indigenous media interests as international competitive players.“ (Humphreys: 224).²⁹ In the USA, the notion of „information superhighway“ was popularised in Bill Clinton’s 1992 election campaign and in 1993 in Britain, leaks appeared in the press that British Telecom was now technically able to provide video-on-demand (VOD) of

28 The Council had been settled in 1987 to monitor violence and ensure maintenance of standards of taste and decency.

29 On political economy of regulation of the British/West European market 1990-1992 see Davis and Levy (1992).

an acceptable standard to a majority of customers over existing twisted copper pairs by the use of ADSL compression technology. The year 1993 proved groundbreaking for the frequency of the use of terms such as „multimedia,“ „digital revolution,“ „information superhighway“ and „convergence.“

3.4. Ownership rules in the multimedia age? The road to the Broadcasting Act 1996

Actually, the idea of convergence was effectively promoted by the British Media Industry Group (BMIG). It was formed by four large UK newspaper groups: Associated Newspapers, Pearson, the Guardian Media Group and the Telegraph. Peter Brooke, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, announced a review of cross media ownership rules in January 1994. Goodwin (1998 : 144) notices that „the general thrust of the BMIG’s case rapidly gained the status of something approaching conventional wisdom in the mid-90s debate on cross media ownership in the UK. But, like the cable industry’s claim to be building the superhighway, closer examination raises some rather awkward questions.“ He suggests three sources of such questions. Firstly, it was not because of the not-yet-existent multimedia revolution, but the old-as-TV-itself willingness to be associated with the glamorous industry. Secondly, experience of newspaper involvement in television showed remarkably little technical synergies or circulation of software between audiovisual and print media. Third, whatever services could be envisaged, how would quality be enhanced simply through a newspaper company owning a terrestrial television broadcasting licence?

For example, Frank Barlow, the managing director of Pearson and the chairman of BSkyB, would symptomatically advise Stephen Dorrell in July 1994 as he was being reshuffled: „Congratulations on your appointment. I would like to emphasise that the name of your department is National Heritage, and draw your attention to the fact that the Broadcasting Act at present favours media that are non-national, and request that you do something about it as quickly as possible“ (Barr : 24 July 1994).

In May 1995, the government could no longer procrastinate over the overall call for a reaction on ever-increasing cross-media ownership issues unless it did not want to politically shy away from the universally proclaimed „multimedia revolution“. The concept of „share of voice“ had rapidly gained attention. It suggested adding up various

forms of media (television, radio, newspapers) for a company in the area. This would allow companies to own a certain share of media market without being limited by a type of media. But, however attractive this solution seemed, it was hampered by the problem of how such shares would be measured. How were audiences for different media to be added up? Would public service media be counted? How should the markets be defined?

The new Heritage Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, thus presented a *White Paper, Media Ownership: The Government's Proposal* (DNS :1995). This brought „a technically ingenious and politically pragmatic“ (Goodwin 1998 : 147 -8) two-stage approach to the issue.

At the „earliest legislative opportunity“ the government would:

- allow newspaper groups with less than 20% of national newspaper circulation to apply to control television broadcasters constituting up to 15% of the total television market (defined by audience share including public sector broadcasters), subject to a limit of two Channel 3/5 licences; and to apply to control radio licences constituting up to 15% of the radio points system;
- give to the relevant regulator the power to disallow such control where it is not in the public interest;
- prevent the development of local media monopolies by disallowing such newspaper groups to apply to control any regional Channel 3 licence or local radio licence in areas where the newspaper group has more than 30% of regional or local newspaper circulation;
- abolish the rules limiting ownership between terrestrial television, satellite, and cable broadcasters, except for those broadcasters which are already in more than 20% ownership by a newspaper with more than 20% national circulation;
- remove the 50% limit on combined Channel 3 holdings in ITN; and
- remove the numerical limit on the number of local radio licences which may be jointly held (while retaining the existing points system).

(DNH 1995 a : 1)

Goodwin comments:

„The technical ingenuity of these proposals lay in combining the fashionable „share of voice“ formula with old style absolute limits on newspaper groups above a certain size. So newspaper proprietors with over 20 per cent share of newspaper audiences would still be prohibited from benefiting from the new „share of voice“ provisions and thus remain excluded from controlling interest in terrestrial television.

The political pragmatism of the White Paper lay in the fact that its proposals allowed each of the four BMIG lobbyist to control chunks of terrestrial television (and between them, in theory, virtually whole of it), but at the same time the 20 per cent of national newspaper circulation threshold prevented News International (with over 30 per cent of the national newspaper market) from doing likewise. ... However, an important, but perhaps incidental, corollary of the 20 per cent ceiling...was that Mirror

Group Newspapers (with a quarter of national newspaper circulation) would also remain excluded from controlling interests in terrestrial television.“

The second stage would „in the longer term“:

- define the total media market;
- reflect the different levels of influence of different media;
- set thresholds beyond which it would be for an independent regulator to determine whether acquisitions or holdings were in the public interest;
- provide the regulator with powers to prevent acquisitions or require divestment;
and
- set out the public interest criteria against which the regulator would act.

(DNH 1995a : 2)

As these plans were put off indefinitely, they attracted considerably less discussion.

In August 1995, three months after Media Ownership, Virginia Bottomley, Dorrell’s successor at National Heritage Secretary, published another White Paper, on the new distribution technology: *Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting: the Government’s Proposals* (DNH 1995 b). Digital terrestrial broadcasting had been possible for a long time, but plans to introduce it put Britain suddenly at the international forefront of digital terrestrial television development. In order to secure the introduction of digital technology, cash-bidding as an essential element of allocating TV licenses had been quietly abandoned. The allocation of multiplex licences would be left to the discretion of the ITC according to three criteria:

- (a) investment in infrastructure over time in order to provide services as quickly and as widely as possible across the UK;
- (b) investment...to promote the early take-up of digital television, including investment to encourage take-up of receiver;
- (c) the variety of service to be transmitted (DNH 1995 b : 9).

There were no positive programme requirements on programmes or multiplexes. However, there was capacity to be reserved for public service broadcasting (in contrast to government policy on cable and satellite) (Goodwin 150 – 151).

Finally, in December 1995, Virginia Bottomley published a new Broadcasting Bill which went through discussions and amendments in the House of Lords and then Commons, only to be passed in July as the 1996 Broadcasting Act. The bill reflected the three above-mentioned sections. It dealt with problems arising from the workings of the 1990 Act, such as ownership rules, Channel Four funding and numerous regulatory bodies for television. It also provided a legislative framework for the privatisation of

BBC transmission and put in the place the framework for „digital revolution“ as introduced in the two 1995 White Papers. The discussion no longer followed the single pattern of mitigation of governmental deregulation. On the contrary, it would be the government who were in the position to strengthen regulation even at the cost of support of smaller opposition parties. The government was not prepared to leave the 20 per cent ownership limit. Also, to prevent worries about Rupert Murdoch’s dominance on satellite television, the government made concessions to issues of listing of major sporting events and on controls over conditional access systems (DNH, 1996 and DTI 1996). The positions on the regulation of the media (and television) market had switched between the Conservative Party and the Labour Party (Goodwin : 152 – 153), as we shall see in the following overview of the Labour Party policies.

One indisputable fact about the Tory years in the UK is that what started out as peculiarly Conservative Party nostrums have since – for good or ill – become the conventional wisdom of public policy, accepted both by Tony Blair’s New Labour Party and by the great majority of „independent“ commentators and experts. This is true of television broadcasting, just as it is of local government, health care, public utilities or education. (Peter Goodwin 1998 :11)

4. Broadcasting Policy in the Labour Party – a historical development

4.1. In the shadow of the Tories

In his book on television policy of the Labour Party, Des Freedman characterises the period between 1979 – 1992 as „in the shadow of the Tories.“ The left continued to intellectually dominate television policy in the Labour Party: the party was far from lack of ideas.³⁰ However, could Labour point to any achievements during the 13 year period?

Regarding the official plans of William Whitelaw for the fourth channel, in reality there was not much to resist. Neither was there a will to resist the rise of independent production in broadcasting. It would have entrusted British Telecom with running a national broadband cable network and would not have introduced the ITV auction, but it would probably have pressed for a more commercially minded system – some of its ministers had already contemplated advertising on the BBC in the 1960s and they would certainly seek political caution in discussions about raising the licence fee. „While publicly criticising the philosophy of the 1990 Broadcasting Act, Labour front-benchers had privately conceded the need for some government reforms and had limited themselves to opposing specific details of the legislation. Labour, far from coordinating a distinct challenge to the bill was, once more, just part of the general ‘noise’ against the plans.“ (Freedman 2001: 149).

Freedman ascribes this inactivity to the incoherence of leftist ideas – with, for example, the cultural industries approach or the emphasis on consumerism and culture in *Marxism Today* – with the official acceptance of market forces by the party’s leadership and its desire not to alienate the broadcasting establishment (Freedman 2001 : 116 – 154). The developments in television policy simply reflected the general line of

30 More in detail, see Freedman 2003. The thoughts would come from a wide variety of participants: academically such radical left wing as Glasgow University Media, trade unions, front and backbenchers...

division within the Labour Party. The party had gone through a period of internal rivalry after 1979, which reached its peak with the resignation of Michael Foot after the 1983 general election when the party had reached its lowest share since 1918 due to the competition with SDP-liberal alliance that had formed from the right wing of the Party. Under its new leader, Neil Kinnock, the Labour Party started its long move towards the centre, establishing the party as the second largest in the country in 1987. Kinnock's resignation after a scarce defeat in the 1992 election would impose John Smith into the position of the leader. All the „wilderness years“ through, the party leadership would curb its much too radical left wing and look for common ground with centre oriented offspring, the new leader being no exception (Wright and Carter : 1997 or Seldon : 2005).

4.2. Winds of change

The Labour Party lost another issue in television policy after the general elections in 1992, when John Major removed broadcasting from the Home Office and created a new Department of National Heritage (DNH) fully responsible for arts and media. As the government came out with a moderate tone in its green paper on the *Future of the BBC* in November 1992 (mentioned above), this provided „Labour with an ideal opportunity to mount a stout defence of the principles of public service broadcasting and to attack the commercialization of British broadcasting.“ Ann Clwyd, a left-winger responsible for the broadcasting brief in the shadow Cabinet, brought in Mike Jempson to draft a response to the green paper. Mike Jempson had a background in the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom³¹ and had even helped organise a campaign during the 1990 Broadcasting Act.³² His principles were strongly against further commercialisation and indeed, also the submission, *Putting the Citizen at the Centre of Broadcasting* (Labour Party, April 1993), followed an anti-commercial line, away from the enthusiast support of market principles held at the top of the party. The document would use expressions such as „the damage of deregulation“ (ibidem : 2), criticise the *Extending Choice* strategy for letting BBC appear „to concede that its destiny is to

31 „The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom is an independent voice for media reform. We work to promote policies for diverse and democratic media“ (cited from their website <http://www.cpbf.org.uk/body.php?doctype=join§ion=0> as of 17.5.2011).

32 The Public Service Broadcasting Campaign was initiated by media unions (BETA and ACTT) to raise broader political questions than those raised by Labour in Parliament, eg workplace rights, continuity of employment, role of advertising and sponsorship and general regulatory structures -see Freedman 2001, p 145 in detail.

make good the shortcomings of its commercial rivals“ (ibidem : 4) and criticise „the squeeze following the 1986 Peacock Report into the financing of the BBC ... as a form of direct pressure on the BBC to comply with Government’s enthusiasm for a reduction in the size and scope of the Corporation“ (ibidem : 21). The support for the licence fee was unequivocal in the document and acknowledged that poor accounting practices, politicization of the appointments system and the unrepresentative nature of the governors were introduced under the Conservatives. The document suggested a complex set of reforms for the institution: instead of a Charter, an Act of Parliament would shield the position of the BBC, an independent set of trustees would replace the board of governors to oversee the general remit rather than management and a number of representative councils and panels should be set to increase transparency and the accountability of regulatory structures. Clwyd presented it to the shadow Cabinet, where it was well received by the leadership. „The document was not circulated to the party conference as originally planned and its proposals were not developed before the government’s white paper on the BBC appeared the following year.“ (Freedman 2001 : 161).

In September 1993, Clwyd called for an extension of existing moratorium rules on ITV mergers and felt hostile to any government plans to loosen cross-media ownership rules. Her call was destined to vanish the following month, when she was replaced as shadow heritage secretary by the former shadow minister for citizen’s rights and women’s issues, Marjolie (Mo) Mowlam.

The new shadow minister was cited in the Guardian as being in favour of the governmental review of media ownership restrictions on 4 January 1994, when a flurry of takeovers finished the ITV moratorium: „The emphasis must be on diversity and choice for the consumer“ (quoted in Freedman 2001 : 161). The government tended to address ownership issues only reluctantly, thus opening a gap the Labour Party was ready to fill, no matter how unlikely it seemed, and it was quick to show this with the 21st Century Media conference, which took place even before Blair had won the leadership contest after John Smith’s premature death on May 12, 1994. At £230 per head, this would be „a distinctly new-look Labour gathering.“³³

In a letter to Freedman (2001 : 162), Mike Jempson reflected his surprise of the conference:

33 Goodwin, Labouring under a Misapprehension, Broadcast 8 July 1994 cited by Freedman.

„There was talk of a consultative conference to update Labour media policy, and we all rather assumed that conventional Labour allies would be involved, although Mo was making noises about potential sponsors from the commercial sector. Offers of joint sponsorship with the CPBF etc. were ignored. In the event...we ended up with a razzmatazz event at the Queen Elisabeth Conference Centre, chaired by Mo, at which News International thanked a rather uncomfortable Margaret Beckett for allowing them to contribute to Labour party policy. There was no trade union involvement...The worm had turned, and most of us saw little point in being associated with policies that now apparently favoured greater deregulation especially re ownership and control measures, in order that UK media companies could compete freely in the global market. I have not been approached for advice on broadcasting policy since; I assume commercial lobbyists have literally plugged all the gaps.“

Mo Mowlam was far from considering her contribution to the change of direction as worth mentioning in her autobiography. However, this has proven to be a keypoint to the direction of Labour television policy ever since. The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), the Labour supporting think tank, launched a high profile project into media regulation. The programme was backed by Patricia Hewitt, the deputy director of IPPR, previously Neil Kinnock's press secretary, now part of Tony Blair's advisory circle. The project was funded by many companies who were highly important players of the UK communication sector and had attended the 21st Century Media Conference: BT, the Cable Communication Association, LWT, Pearson, Mercury Communication and News International. „In fact, according to one of the project's founders, Richard Collins, News International was the first company to commit to funding on condition that at least two other backed the work“ (Freedman 2001 : 163). And for James Purnell, one of the researchers, and later a policy adviser in Downing Street, there were two key assumptions for the project:

„Firstly, that markets were not necessarily bad things, that there were some things that they were the best tool to deliver. Secondly, we had to adapt to the fact that technology was changing incredibly fast and that, whereas policy was based on the idea that you would have a very small number of channels and newspapers, those assumptions were being overturned.“ (quoted in Freedman:163).

The outcome of the project was published as *New Media, New Policies* two years later. Basically, it summoned that neither pure neoliberalism nor „old left“ approaches were effective: „a convergence of liberalization and regulation are, in our view, likely to provide the best basis for securing the public interest in media and communication in the future“ (Collins, Muroli 1996 : 16). In a special chapter devoted to concentration of ownership, the authors distinguished between „cross-ownership“ and the more

undesirable „concentration of ownership“ and also that „policies promoting structural change, promoting pluralism in ownership, may be inimical to diversity of products and services“ (ibidem : 75).

Such a shift on cross media ownership naturally did not please everyone in the party. „The 1994 TUC conference passed a motion opposing the relaxation of ownership restrictions and calling for the rules to be extended to include satellite as well as terrestrial media.“ (Freedman 2001 : 164). However, the first dinner between Tony Blair and Rupert Murdoch took place in August 1994, a month after Blair’s leadership victory. While the leader of opposition was seeking a good media image, Murdoch was equally keen to soften the party line expressed in the 1992 election manifesto to launch monopolies and mergers investigation into media concentration. (ibidem : 158).

In March 1995, Chris Smith, successor of Mo Mowlam as the Shadow Heritage Secretary (he entered the real post in 1997), spoke at a conference organised by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and „described the government’s delay in reporting on cross media ownership as a „seriously lost opportunity.“ Asked directly whether Labour was more deregulatory than the Conservatives over cross-media ownership (as had been publicly suggested the previous week by Associated Newspapers boss, David English), Smith replied „no“. But then he added: „What I am in favour of is the right sort of regulation. That does not mean I am in favour of less, nor necessarily of more.“(Goodwin 1998 : 146).

When the government finally came out with the 1995 White Paper that was making losers of the labour-supporting Mirror Group and Murdoch’s News International exceeding the 20 per cent limit, Labour made it clear that the relaxed ownership rules *did not go far enough*. The heritage secretary Virginia Bottomley said that Labour had „lurched from a paranoid terror of large media groups to a sycophantic devotion to them“(quoted in Freedman 2001 : 166).

But thinking that the coalition was the only impulse behind the change in Labour’s policy on media would probably not reflect the situation fully. Television policy followed the general shift of policy towards the convergence of media. In November 1994, Tony Blair launched a policy forum of 32 members ranging from all over the Labour party, communication industries, academia and the union, chaired by Chris Smith. It received over 200 written submissions and oral presentations from leading media and communication companies. It was meant to follow cutting edge

developments around multimedia and digital technologies – inspired by promises of „information superhighway“ and „broadband revolution“ in 1992 Bill Clinton and Al Gore’s US election campaign and it did so in the report *Communicating Britain’s Future* (CBF) in summer 1995.

CBF signalled the Labour party’s acceptance of convergence not only in the suggestion of the merger of ITC (Independent Television Commission) and the telecommunications regulator Oftel into light touch streamlined regulator, an OFCOM. Media would also be set into the framework of industrial policy and also broadcasting was considered as such. (It even created a little turf war on the brief between the shadow ministers, which reflects the rise of media policy significance for New Labour). This approach showed in support of the government’s plans for digital terrestrial television as embodied in the 1996 Broadcasting Act. Similarly, Labour’s pre-election arts and media document, *Create the Future*, promised to „promote the digital revolution“ and added that „it is important that we maintain universal access to a wide range of television services in the digital age“.

Freedman (2003 : 170) concludes the change on Labour between the 1992 and 1997 in the following words:

„New Labours’s balancing act between the market and public service in the 1997 manifesto does little to obscure the fact that substantial changes had taken place between 1992 and 1997. In five years since its last manifesto commitment to tackle media concentration; its pledge to curb the power of Rupert Murdoch and News International had been rethought as a campaign to court the power of Rupert Murdoch and News International. By 1997, New Labour had provided the clearest signal of any incoming Labour administration of its intentions for broadcasting once in office.“

Freedman (2003 : 202) also concludes on television policy:

...up until emergence of New Labour, television policy was simply not a key issue for the party leadership. In opposition and government, the leadership was always far more interested in the use of television to project a modern image and to publicize personalities and politics. To the extent that it did consider policy, television was used as a means of identifying Labour with key themes: the consumer revolution in the 1950s, technological developments in the 1960s, questions of accountability and democracy in the 1970s and with issues of quality and standards in the 1980s.“

He also highlights that it might have been New Labour who lifted the theme of television policy, which does usually not attract much public awareness, and set it into the wider framework of „rebranding“ the party. In his view, it would still „be too

simplistic to suggest that New Labour has transformed what was previously a monolithic policy on the media into a more relevant and multidimensional one given that there are strong continuities in the evolution of Labour's television policies" (ibidem : 202).

Let me now return back to the neoliberal discourse as imposed on the broadcasting policy of the Labour Party as now I have presented some background to understand the texts I have managed to get hold of better. First, I will have a look into Norman Fairclough's analysis of New Labour language and reflect his explanatory focus on its relation with global trends and free markets.

Second, I choose a few primary documents to work out whether these changes can be followed. I also shortly reflect upon paragraphs devoted to media policy in the Conservative Party and Labour Party 1992 and 1997 general election manifestos.

„The one genuinely significant change, the replacement of the old state control /free market polarisation of the 1970's and 1980's with the new two-party acceptance of the market, is the achievement, in their different ways, of Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Neil Kinnock, John Smith and Tony Blair, not of the SDP or of anyone else associated with it“ (Anthony King and Ivor Crewe 1996 : 470

5. Where the hell is...the free market?

Writing on the phenomenon of political change a year after the Labour finally won the general elections of 1997, Richard Heffernan reflected on the relationship between Thatcherism, neoliberalism and New Labour in the following way:

„In economic and social policy the Thatcherite political agenda is now a significant constraint affecting what present day political actors can do... While the rise of neoliberalism in the context of the UK is not necessarily reducible to the role of agency it still owes much to the politics of Thatcherism... Even if Thatcherism was a reaction to a structural environment in the form of a cross national political economy (reflection of the unfeasibility of the Keynesian welfare state), its political and electoral engagement with Labour over a fifteen year period was the transmission belt of the 'neo-liberalisation' of traditional social democratic politics. Thus, under Tony Blair, Labour has moved ever rightward after 1992 whereas its programmatic stances of 1987 and 1992 were constructed under the same configuration of economic and social forces that applied in 1996 and 1997. Blair, and crucially, Kinnock before him have not been working a blank canvass but a palimpsest already partially reworked by Thatcherism, one covered in markings Labour is as unwilling as it is unable to erase.“ (Heffernan, Richard 1998 : 32)

This might suggest that when Tony Blair took over his leadership in 1994, neoliberal discourse *had already been there*. Similarly, the columnist Simon Jenkins wrote for The Times in 1995 that „It was Neil Kinnock who saw off the Social Democrats, who declared war on the militants, and who took a bullet in the back for his pains. Mr Blair had only to walk across the silent battlefield, shoot any left wingers found alive and collect banners for his triumph.“ This sounds as if Blair simply highlighted discourse that had already rooted within the party. Can this hypothesis be supported when dealing with television policy?

I have gone through the corpus of texts that Dr Freedman kindly shared with me that had been used to complete the part of his book on Labour Party television policy between 1992 and 1997. From this I have chosen three pieces of text related to television policy that help me to argue that there had been a positive approach to the

market even before Blair became a leader, but that his leadership further impacted media policy. Before I turn to the analysis, let me make one more brief U-turn to Norman Fairclough.

5.1. New Labour, New Language

In the following couple of paragraphs, I will employ information from Norman Fairclough's book (2000) on the political discourse of New Labour to distill the general discourse of New Labour, its nature and coherence especially in relation to globalisation and neoliberalism. All citations I use below come from the book. The following lines are inserted to roughly introduce the discourse of New Labour, as it is germane for discourse analysis to look for expressions that are in texts as well as notice what has never been pronounced or even did not even get in.

Norman Fairclough worked with a corpus of text from 1998 and early 1999, when the language was still highly coherent after the 1997 general election. Of course, absolute coherence can never be reached in a democratic party. The Labour Party needed to build its own „coherent and distinctive representation of the world.“ „For instance, the Conservative Party at present (early in 1999) is in some disarray not just because New Labour won a landslide victory in the 1997 general election, but more because New Labour has built a new political discourse that has incorporated elements of the political discourse of Thatcherism, and has thus transformed the field of political discourse.“(21) The situation of Conservative Party was thus not dissimilar of the Labour Party before 1997.

New Labour presented the set of its values as the „Third Way.“ „That logic begins from assumptions about the global economy that lead to an emphasis on competition between Britain and other countries, which foregrounds a project of „national renewal“ designed to improve Britain's competitive position, in which there is an inclusive focus on „one nation“ and on necessary transformations of „civic society“ and of the „deal“ between government and people.

A crucial assumption is that the measures necessary to strengthen enterprise in the knowledge-based economy are also means of achieving greater social justice. This logic is consistent with a „new politics“ which transcends the division between („old“) left and („new“) right.“(23)

„Third Way differs from the „old left“ and „new right,“ often in the form of extended lists“(9), in which „what had been seen as incompatible opposites are

represented as reconciled“(9). The Third Way discourse stands on a set of assumptions about global economy. Fairclough cites the White Paper on competitiveness and the building of a „knowledge driven“ economy:

„In the increasingly global economy of today, we cannot compete in the old way. Capital is mobile, technology can migrate quickly and goods can be made in low cost countries and shipped to developed markets. British business must compete by exploiting capabilities which its competitors cannot easily match or imitate...knowledge, skills and creativity.“ (quoted on 23).

„But the presupposition of global economy can mean one of two things: either „the fact that the economy is now global in scale“ or „the global economy in its present (i.e. neo-liberal) form“. This ambiguity is systematic in the discourse of New Labour...and the whole logic of „third Way“ flows from it. Many of those who do see globalisation as undeniable and irreversible do not by any means see the currently dominant neo-liberal form of globalisation as inevitable and irreversible. But the discourse of New Labour fudges this distinction, and in effect it constructs neo-liberalism itself as a given an irreversible fact of life.

It is possible to identify keywords of New Labour, used relatively most frequently. Fairclough mentions the following as relatively the strongest ones: we, welfare, new, people, reform, promote, deal, young, Britain, partnership, schools, crime, deliver, business, tough (17-18). So is a certain discourse related to business. Here for example „partnership“ and „helping“ collocations with „business“ are striking in terms of overwording (30-31). On the other hand, some words will never be pronounced. The technology cited in the White Paper above can „migrate“ like a bird, but the formulation „the multinational corporations can quickly move capital and technology from place to place, and they can make goods in low cost countries and ship them to developed markets“ will for an average reader remain only a veiled allusion, if anything at all.(24-25).

The discourse nominalises change as a given fact, naming where it takes place: „in trade, in media and communications, in the new global economy refashioning our industries and capital markets. In society; in family structure; in communities; in lifestyle.“ (28).

This creates the feeling that the world is changing cumulatively. However, this suggests „a system and logic of modern capitalism which positions agents including the multinationals and governments in processes which that they will act, they will have to act, in certain ways.“ But Labour does not have an analysis, „still less critique, of the

modern systém.“ In this discourse, „in sharp contrast with political discourse on the left, the main social actors in global economic competition are national states rather than multinational corporations“(29). The task for a nation is to „make Britain more competitive.“ We would be a community and civic society with rights, responsibilities and duties, values and the family, preventing social exclusion (28-65). Fairclough points out the striking similarity of discourse with Bill Clinton, certain common ground with Thatcherism but also enriched by the European and global discourse.

The discourse was targeted on the British audience and also at efficient presentation to the media. In a knowledge economy, where creative industries played an important role, let me now have a look how new Labour discourse developed in broadcasting policy.

5.2. A closer look at three Labour policy texts in time

Now I am going to comment on three texts that can be found in Appendix. The texts were chosen as I considered them representative enough to reflect the development of Labour broadcasting policy discourse in time. I have tried to set them into the general context in the Labour broadcasting policy chapter (Chapter 3), so here I am rather targeting the order of discourse.

Putting the Citizen at the centre of British Broadcasting, A Labour Party Discussion Document (Appendix 1)

The conclusions of *Putting the Citizen at the centre of British Broadcasting, A Labour Party Discussion Document* can be found in Appendix 1. In April 1993, this was presented by the Shadow Secretary of State for National Heritage as a brief destined to react to the government’s green paper on the *Future of the BBC*.

Ann Clwyd, before her replacement at the position, represented a left-wing oriented approach and this reflects in the paper. Even the title is representative of this approach as it stresses a „citizen“ rather than a „consumer“ and suggests a deliberate motion towards balance and accord at the centre of national broadcasting.

The left wing position reflects in traditional close-to-socialist values mentioned: from „maintenance and development of the public service,“ „defending its independence,“ a pressure for impartiality through a settled framework and thus guard it for „viewers and listeners rather than advertisers and sponsors.“ BBC should also be an example of „good employment practices“, „devolution“ and also „close to its audiences“. Basically, a set of equality leftist values that would be open for further discussion.

Mo Mowlam, speech from the 21st Century Media Conference, Wednesday 13 July 1994, The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (Appendix 2)

Do not let yourself be intrigued by the call for „consultation and dialogue“ in this speech. It is rather given by the situation than by the real meaning. Mo Mowlam was „supping with the devils“ of media industry at a conference that ordinary people or trade unions would not attend due to the high fee. Apparently, for attendants of this event, time is more precious than money, as time and information „offers the prospect of more social interaction.“

And „media industry“ is „not so much part of our heritage but part of our future.“ „We“ „help that industry grow.“ UK market „needs the assurance.“ It slightly reminds me of cafeteria benefits – express what you need and „we“ will „get the regulatory issues right“.

This speech is meant to be highly encouraging for the market and its „consumers.“ On the other hand, it is positive about ownership it slightly doubted the development of „multi-media revolution,“ the time of bright future it might bring was yet to come.

Communicating Britain´s Future (CBF), Introduction, Appendix 3

CBF was launched at the second 21st Century Communications conference. The audience had not changed much. According to the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, the conference „was a sort of meeting for the faithful. The CPBF and the media unions received no publicity about the event and had to make a direct approach to attend and have a stall“ (quoted in Freedman 2003 : 193). The target

reader of this document was the public. The brief was destined to impress by its expensive colourful print or even a distribution on hard drive. The language is an example fully in accordance with the above mentioned Fairclough's analysis of New Labour language. The policy group has done its job and the leadership too: there is no discussion but coherence and assurance radiates.

A revolution in media is about to burst, it is going to flood the list of events in our lives and we are going to benefit from a newly established „information superhighway.“ Britain deserves better. Networks will „increase international competitiveness, stimulate innovation and investment and encourage the development of world leaders in media and information technology services.“ Again the networks by themselves will empower „citizens and participants and consumers,“ and also providers.

The wording, as well as contacts with the relevant businesses, attracted a great deal of attention from the leadership. The positives of broadband communication were absolutely in accordance with „third way“ principles. The „information superhighway“ would be one of the flagship Labour policies – and also a good lure to mention in various speeches.

I am well aware that the three texts target different audiences. But were chosen to follow the change of discourse in the party in time. The first reflects the time, when broadcasting policy was not in the sunshine of attention of the leadership. It would follow the anticapitalist approach that had been presented in the 1992 election manifesto.

However, the speech by Mo Mowlan reflects the raise of media policy among priority theme for the leadership. John Smith may not have presented his Prawn Cocktail Offensive in public, but he was making moves to create positive relations with business. Even if this might have been only an effort to fill a gap in the television ownership issues neglected by the government, it seemed an effective move.

Blair leadership could thus continue. A closer look at the language of did not simply follow and feed up the discourse that had already rooted withing the party. In was to reflect global developments and communicate the party's eager position.

As this thesis is mostly a comment on the paragraphs devoted to media/broadcasting in the 1992 and 1997 general manifesto, I recommend seeing the Appendix 4, where I have laid the relevant parts side by side, Conservative and Labour. I do not want to

comment on them further at this point except a little remark on consistency of discourse. While I was taking the paragraphs out of the manifestos, I considered the general consistency of the whole texts as well as of the language. In 1992, the Conservative Party bit seemed more like a party that knew the continuity of what it was doing and where it was heading. Media policy in Labour was negative to opening the market too much. In 1997, both paragraphs say approximately the same. But it is the New Labour who uses language that is strong, coherent and even „bursting with future active engagement.“ I believe this is the way discourses reach hegemony and language wins elections. The discourse reflects coherency in exactly the scope that has been reached. Otherwise it does not work.³⁴

34 Wring (2005 : Chapter 6) gives a good example on political communication of the Labour Party in 1987: „Labour resembled an airline with a safety problem marketing itself on the quality of its in-flight meals“ and cites an internal report by Peter Mandelson who claimed the party’s presentation was 'so professional (it) risked being disqualified in the voter’s minds.“

6. Conclusion

In the first chapter, I applied the basic premise of CDA to British broadcasting policy. That discourse, as an inseparable part of social change, is both constituted by and constitutes power. When the research deals with political change, this premise stands out even more, as the actors in their quest for power actively seek out opportunities for change. An example from the area I have dealt with would be the „prawn cocktail offensive“ started in 1993. The low key theme of broadcasting was taken from the Shadow Cabinet Heritage minister Ann Clwyd, who had treated it with an anticapitalist approach, and handed over to Mo Mowlam, a political pragmatist, who would bind good relations with the media industries. A gap in media ownership interests that had been neglected by the government would be filled in by the Labour Party, which did not hesitate to completely switch its position on the theme.

At this point, let me also look back at the simple question of discourse as a policy turning into reality. In 1993, Ann Clwyd had invited a voice from the CPBF to set a policy and he did. But it did not turn into reality because in the meantime the discourse of media and cross ownership had gained hegemony. Similarly, the „Third Way“ discourse would have never gained coherence and the interconnected hegemony had there been no managerial impulses to follow the way. The leadership of the Labour Party would work as a belt of transmission, applying different global frameworks on national concepts – no matter if definitions were missing once a common political feeling or message was handed over. They certainly managed to create and promote a coherent enough set of messages to be elected in 1997.

In this context, following Labour media policy between 1992 and 1997 provides understanding how from a politically low profile theme like this turned into one of the flagships of the Third Way ideas. Had there been no belief – no matter how grounded – in media convergence in business circles, there would have been no strong impulse to reassess the policy. Had there been no quest for power, the management of Labour would probably not have been so eager to adopt the values of the free market. Had there been no acceptance of business principles of leadership and new managerialism, policies (or discourses) might have been discussed differently (as they were tried to by TUC).

Even paradigmatic shifts are subservient to the actors of social change. Throughout the period of 1992 to 1994 the television policy of the Labour Party towards the market could be diagnosed with two large paradigmatic shifts. One was rather „technological,“

since in 1993 more and more players trusted the new technologies so that they would be vitalized – ending up in the digital revolution. For example, New Labour would trust broadband as an „information superhighway“ promoting its positives, a step probably not so surprising in the end as this technology could make newly defined lists of principles at least partially true. So was it the digital revolution that adopted neoliberal Labour or was it neoliberal Labour that adopted digital revolution? In this thesis, I could find a whole number of other ways that discourses mix, interconnect and cohere and I hope to have shown it also through the texts I have presented.

Applying a transdisciplinary approach and CDA to a theme allows the researcher to see much wider comparisons and consequences. However, this freedom can prove almost dangerous – such as my enchantment with the interconnectivity of discourses in the paragraphs above. Discourses seem coherent, strong and explanatory, as long as we are unable to uncover the missing or unmentioned parts.

The „real/academic facts“ collected for this thesis allow me to interpret. I can create the discourse on the Labour management tenaciously building its positions against the loony left that never inspired the public, but that they would gradually attract voters and finances through moving the whole party ideologically to the centre. The replacement of leftist Ann Clwyd by pragmatist Mo Mowlam was meant as only a small battle for a policy issue far from public interest, especially given convergence threatening private national broadcasters. But this proved to be a highly progressive step and they intercepted the „information superhighway“ as an important impulse for the national economy and were able to communicate its positives even in their self propagation.

On the other hand, Mo Mowlam could be characterised as a conscienceless politician who would make from people consumers rather than citizens, and supported the „producer choice“ squeezing the BBC. As a career builder heading for a seat on Northern Ireland, she would let her colleague Chris Smith take over. This shadow minister would, before the 1996 Broadcasting Act, promote the idea that the British media market be directed by Rupert Murdoch, whose Sun, money and bad treatment of employees gained him a worldwide respect. To lure Murdoch, Labour pressed the government to adopt less tight media cross-ownership rules. With the professional communication of spin and programme stolen from previously successful US New Democrats, the Party finally got to power. It was no longer doing much for its traditional voters. For example, in the television policy it had voted for digital television in the UK, not considering the cost of set-top boxes for ordinary families.

Again, I would be creating discourse setting it in a framework of other discourses. Though such activities may be useful, rather I want to stress the importance of understanding of discourses around us. Only a society that asks, discusses and thinks, reads and writes rather than consumes, stares and remains silent, stays free. CDA works in support of (the discourse of) freedom. And Labour television policy would have deserved better exploring the discourse of neoliberalism.

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8. SUMMARY

The thesis deals with the television policy of the Labour Party, 1992-1997. The topic works as a framework for interpretation of Norman Fairclough's concepts, applying his transdisciplinary approach and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Within the framework, I answer simple questions such as whether discourse that had reached the status of policy can have real economic impact (in the case of Campaign for Press and Broadcasting not) or where the global discourse meets the local (issues of cross media ownership and new technologies).

In my quest to better understand the relationship between social change and discourse, I follow the history of deregulation of the broadcasting duopoly, the way of the Labour Party towards deregulation and in the light of this information analyse three different texts and shortly follow up on coherence in the 1992 and 1997 Labour and Conservative manifestos.

To conclude, I appreciate the wide academic freedom that discourse and its interconnectivity provides. As discourses can influence society, a free society should understand and participate in its discourses. In Labour Party television policy, the participation was certainly not complete.

9. Appendixes