Parties under pressure : explaining choices made by parties in the wake of heavy electoral defeat
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6 The Labour Party, 1983-1992

6.1 Introduction

If there exists a paradigmatic case of electoral crisis leading to dramatic changes in a party's outlook, it is almost certainly the British Labour Party's reinvention as New Labour. After going through a period of great internal strife in the 70s and a major split leading to the creation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1981, Labour suffered one of the most humiliating defeats for an official opposition party in Britain: in the 1983 election, they lost a quarter of their votes, almost a fifth of their seats and barely scraped for second place in the popular vote.[1] The form Labour took after going through this difficult period was perhaps the first iteration of the Third Way on the European left.

One might almost forget that it was not as easy as that. Before 1983, Labour was a party with a deep socialist and trade unionist identity, under the increasing programmatic control of those favouring its ideological purity. The transition into New Labour was tumultuous and incremental, and not, as it turns out, all due to the internal motivations of the party itself. In fact, the internal institutional characteristics of the Labour Party would be a sure recipe for a reinforcement strategy, in which the party would go back to its roots and its traditional values to rediscover its strength. This is exactly the opposite of the ultimate outcome of the process.

The analysis of Labour in this chapter shows the clearest of all evidence to be found for the proposition concerning the effects of the electoral system, particularly First Past the Post (FPTP), on the recovery strategy. In concrete terms: the structure of the FPTP system can be expected to constrain Labour to a more extending trajectory than one would expect based on its internal characteristics. Taken together, the full thrust of the expectations generated by the model in this case would be for initial preferences to show a marked reinforcement strategy, before the effects of the electoral system give more rational and functional reasons to pursue a reinforcement strategy.

This chapter analyses the process of transformation the Labour Party underwent between 1983 through 1992 based on minutes from the party archives and the personal archives of Neil Kinnock, along the lines of our model, identifying two different phases: an initial phase from 1983 until the 1987 general election and from the 1987 general election onwards. Before doing so, section 6.2 will present a general overview of the Labour Party and its organisation, and measure up the party according to the independent variables of the model. After a short introduction on the 1983 General Election which gave the electoral shock in section 6.3, section 6.4 will then present a dimension-by-dimension

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1. H. Döring and P. Manow, "Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov)," Information on parties, elections and cabinets in modern democracies, 2018, accessed December 11, 2018, `http://www.parlgov.org`.

descriptive analysis of the recovery strategy as it developed. Finally, section 6.5 presents the conclusion of the analysis.

6.2 The Labour Party in 1983: setting the stage

In the course of the 20th century, the Labour Party has emerged as the major centre-left force in British politics. Founded in 1900 as the Labour Representation Committee, the Party originated as a conglomerate of organisations (mostly trade unions) pooling together into a single organisation to sponsor left-wing Parliamentary candidates. The party introduced individual membership in 1918. It entered government for the first time in 1924 under Ramsay MacDonald with a very small minority of the seats in Parliament; over the course of the interbellum, Labour would rise to supplant the Liberals as the major opposition to the right-wing Conservative Party. It won its first majority government in the landslide of 1945 under Clement Attlee, forming a government that would among others be responsible for the foundation of the National Health Service (NHS).

Over the course of its history, the bond with the trade unions remained a strong part of the party's identity. It was characterised during the period between 1945 and the 1970s as a rather moderate party upholding the "post-war consensus", a somewhat corporatist position shared by both the Labour and Conservative Parties. In his influential *Parliamentary Socialism*, left-wing thinker Ralph Miliband argued that Labour's history was 'dogmatic', but about parliamentarism rather than socialism.[2] They were strongly committed to the parliamentary system and 'flexible about all else'. Indeed, Labour's political leaders were more moderate. The rise of the left in the party in the 1970s led to ever stronger factional conflict.

The link with the wider Labour movement (as the trade union movement is usually referred to within party circles) has left a strong imprint on the party organisation. Webb notes that British parties largely concentrate power at the centre, particularly around their parliamentary parties, and place little in the way of demands on their members.[3] The Labour Party was no different in this regard. Where it was different from the Conservative, Liberal and Social Democratic Parties, this was largely the result of its historic role as political wing of the trade union movement. Organisationally, the party had three wings: in addition to the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and the extra-parliamentary organisation represented nationally by the National Executive Committee (NEC) and locally by the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs), the party's affiliates, dominated by the trade unions, comprised the party. To understand the Labour Party and the events of 1983-1992, it is crucial to have an understanding of the dynamics between the three.

Like in all British parties, the parliamentary party was a dominant force and had wide-ranging autonomy.[4] Its leadership was also the leadership of the party-at-large and of the

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2. R. Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism: A Study in the Politics of Labour* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972 [1961]), 13.

3. P. D. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain: the Iron Law of Centralization?," in *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, ed. R. S. Katz and P. Mair (London: SAGE, 1994), 109.

4. Ibid.

Labour movement as a whole. The PLP had dominated both leadership selection and the process of policy-making, especially surrounding the authoring of manifestos. Unlike their Conservative counterparts, however, the PLP's authority was not unrivalled. This was because of Labour's setup as a mass organisation. The Labour Party Constitution governed the way in which the entire party conducted its work, and was under the authority of the Annual Party Conference, thus limiting the autonomy of the PLP compared to the Tories and Liberals.[5]

This is particularly relevant when considered in light of the way the balance of power had shifted by 1983. By that time, the PLP's influence had become the victim of factional strife between the left and right of the party. Historically regarded as a bastion of the pragmatic right of the party, the PLP and its leadership were accused by left-wing activists of repeatedly betraying the policies passed by conference and included in the party's general election manifestoes. This eventually grew into what could be called the "betrayal theory", which equated leadership with betrayal.[6] Over the course of the 70s, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) was set up by the left, and successfully pushed to curtail the autonomy of the PLP. Two reforms in particular were important. First of all, while the PLP had at first elected its own leader, in 1981 this was placed in the hands of an electoral college representing CLPs and affiliates as well as the members of the PLP.[7] Secondly, the left had successfully pushed for mandatory reselection as candidates of incumbent MPs, which meant local activists could more easily replace MPs whom they thought had "betrayed" the manifesto.[8] Regardless of these reforms, however, the leader of the party remained a central figure to its organisation, and his elected frontbench team of spokespersons known in opposition as the Parliamentary Committee or the Shadow Cabinet[9] was a driving force for policy still.

The other major actor in the party was the 29-member NEC. The unions were represented on this body by a twelve-man strong contingent, much smaller than the seven allotted to the CLPs, five specifically to women and two (leader and deputy leader) to the PLP (although some MPs served as representatives of other sections).[10] These members were elected by the relevant sections of party conference. The official role of the NEC was to develop policy between conferences and direct the work of national headquarters.[11] The chairman of the NEC was traditionally chosen based on seniority, and did not have a large role in the party organisation's day-to-day direction. That role was played by the general

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5. The Liberals had a Constitution, of course, but the Liberal Parliamentary Party was only named as supplying members for certain bodies, and the appointment of its officers left autonomous. In the Labour Party, this was different.

6. E. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979: Crisis and Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 165; see also the quote by Mitchell on page 20.

7. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain," 119; D. Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987" (PhD diss., Queen Mary College, University of London, 2004), 21-22.

8. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 16-17; Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987," 19.

9. In the text, preference shall be given to the colloquial term "Shadow Cabinet" rather than the official term "Parliamentary Committee", in the interests of clarity.

10. P. D. Webb, "The United Kingdom," in *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook*, ed. R. S. Katz and P. Mair (London: SAGE, 1992), 855.

11. Ibid.

secretary of the party, the head of Labour Party Headquarters, an important figure that attended the NEC without a vote. The NEC conducted its work largely through a number of committees, including the influential Home Policy Committee and the Organisational Committee.

This leaves the role of the unions. In practice, the unions used their dominant position in the party with a considerable degree of self-restraint.[12] Unions were regarded as being on the "traditional right" of the party.[13] According to Minkin, trade union leaders recognised that asserting too much influence would be damaging to the party, and therefore exercised restraint, leaving leadership in political affairs to the PLP.[14] Successive bodies were formed to give union support to Labour election campaigns.

As can be inferred from the way certain bodies were perceived as on the left or right, the factional balance plays a particularly important role. Each faction generally had its own group of MPs and extra-parliamentary groups. The right of the party had historically been dominant, with the support of the trade unions. Its ideology was "labourism" more than socialism, being concerned more with furthering the labour movement's interests than with ideological concerns of socialism. They also dominated the PLP before 1981 organised in the Manifesto Group, but their power was diminished when defectors from the right left the party and established the SDP. Their organisations were the St. Ermins Group of trade union leaders, the Labour Solidarity Campaign and Forward Labour.[15] By 1983, an important development was taking place in this factional balance as the left was splitting. The leadership challenge of the left's standard-bearer, Tony Benn, to the sitting Deputy Leader, right-winger Denis Healey, is often seen as a pivotal moment. Several left-wingers, including the party's 1983-1992 leader, Neil Kinnock, abstained from the ballot in protest, leading Benn and his allies to leave the left-wing Tribune Group of MPs and form the 'hard-left' Socialist Campaign Group.[16] The remaining members of the Tribune Group are usually seen as the 'soft left'. This soft left is very important to our narrative, not just because Kinnock was a member of this faction, but also because this split in the left opened up opportunities to ally with the old right and trade unions to restore electoral viability.

The Labour Party is a large party, both in terms of votes, seats and members. Especially in the latter regard, if the affiliated members through the trade unions are taken into account, it dwarfed all other British parties with a total of just over 6,5 million in 1982.[17] However, Webb also notes that these trade union members were largely passive.[18] The individual members were considerably fewer in number at 273,803, and much smaller as a body than the reported 1,2-million membership of the rival Conservative Party in 1982, but still way larger than the minor Liberal Party with its 100,000 members in 1985, the

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12. See L. Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991).

13. Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987," 10.

14. Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance*, 28; 30.

15. Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987," 8.

16. Ibid., 25-26.

17. Webb, "The United Kingdom," 847.

18. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain," 110.

closest year these statistics are available for.[19] As a result, Labour has a significant amount of resources.[20]

It should be kept in mind that the factional conflict within the Labour Party strongly colours the discussions on electoral base attachment and ideological attachment. Labour's tradition was, for most of the 20th century, defined by the dominant position of the right, which was less ideological and more socialised in the parliamentary and trade union environment. Essentially, the right adhered to a revisionist social democracy.[21] However, the rise of the left, which was more committed to socialism as an ideology and differed in its ideas about the working class, changed all this in the rather short timeframe between the foundation of CLPD in 1973 and the implementation of the electoral college in 1981.[22] This will be expanded upon further in the analysis below, which serves to measure up the party according to the independent variables of the model.

6.2.1 Electoral base attachment

The party's strong links to the trade union movement and its wide array of affiliate organisations make the party a strong example of a party with high electoral base attachment through formal ties. In the common discourse, Labour has essentially been seen as the party of the unionised working class and the political arm of the trade union movement in particular. Webb notes that the trade unions affiliated to the party effectively "became" its organisation.[23] Within the party, this trade union connection is usually regarded as a valuable part of the Labour identity; to the outside world, especially during the 80s, experience with general strikes in the preceding decade had occasionally seen this bond portrayed as pernicious or damaging to society-at-large.[24] Nevertheless, the formal links to the trade unions and the informal norms that put value on these links combine to make the party strongly attached to its base through these formal and informal links.

This is in part due to the party's origins as the Labour Representation Committee through which the unions sought political representation, and in part due to the class-based nature of British politics. Although Webb describes Labour as a mass-integration party, he also distinguishes this from a mass-membership party and notes that essentially "coalitions of parliamentary *and union* elites" dominated it.[25] It was also grounded in working-class culture.[26] The working-class self-image of the Labour Party, in terms of our model is informal electoral base attachment: the working class, perhaps more even than socialism itself (hence the term Labourism), was the core identity of the party and its *raison d'être*.

More importantly, however, the identity of the party as the political arm of the broader Labour movement found expression in its institutions and therefore in the broader dy-

19. Webb, "The United Kingdom," 847.

20. Although Webb remarks that most British parties do not place a lot of demands on their members.

21. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 2.

22. Ibid., 8.

23. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain," 110.

24. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 46.

25. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain," 110, italics added.

26. L. Black, "'What kind of people are you?' Labour, the people and the 'new political history'," in *Interpreting the Labour Party: Approaches to Labour Politics and History* (2003), 31.

namics of power within the party. The party did not just have individual members, but also a huge block of affiliates who were members through their trade unions. These affiliates were largely passive payers of an automatic 'political levy' through which the trade unions supported the party.[27] The number of individual members, who joined through their local Constituency Labour Party (CLP), was considerably smaller. This meant the levy dwarfed Labour's income from membership fees, giving the unions a strong position.

This strong position was also expressed in the party's governing bodies. The party's Annual Conference or national congress consisted of one delegate per 5000 members, be they affiliated through their union or CLP, which gave the unions a huge 'block vote' to cast on behalf of their largely passive membership.[28] Likewise, the unions were guaranteed 12 seats on the 28-man National Executive Committee (NEC) for their representatives.[29] This tied the party strongly to its trade union roots both through the purse strings and through power relationships. It should be noted that the unions were reticent when it came to exercising this power, as has already been noted above.

Even if the Labour Party was strongly attached to its working-class and trade union base through its formal organisation, it should be noted that like all major parties, it was confronted with the effects of partisan dealignment. Webb notes that both its individual and affiliate membership were declining, and that there was also a decline in the patterns of class voting.[30] Documents in the personal archives of Neil Kinnock show that the party was aware of this.[31] However, the party remained formally attached to the trade unions, and this influence required them to at least take the views of their unionised base into account. This attachment to the electoral base of the party should engender a reinforcement strategy, particularly in the field of electoral tactics and organisation: the party's history as a working-class movement should make it more difficult to veer away from this particular path.

6.2.2 Ideological Attachment

As noted above, Labour's identity was defined more by its working-class base than its ideology, which was commonly described within the party as "democratic socialism".[32] The word "commonly" should be emphasised here, for the party had no declaration of its founding principles which contained the official version of this ideology. What official references there were to ideology were contained within the party constitution, specifically in the infamous Clause IV which described its aims. The original version of this clause contains a commitment to eventual full-scale nationalisation of the means of production.[33]

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27. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain," 114.
28. Webb, "The United Kingdom," 857.
29. Ibid., 855.
30. Webb, "Party Organizational Change in Britain," 114-115.
31. G. Marshall et al., "The Decline of Class Politics?" (1985), KNNK 2/1/67, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2-3.
32. For instance in the title of N. Kinnock and R. Hattersley, "Democratic Socialist Aims and Values" (1988), Papers on the Policy Review, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.
33. D. Wring, "The media and intra-party democracy: 'New' Labour and the clause four debate in Britain," *British Elections & Parties Review* 7, no. 1 (1997): 50.

The words were considered symbolic and appeared on the party's membership cards.[34] Nevertheless, Clause IV has been divisive throughout the party's history, showing much of Labour's conflictedness when it came to its ideology. This was a factional conflict. The right of the party had a more practical bend, while the left was more ideologically motivated.[35] This came to the fore in various battles between left and right, such as the 1960s attempt by rightist leader Hugh Gaitskell to abolish Clause IV because of its electoral drawbacks. Davis notes that the party's socialist ideals such as Clause IV had at most been paid lip service, and subordinated to the need to achieve the emancipation of the working class through Parliament.[36]

It was the right wing, with its "Labourism", rather than socialism, driving the party for most of its existence.[37] According to Cronin, Labourism rested on cooperation between trade unions and government to keep wages low, coupled with Keynesian economic strategies to spur growth.[38] For much of its existence, therefore, the party was very pragmatic, willing to sacrifice its expressed socialist principles to secure government and the ability to make parliamentary progress. This was made possible by the passive position adopted by the trade unions and the membership. Its history is not one of strong ideological attachment.

Nevertheless, by 1983, this had changed. The movement known as the "New Left" within the Labour Party had changed the dynamics within the party. More activist party members felt betrayed by the parliamentary leadership and openly denounced the pragmatism with which the party conducted itself in government as a casual disregard for the party's electoral manifestoes. The strength of the left was already evident as early as the 1960 party conference, when the party briefly embraced unilateral nuclear disarmament until party leader Hugh Gaitskell's Campaign for Democratic Socialism succeeded in overturning it, and in the successful resistance to Gaitskell's attempt to scrap Clause IV at the same conference.[39] Unilateral nuclear disarmament and Euroscepticism would be major bones of contention between the factions.[40] These charges of betrayal against the elected leadership of the party led to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) in 1973: unless the MPs were brought to heel by mandatory reselection as a candidate, an electoral college for the leadership and NEC control over the manifesto, they would keep betraying the leadership, according to the left.[41]

Due to a loss of control of the union leaders over their members, the activists were able to mobilise successfully. Between 1979 and 1981, both mandatory reselection and

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34. Ibid.

35. M. Davis, "'Labourism' and the New Left," in *Interpreting the Labour Party: Approaches to Labour Politics and History*, ed. J. Callaghan, S. Fielding, and S. Ludlam (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 45.

36. Ibid.

37. see Davis, "'Labourism' and the New Left"; J.E. Cronin, *New Labour's Pasts: the Labour Party and its Discontents* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2004), 7-8.

38. Cronin, *New Labour's Pasts*, 7-8.

39. Davis, "'Labourism' and the New Left," 41 & 45; Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987," 6.

40. Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987," 6.

41. Ibid., 15.

the Electoral College were achieved.[42] This put pressure on MPs to tread more carefully around their CLPs. The left also managed to secure crucial seats on the NEC from year to year, and left-winger Michael Foot was elected by a PLP under pressure from their constituency parties to lead the party in 1979.[43] This flexing of muscles by the left, combined with the exodus of major right-wingers who defected to form the Social Democratic Party in 1981, turned Labour's ideological character around. Since the left, which was far more ideologically attached than the right, occupied such a position of power, Labour has to be regarded as strongly ideologically attached, even if less so than a party in which ideological attachment had a longer history of ideology. This should make it costlier to pursue an extension strategy, particularly in the field of programme, since the dynamics of influence in the party would resist such changes. Altogether, Labour should therefore be expected to pursue a reinforcement strategy.

6.2.3 External environment: electoral and party system

The British political system is notoriously majoritarian – in fact, the Westminster system is seen as the archetype of the majoritarian system. British elections to Parliament are effectively elections for a governing party, since a single party typically controls a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. Between 1945 and 1983, there has been only a single election that returned a so-called "hung parliament" in which no single party had an overall majority, in February 1974.

This is because the elections are conducted using a First Past the Post (FPTP) system with single-member electoral districts. In chapter three, we have already argued, following Rohrschneider, that a majoritarian electoral system like FPTP will make it harder for core voters to defect, as well as giving parties incentives to chase after unaligned voters.[44] In practice, the electoral system results in a large number of safe seats for both major parties – as Golosov has noted, very large parties are generally advantaged by the system, and the system also benefits those with territorially concentrated support.[45] Safe Labour seats are historically concentrated in urban areas, mostly in the industrial heartlands of the North of England, whereas Conservative safe seats are more rural, located largely in the Home Counties in the South. The election is effectively decided in a number of marginal constituencies where the two parties are closely matched, given that these seats determine the majority in Parliament. As a result, the British electoral system is quite disproportional, with a Rose index of proportionality of just 76.35[46] for the 1983 General Election.[47]

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42. Hayter, "The Fightback of the Traditional Right in the Labour Party 1979-1987," 21-22.

43. Ibid., 21.

44. R. Rohrschneider, "Mobilizing versus chasing: how do parties target voters in election campaigns?," *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 3 (2002): 378.

45. G. V. Golosov, "Party nationalization and the translation of votes into seats under single-member plurality electoral rules," *Party Politics* 24, no. 2 (2018): 126.

46. Calculated by the author based on data from Döring and Manow, "Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov)."

47. The Rose index is calculated by subtracting the sum of the differences between each party's voteshare and seatshare at a given election, divided by two, from 100. See R. Rose, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Elections* (Washington: CQ Press, 2000)

Table 6.1: Overview of the Independent Variables: the Labour Party in 1983

Internal factors	Measurement	Expected Strategy
Electoral base attachment	Strong	Reinforcement
Ideological attachment	Strong[49]	Reinforcement
External environment		
Electoral system	First Past the Post	Extension
Previous election	Below average (-4%)	Reinforcement

This has resulted in a party system that is effectively a two-party system, where only two parties stand any chance of entering into government: the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. However, by 1983, a serious challenge had developed to this mode of competition in the form of the Alliance between the centrist Liberal Party and the breakaway Social Democratic Party formed by four rebel Labour MPs, which polled unprecedentedly high numbers in the popular vote for a third party in British history at 25.4% in the 1983 general election compared to Labour's 27.6%.[48]

The characteristics of the British electoral system are such that if the goal is to win more seats (and through them, a majority government), appealing to those that have voted for the party in the past is less useful. After all, these supporters largely live in safe seats that Labour already holds, and increasing the majority of the votes there therefore has no effect towards securing a majority. Therefore, there should be increasing pressure towards an extension strategy as the crisis continues, since this the electoral logic should push the party in this direction. In addition, the evidence already noted above of the decline of the party's working-class base should also lead Labour towards an extension strategy to compensate for this decline. According to the operationalisation of the impact of external factors developed in chapter four, this should primarily be in evidence in the second electoral cycle between 1987 and 1992, especially since the 1987 general election ended in another defeat for the party.

6.2.4 Overview and expectations

As shown in table 6.1, Labour's internal characteristics at the time of the 1983 general election point into a single direction. Through its history and its formal links to the trade union movement, Labour remained strongly attached to its working-class base. In addition, however, the dominance of the left and the concern for socialist ideological purity which it had managed to push to the forefront through the CLPD, strengthened the attachment of key actors in the party to socialist ideology. Because of this, we can expect a uniform influence towards a reinforcement strategy during the first electoral cycle. However, the dynamics of the FPTP electoral system constrain this option: an

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48. See I. Crewe and A. King, *SDP: the Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

49. Albeit with less of a tradition and more due to the increased influence of the left in the party, who can definitely be said to have such an attachment more than the party's traditional rightist leaders.

appeal to Labour's core voters, concentrated as they are in safe seats, will only have a limited effect if the party is to win back power. Therefore, a second cycle can be expected to show a change of strategy from the reinforcement to the extension strategy. For propositions 3 through 6 to find support in the data, therefore, the party should start off with a reinforcement strategy and then change to an extension strategy in the second cycle.

6.3 The 1983 General Election defeat

The 1983 General Election defeat saw Labour suffer the worst defeat in its history. Despite being in opposition against a generally unpopular government, the party managed to lose 52 of its 261 seats, about one-fifth, and after losing almost 10% of its share of the popular vote (a quarter of what it had polled in 1979) was uncomfortably close to the Alliance in the battle for second place.[50] This is below the 33% of votes or seats lost which we have set as a rule of thumb to recognise a crisis in a quantitative way. However, there are solid qualitative reasons to consider the case despite this. The official opposition can usually expect to gain seats at a general election. However, in 1983, this expectation of at least gaining on the Conservative government was not met in the slightest, leading to a feeling of crisis on all sides of the party, expressed differently: the hard left loudly complained that the Alliance and the press had stolen the election from them, whereas the right blamed the defeat on the left.

The fact that the previous election had already been a defeat for Labour also plays a role when we consider the identity of the defectors. In 1979, Labour was already below its average performance over the last five elections by 4%, as can be seen in the chart in figure 6.1.[51] The shock of 1983 brought it down to 13,3% below this average. This means that most of the defectors would have been core voters judging by our operationalisation. Though there might be some non-core voters involved, the threat to the core vote was significant. This would mean that the functional strategy for Labour to pursue would be a reinforcement strategy. As we shall see later in the discussion of tactical change, there is evidence supporting the picture that the Thatcherite Conservative Party was presenting a challenge to groups which traditionally voted Labour.

Perhaps thanks to the most graphical description of it by right-wing Labour MP Gerald Kaufman as "the longest suicide note in history"[52], the 1983 election defeat is associated in the popular mind with the Labour Party manifesto.[53] The manifesto was pushed through based on all the resolutions of a party conference dominated by the left of the party.[54] This led to a manifesto seen by many on the right of the party as unwieldy, contradictory and out-of-touch with the concerns of ordinary voters, without emphasis. It is generally also presumed that the manifesto's inclusion of many unpopular policies contributed to

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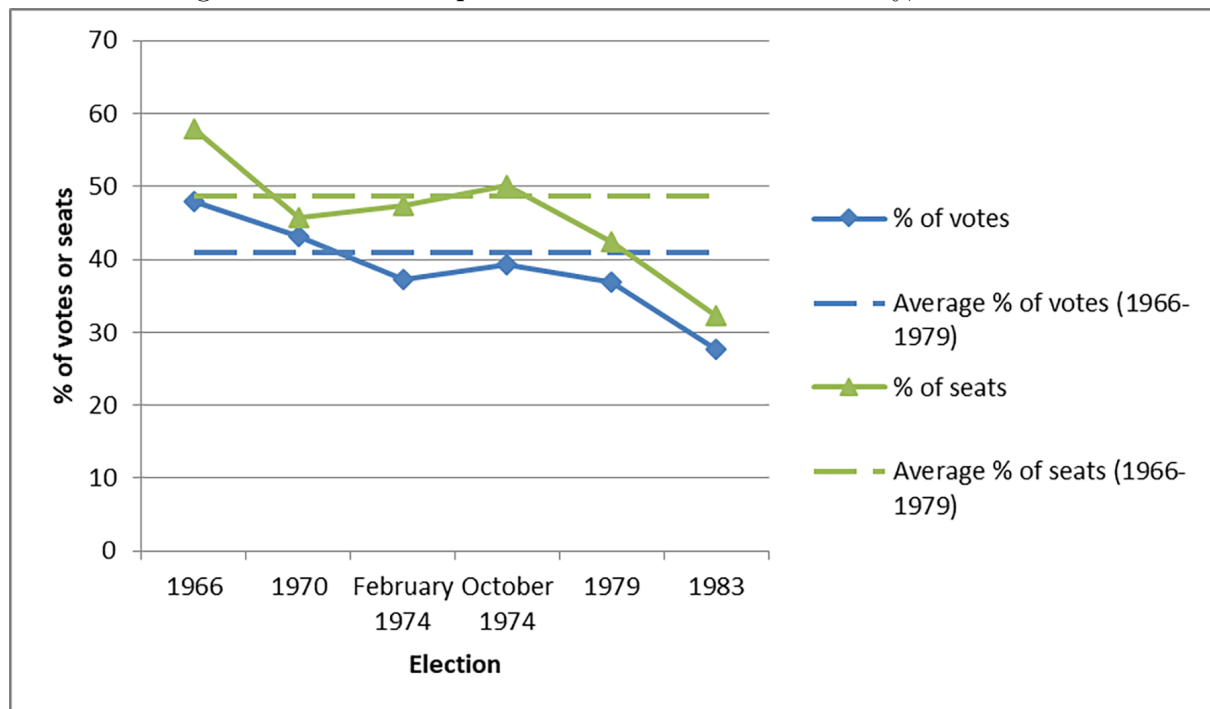50. Döring and Manow, "Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov)."
51. Based on data from ibid.
52. "Editorial comment: a loser's manifesto," *Financial Times*, May 17, 1983,
53. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 41.
54. Ibid., 24.

Figure 6.1: Electoral performance of the Labour Party, 1966-1983

the defeat.[55]

In addition, secondary literature implies that the party's attitude to communication was outmoded. While the Conservatives conducted a slick, professionalised campaign using the services of PR agency Saatchi and Saatchi, which had also seen them to victory in 1979, the Labour left had a deep mistrust of using the techniques of modern marketing in political campaigns, considering them too corporate and capitalist.[56] This might also have contributed to the defeat.

6.4 The recovery strategy

The 1983 landslide defeat threw the Labour Party into disarray. However, it seems that the dominant interpretation of the defeat, expressed by many on the left, was that its political direction and policies were not to blame. Outgoing party leader, Michael Foot, emphasised that he thought the manifesto was not the problem and that he was convinced the party's stances would be vindicated.[57] The general attitude on the left seems to have been that the voters might not perhaps have appreciated Labour's principled positions during the general election but that they would in time be able to be educated to come round to the party's point of view. This was underscored by statements like "nuclear disarmament policy should not be decided by a public opinion poll" (attributed to the

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55. Ibid., 27.

56. Ibid., 53.

57. M. Foot, "Manifesto Will Prove Right," *Labour Weekly*, July 17, 1983, Accessed at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, in *Labour Weekly*)[58] in defence of the policy on uni-lateral nuclear disarmament, which indicated that although the party's leadership on the left was aware that its policy was out-of-sync with ordinary voters, it did not believe that this should result in changing it.

By contrast, critics of the leadership, mostly on the right of the party, were very quick to point out the flaws in the party's policies and presentation. Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, who would later become a prominent leader on the right, wrote to the General Secretary that "... the entire presentational attitude to these policies could not have been better designed to alienate the very people whose votes we needed"[59] and the General Secretary wrote in *Labour Weekly* shortly after the election that the defeat was political rather than organisational, and owed to a number of "own goals".[60] It appears that this assessment was also shared to some extent at Labour Party Headquarters, because Policy Director Geoff Bish wrote of the failure to prepare a manifesto that "accurately reflected the concerns and needs of ordinary voters" as one of the failings, also mentioning presentational and organisational feelings.[61]

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the mood on the left of the party, the National Executive Committee's evaluation of the 1983 general election, which was put before the 1983 Party Conference as the statement *Campaigning for a Fairer Britain*, reveals that it was unwilling to lay the blame squarely at the feet of the party's policies.[62] The tone of the NEC statement as regards policy seemed to be that a majority agreed with the party, but that the SDP split had alienated them from the party.[63] The campaigning priorities outline fairly traditional areas of party policy as the focus of party efforts, and most of the changes announced dealt with organisation and party unity.[64] It seems therefore that even the magnitude of the defeat was almost unable to convince part of the party elite (though not its new parliamentary leadership) that the crisis could not be ignored.

However hesitantly, the party had resolved to act on the crisis and perhaps moreso than the NEC, the incoming party leadership under Kinnock and Hattersley had resolved to tackle the party's problems in a decisive manner. Between 1983 and 1992, when Kinnock left office, and even moreso between 1983 and 1997, when Blair won a majority, Labour would be transformed into an altogether more centrist governing alternative, adopting some of the characteristics of its Conservative rival. In terms of the dominant power coalition, this has gone hand-in-hand with the reassertion of power by the parliamentary leadership of the party through the sidelining of the Party Conference in policy-making

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58. H. Frayman, "Political Defeat, says Jim," *Labour Weekly*, July 17, 1983, Accessed at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

59. G. Dunwoody, "Letter to James Mortimer, General Secretary, the Labour Party" (1983), page stamped 000702, National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

60. Frayman, "Political Defeat, says Jim."

61. G. Bish, "The 1983 Election Campaign: the Failures: and Some Lessons" (1983), KNNK 2/1/20, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 1.

62. Labour Party, National Executive Committee, "Campaigning for a Fairer Britain" (1983), KNNK 2/4/3, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge; J. Mortimer, "General Secretary's Interim Report" (1983), KNNK 2/1/20, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

63. Labour, NEC, "Campaigning for a Fairer Britain," 6.

64. Ibid., 7-14.

and the employment of a more professional organisation in the Leader's Office.

There is a very clear dividing line to be drawn between the first electoral cycle of Kinnock's leadership from 1983 to 1987, in which the outlook was more traditional, and the later period from 1987 to 1992, in which some of the contours of what would later become New Labour were becoming visible. Due to the decision to restrict analysis to two electoral cycles following the shock, this chapter does not go beyond 1992 in the analysis. This is not as problematic as it might seem - after a fashion, Blair's New Labour emerged as a consequence of the foundations laid under Kinnock's leadership.[65] We shall return to this argument in the conclusion. In the sections that follow, we shall occasionally discuss New Labour – but always from the perspective of how Kinnock's actions presaged and enabled the later formation of New Labour and its essential characteristics.

6.4.1 First hesitant steps: 1983-1987

The 1983-1987 period of Labour's recovery process is characterised by a rather traditional reinforcement strategy. Internally, the period seems to have marked a shift in the balance of power within the party from the hard left of the party to a coalition of the soft left and the trade unions, led by the party leader, Neil Kinnock. This was marked by the development of a more compliant attitude by the NEC towards the 1987 general election as elections to the NEC saw members more sympathetic to the party leadership returned.[66]

It was also evidenced by the party leader's struggle with the Militant Tendency. This Trotskyist faction, often accused of entryism, had built several power bases inside the party and the country. The group clashed with the party leader's new mission to make the party electable, offering a radical left-wing alternative and promoting civil disobedience. The group had been proscribed in 1982 but still retained sympathy in significant parts of the party. A turning point in the battle against Militant for Kinnock was marked by a widely-acclaimed speech to the 1985 Party Conference in which he turned on the "far-fetched resolutions" of the Labour left, referring to Militant-influenced Liverpool Council's disobedience to new local government budget restriction, which saw the council infamously hire taxis to "... scuttle round the city, handing out redundancy notices to its own workers", in Kinnock's words.[67] Following the speech, sympathy for Militant took a heavy hit, and in 1986, the Liverpool Council's deputy leader was expelled from the party.

Nevertheless, as we shall see, the NEC and the leadership did hold considerably different outlooks (and the hard left, still influential, held yet another). The NEC can be characterised as cautious. With a significant left-wing contingent and wary of the CLPs which would react against too radical changes, the NEC primarily focused on organisational reform at the Walworth Road Party Headquarters. Even there, it was noted by

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65. Although this could be seen to be by no means both a necessary and sufficient condition. After all, John Smith's leadership between 1992 and 1994 was a more traditional continuation of Kinnock's course (for example, Smith's leadership saw the implementation of OMOV). Smith died in office, but his more limited reforms might very well have won the 1997 general election Blair's reforms went much further than Smith or Kinnock would ever have considered, but in a way they continue the more individualist cast which Neil Kinnock's programmatic reforms had given to Labour politics.

66. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 37; 159.

67. Quoted in ibid., 36.

his team member Patricia Hewitt that Kinnock had to take the lead to avoid different vested interests on the NEC bogging down the reforms.[68] It outlined a fairly traditional campaigning agenda, stemming from its evaluation of the defeat in *Campaigning for a Fairer Britain* as a function of presentation and party unity.

It should be noted that Kinnock's origins in the soft left probably did not put him that far from the old party line on many issues. His leadership campaign recommended that "unilateralism [in nuclear disarmament] must be held to unequivocally"[69]. However, he seemed aware of the fact that the party needed to appeal to a broader constituency, especially "those of the working class who have made at least some progress" and that "Thatcherism co-opts themes like liberty or patriotism that should be ours".[70] The documents in his personal papers show the agenda of the Leader's Office to be one more radical than the course that emerged, especially in organisational matters. Therefore, while it remains unlikely for Kinnock to have held the kind of programmatic views he would later push as party policy, we can at least say that he was of a mind to tackle further-going organisational and tactical changes.

6.4.1.1 Organisational changes, 1983-1987

According to the terms of the model, its strong attachment to its working-class base should lead to Labour adopting internal democratisation measures to empower the members, who are largely in tune with this core constituency's values. However, the concrete circumstances in the Labour case pose a challenge to this understanding of internal democratisation that needs to be cleared up first, since the largest part of the working-class base was passively affiliated rather than an active individual member of the party. The active members of the Labour Party in the 1980s, who held much of their power through the CLPs, are portrayed by Shaw as more radical and not afraid to pick fights with the leadership, causing a "crisis of legitimacy".[71]

Internal democratisation has an interesting effect in that it distributes power more widely, offering the possibility of a voice to the passive member. Since the affiliate members trump the voting power of the CLPs, the effect of introducing One Member, One Vote (OMOV) reforms in selections and the way in which the unions were treated was crucial in changing the balance of power in the party. Even if it only empowered individual members of the party and not affiliates, this can still be argued to be part of the reinforcement strategy. Bearing in mind the domination of left-wing CLPs because of their active and involved membership, empowering the more passive members of the party by means of OMOV shifts power away from these activists to members who are potentially more in touch with the concerns of Labour's core electorate.

This logic is evidenced by the attitude of the prime proponents of this reform. The

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68. P. Hewitt, "Some Thoughts on Party Reorganization" (1984), KNNK 2/1/25, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

69. Labour Party, Leader's Office, "Memo to Neil Kinnock on Leadership Campaign Themes" (1983), KNNK 2/1/20, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 3.

70. Labour, Leader's Office, "Memo to Neil Kinnock on Leadership Campaign Themes," 2; P. Hain, "Memo on leadership strategy" (1983), KNNK 2/1/20, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 11.

71. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 19-20.

leadership was favourable to OMOV because they believed it would stimulate membership involvement and further democratisation. This is exactly the logic of the model: through membership involvement, the party gets closer to its core supporters.[72] They pointed towards favourable experience with CLPs balloting their members in the 1983 leadership election.[73]

Of course, there is also something to be said for a power-based explanation of the push for OMOV. Since the parliamentary leadership now had the sword of Damocles of being refused reselection by left-wing CLPs hanging over its head, it was undoubtedly in their interest to circumvent radical activists within the party by broadening the franchise for these votes to less activist members. This was the motivation ascribed to the reforms by the CLPD and similar opponents on the left.[74] They claimed the move was caused by resentment over the introduction of mandatory reselection and that the primary motivation was to protect disloyal MPs from the scrutiny of their CLP, something Kinnock always vehemently denied.[75]

The battle for OMOV that started in the 1983-1987 electoral cycle was, therefore, a complicated affair. Kinnock's senior advisors, his chief of staff Charles Clarke and press secretary Patricia Hewitt cautioned against the resistance any move towards a mandatory OMOV arrangement for all CLPs would face, which made it a battle Kinnock was sure to lose.[76] While the leadership would have preferred a mandatory system, therefore, a voluntary system empowering CLPs to choose whether or not to use OMOV was devised.[77] When Conference rejected this compromise solution, it started a rather confusing back-and-forth between the NEC and Conference in which Conference defeats the proposal one year and then asks for new proposals to the same effect the next from the NEC, which failed to introduce them by 1986 (ahead of the 1987 general election) as planned.

The issue of trade union involvement played an important role in the discussions over OMOV. One of the principal criticisms of OMOV was that in the pure form in which only individual members would be entitled to vote, it would shut out the trade union movement of which Labour considered itself the political arm.[78] A group set up in response

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72. C. Clarke, "Reselection - Issues and Possibilities" (n.d.), KNNK 2/1/55, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge; N. Kinnock, "Letter from Neil Kinnock to MPs opposed to Franchise Extension" (1984), KNNK 2/1/56, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2-3.

73. Labour Party, Leader's Office, "A Note on Re-Selection" (1984), KNNK 2/1/55, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 1; Kinnock, "Letter from Neil Kinnock to MPs opposed to Franchise Extension," 2-3.

74. Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, "One Member, One Vote: Realities behind the slogan" (1984), KNNK 2/1/55, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

75. Kinnock, "Letter from Neil Kinnock to MPs opposed to Franchise Extension," 3.

76. Clarke, "Reselection - Issues and Possibilities," 1; P. Hewitt, "Reselection: One Member One Vote: Encouraging Good Practice, Without Rule Change" (1984), KNNK 2/1/55, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

77. Clarke, "Reselection - Issues and Possibilities"; Hewitt, "Reselection: One Member One Vote"; Labour, Leader's Office, "A Note on Re-Selection."

78. This concern was alive and well within parts of the trade union movement, as evidenced for example by a transcript of a speech Kinnock gave to the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR). Found in National Union of Railwaymen, "Extract from the speech of the Rt. Hon. Neil Kinnock MP on Tuesday, 30th June, 1987 at Dundee (Transcript of sound recording)" (1987), KNNK 2/1/56, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2

to the 1985 resolution asking the NEC for proposals recommended a decision for either of two mandatory systems for parliamentary selection: pure OMOV and a compromise Local Electoral College (LEC) in which votes were split between individual members and the block votes of affiliated trade union branches.[79] This latter system was adopted by conference in 1988.

The factional impact of the possible OMOV reforms was undeniable, and quite probably formed part of the leadership's motivation for the reforms. However, as expected from the theoretical framework of this study, it should be noted that there are strong themes of the party's working-class identity at play here. Looking forward to the reforms of the second electoral cycle, where this comes even more clearly to the fore, the question of what effect this would have on the party-union relationship looms large and lends support to the idea that while OMOV might have had a factional element, the eventual form of the system that was adopted, the Local Electoral College, also shows the hallmarks of Labour's attachment to the trade union base. In this way, Labour's high electoral base attachment can be said to have contributed to an outcome in which the membership of the party was empowered by organisational reforms.

6.4.1.2 Programmatic changes 1983-1987

The historical influence of socialist ideology in the Labour Party might be in dispute in the literature, but with the socialist left firmly in control of the party in 1983, their influence generated what one might call ideological attachment. Important veto-players in the party, such as the NEC and Conference, held strongly to traditional values in areas of policy such as nuclear disarmament[80] and employment, regardless of electoral consequences. The General Secretary of the Party, among others, insisted that changing policy for electoral reasons was not a discussion.[81] Even the incoming leadership insisted that the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament must be held "unequivocally".[82] In such an atmosphere, a continued and even renewed focus on these traditional issues is to be expected.

In the NEC statement *Campaigning for a Fairer Britain*, the NEC did indeed focus the party's programmatic efforts on a number of traditional issues.[83] The statement to conference named a number of issues that undoubtedly can be seen as part of Labour's core programmatic efforts: the National Health Service, the welfare state and industrial relations.[84] There appears to have been the possibility of some influence of opinion research on the programmatic focus of the party: a Campaign Strategy Committee (CSC)

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79. Labour Party, Franchise Review Group (Working Party on the Franchise), "Party Franchise for the Selection and Reselection of Parliamentary Candidates" (1987), Franchise Review Group Papers, Personal Papers of Dianne Hayter, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

80. Although unilateral nuclear disarmament was a policy that was only introduced to the party in 1960, the fanaticism with which the left pursued it and the influence of that particular wing within the party ensure that it was regarded at that time as one of the party's core issues. Much like the power of the left made the party more attached to ideology than it was at its foundation, unilateral nuclear disarmament can therefore be seen as having become a traditional issue by 1983.

81. Frayman, "Political Defeat, says Jim."

82. Labour, Leader's Office, "Memo to Neil Kinnock on Leadership Campaign Themes," 3.

83. Labour, NEC, "Campaigning for a Fairer Britain."

84. Ibid., 10-13.

document notes the issues as those on which the party was most trusted.[85] However, such electoral concerns apparently did not trump ideological influence. When the Shadow Communications Agency (SCA, see 6.4.1.3.) found that the issue of unemployment was not likely to sway any votes except those of voters who were unemployed themselves, this changed nothing about the general focus the party placed on the issue of jobs.[86]

Despite the realisation of the Leader's Office that "Thatcherism co-opts themes (...) that should be ours"[87], therefore, the party clearly elected to pursue an appeal highlighting their traditional values, contributing to a reinforcement strategy. This seems related to the party's ideological attachment in multiple ways. First of all, the prevailing opinion as evidenced in *Labour Weekly* seemed to favour holding fast to traditional stances on issues like unilateral nuclear disarmament.[88] Secondly, it should be noted that in the wake of the crisis, there was a need for party unity which might have forced the party to focus on policies that it generally was not divided upon. Finally, there is the perspective that Kinnock did not choose his battles.[89] Being engaged in a fight with the hard left and the entryist Militant Tendency, even if he had wished to he could not have afforded to move away from the party's traditional platform for the time being. In this way, the influence of the left, which is the principal reason for Labour's high ideological attachment in 1983, seems to be an important reason for Labour's programmatic reinforcement strategy.

6.4.1.3 Tactical Changes, 1983-1987: from red flag to red rose

Theoretically, the tactical dimension is of great interest to the model in the Labour case. Its strong attachment to its electoral base should incline it to playing to its traditional working-class constituency as predicted by the model. On the other hand, this base was evidently in demographic decline, and the party's leadership was aware of this. This latter circumstance would naturally require broadening the party's constituency, a pressure strengthened by the FPTP system. These contradictory expectations are important, since in contrast to the avowedly reinforcement-oriented other parts of the strategy in the 1983-1987 period, movement on the tactical dimension seems to decidedly favour a more inclusive image and therefore a broader constituency.

In explaining this deviation from the overall pattern, it is important to understand that the leader and his team carried greater influence in tactical decision-making. Shaw chronicles how prior to 1983, the Labour Party, particularly the left, had been distrustful of commercial campaigning and neglected public relations and campaigning.[90] Indeed, a note found in the archives sees a pollster explain to his colleague that Labour "does not understand what research can do for them until they've seen it in action".[91] The election

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85. Labour Party, Campaign Strategy Committee, "Campaigning Strategy" (1983), CSC 4/14/11/83, KNNK 2/1/29, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 5.

86. Labour Party, Shadow Communications Agency, "Report on a Communications Strategy" (KNNK 2/1/72, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge).

87. Labour, Leader's Office, "Memo to Neil Kinnock on Leadership Campaign Themes."

88. Foot, "Manifesto Will Prove Right"; Frayman, "Political Defeat, says Jim."

89. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 30.

90. Ibid., 52.

91. C. Fisher, "Letter to Alistair Buchan" (1983), KNNK 2/1/20, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

post-mortem produced by policy director Geoff Bish corroborated this by making note of a failure by the party to use its advertising agency appropriately.[92]

This changed in 1983. As a result of the evaluation, the NEC proclaimed communications a new priority, and a number of measures were taken that greatly empowered the leader and his confidants.[93] First of all, a Campaign Strategy Committee (CSC) was set up under the chairmanship of the leader with a wide-ranging coordinating role, strengthening his authority in the area.[94] In conjunction, a Campaigns and Communications directorate was created at Labour HQ, which came under the directorship of Kinnock's appointee Peter Mandelson and worked closely with the Leader's Office.[95] Finally, 1986 saw the creation of the SCA, a network of volunteer professionals to help the party prepare itself for the general election, which would prove very influential.[96]

All three innovations in campaigning structure served to empower Kinnock and his office, and this explains the deviation from the overall pattern that is the extension strategy on the tactical dimension. Internal documents from the Leader's Office are crystal clear about what voters Labour should be aiming for. In 1983, before being elected to the leadership, memos received by Kinnock make mention of an extension of Labour's alliance with the traditional working class and industrial trade unions to those sections of the working class "who have achieved material, educational or social progress".[97] Interestingly, the same paper decries the idea of a "conglomerate of minority groups", often described as a rainbow coalition, including for example the gay rights movement, such as had been employed in Greater London, as a "dangerous and diversionary strategy".[98] Research conducted by the party on attitudes on young voters and women additionally gave alarming intelligence regarding the ideological influence of Thatcherism on both groups and the extensive image problems Labour suffered from.[99]

The most visible aspect of the change in communications outlook was the new "red rose" logo adopted by the party which was worked out through the SCA. Corporate designs need not be significantly related to an attempt to change the party's appeal and image – they may just have been attempts to look fresh and modern. However, the red rose logo which replaced the red flag in the 1983-1987 period appears to be a deliberate attempt to evoke more moderate continental social democracy rather than the previous democratic socialism. Primary sources confirm this: a summary of findings for research on the logo convey very clearly that the designers and communications experts behind this were acting on instructions to go out of their way to avoid extremist and Militant connotations,

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92. Bish, "The 1983 Election Campaign," 10.

93. Labour, NEC, "Campaigning for a Fairer Britain," 7.

94. Labour Party, Campaign Strategy Committee, "Terms of Reference" (1983), KNNK 2/1/29, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2.

95. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 56.

96. Labour Party, Shadow Communications Agency, "Terms of Reference" (1984), KNNK 2/1/72, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

97. Hain, "Memo on leadership strategy," 11.

98. Ibid., 12.

99. Labour Party, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Female Voters" (1985), KNNK 2/1/71, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge; Labour Party, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Young Voters" (', 1985), KNNK 2/1/71, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

suggesting that a more moderate and inclusive image evoking "caring, compassion and nationality" was the goal.[100]

By the 1987 general election, Labour had become much more publicity-conscious and more consciously appealed to the floating vote. In fact, this letter from polling firm MORI to Chris Powell, who headed the advertising agency for the campaign, note that this 20% of voters who are floating should be the "primary target voters".[101] Earlier, in 1985, this focus on the floating vote was already in evidence as social scientist Roger Jowell, in a presentation, noted that Labour had moved from a sectional to a broader-based appeal and that this was "absolutely correct".[102]

Despite the overall attention devoted to the extension of the franchise in candidate selection, less attention appears to have been afforded to attempts to change the overall composition of Labour's contingent of MPs and project a more inclusive image in this way. While the Franchise Review Report includes the mandatory shortlisting of a woman candidate in all its versions of the selection procedure, this appears to have come at the last moment.[103] Most likely, the efforts to reform candidate selection were focused on the franchise at the expense of looking for ways to increase Labour's number of women MPs. This would be in accordance with the reading of the period in the literature,[104] which recounts how efforts to increase the participation of women only picked up in earnest after 1987.

The leadership, empowered by the organisational reforms and in the knowledge that the base was declining, therefore, consciously pursued a broader-based constituency. All this should, however, be taken with a significant caveat: although Labour clearly sought to win over these floating voters, and did specific research into the attitudes of women and young voters, it was not yet ready to act on warnings coming out of this research that Thatcherism and its main theme of aspiration and ambition had a more intuitive appeal to these groups than the party had assumed.[105] One of the significant findings of this research was that the issue of unemployment had very little appeal to the individual voter unless he himself was unemployed; nevertheless, Labour continued to campaign on the issue.[106]

It seems to be the case, therefore, that style was ahead of substance in the Labour Party. The revision of the party logo was explicitly intended to soften and broaden its image. Though this shows that the party was reshaping its electoral strategy towards a broader constituency, this was not mirrored in substantial changes to the party programme yet.

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100. Labour Party, Shadow Communications Agency, "Corporate Design/Slogan Research: Summary of Findings" (), KNNK 2/1/72, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.
101. R.M. Worcester, "Letter to Chris Powell" (1986), KNNK 2/1/72, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.
102. R. Jowell, "Summary of Roger Jowell Presentation January 16th 1986" (1986), KNNK 2/1/72, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.
103. Labour, Franchise Review Group, "Party Franchise for the Selection and Reselection of Parliamentary Candidates."
104. E.g. S. Perrigo, "Women and Change in the Labour Party, 1979-1995," *Parliamentary Affairs* 49, no. 1 (1996): 116–129.
105. Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Female Voters"; Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Young Voters."
106. Labour, SCA, "Report on a Communications Strategy."

Nevertheless, as a category, the 1983-1987 tactical strategy prefigured the much more sweeping changes the party would pursue from 1987 onwards, which would tackle these problems head-on. A possible explanation would be that the tactical dimension might be influenced by external demands earlier than the other dimensions.

6.4.2 Blatant Electoralism, 1987-1992

After Labour failed to win much ground in the 1987 election, its strategy shifted. This was most apparent in the area of programmatic change, which was previously confined to renewing the party's appeal on its traditional issues. In a 1987 PLP meeting, Kinnock pleaded guilty to "electoralism", and indeed, this seems an apt description of the general thrust of Labour's recovery strategy between 1987 and 1992.[107] Kinnock himself seems to have shifted in his attitudes towards the party's policy programme. For example, he now regarded unilateral nuclear disarmament as having been a liability in the 1987 election campaign rather than a policy that should be held to unequivocally.[108]

The balance of power within the party now seems definitely to have shifted in the direction of more radical changes, most likely because the 1987 result proved the party could not win without them. The Shadow Cabinet, though divided on the scope of the changes, was swinging in favour of changing Labour's programme.[109] The NEC seems to have come onside, as well. In fact, the NEC played a great role, as we shall see, in allowing the leadership to bypass conference in its efforts to overhaul the party's policy programme based on the conclusions of working groups of the PLP and NEC.

In an internal preliminary report, the weak position in London and the South was also underscored.[110] In addition, Labour was preferred on most issues but lost on its defence policy.[111] The NEC publicly responded to the "bitter disappointment" of the defeat in its statement to conference, *Moving Ahead*.[112] The tone was very different from *Campaigning for a Fairer Britain* four years back. Where the 1983 document had blamed the defeat on presentation and party unity, *Moving Ahead* contained an extensive analysis of social

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107. N. Kinnock, "Neil Kinnock Address to PLP" (1987), KNNK 2/2/1, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 7; Labour Party, Parliamentary Labour Party, "Minutes of the Party Meeting Held on Wednesday 4th November 1987 at 11.30 AM in Committee Room 14" (1987), Parliamentary Labour Party Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 1.

108. Labour Party, Parliamentary Committee, "Minutes of a Parliamentary Committee Meeting Held on 1 July 1987 at 6.00 pm in the Parliamentary Committee Room" (1987), Parliamentary Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 2; Labour Party, Parliamentary Committee, "Minutes of a Parliamentary Committee Meeting Held on 15 June 1988 in the Parliamentary Committee Room" (1988), Parliamentary Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 2; Labour Party, Parliamentary Committee, "Minutes of a Parliamentary Committee Meeting Held On 17 May 1989 in the Parliamentary Committee Room" (1989), Parliamentary Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 2.

109. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 92.

110. Labour Party, General Secretary's Office, "General Election 1987: Preliminary Report by the General Secretary" (1987), GS 56/6/87, NEC 34/6/87, National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 4.

111. Ibid., 5.

112. Labour Party, National Executive Committee, "Moving Ahead: Statement to Conference 1987" (1987), KNNK 2/2/1, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2.

changes that Labour acknowledged they had to confront.[113] Not only did it observe these social changes: it recognised the stark reality that without winning the South, "[Labour] cannot win the next election."[114] It set the tone for the next five years of work: widening the appeal of the party to new white-collar occupational groups and to women, confronting the divide in the working class between deprived and affluent members.[115] It announced a large-scale policy review and proclaimed "extending the freedom of the individual - every individual" the aim of democratic socialism.[116] This, then, was a radically different point of departure, and it would prefigure a radically different project of recovery, which is further detailed below.

6.4.2.1 Organisational changes, 1987-1992: the continued battle for OMOV

The general thrust of the reforms to increase autonomy for the leadership seems to have continued following the 1987 election defeat. The success of the Policy Review (see 6.4.2.2.) led to the establishment of a permanent National Policy Forum (NPF) to lead the process of policy formulation in a similar manner, thereby bypassing Conference's policy formulation functions. This was important, since conference was one of the traditional strongholds of the party's socialist left. The NPF would establish and maintain a standing programme.[117]

Meanwhile, the battle for OMOV may have seemed over with the adoption of the voluntary Local Electoral College in 1988, but in fact it was far from it. Conference abolished the LEC again in 1990 to be replaced with OMOV with an unspecified trade union involvement.[118] According to the report of the Trade Unions Links Review Group, this left the party without a new selection procedure for the 1992 election.[119] The version proposed by the report was effectively a reintroduction of the LEC but with the union vote cast by affiliated "registered supporters" among trade union branches affiliated with the local constituency party.[120] A similar change was also proposed to the Electoral College for leadership elections.[121] These changes would ultimately be implemented under the leadership of Kinnock's successor, John Smith.

The interesting thing about the final result of the battle for OMOV is that it clearly shows the effect of the strong formal and informal attachment of the Labour Party to its traditional supporters in the unionised working class. While initially, Kinnock and his team had intended to extend the franchise in the party to members only, a form of internal democratisation, the pressure to include the unions in some way led to a limited form

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113. Ibid., 3-4.

114. Ibid., 3.

115. Ibid., 4.

116. Ibid., 6.

117. Labour Party, National Executive Committee, "Democracy and policy making for the 1990s: Statement by the National Executive Committee, Conference 90" (1990), National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 3.

118. Labour Party, Trade Union Links Review Group, "Trade Unions and the Labour Party: Final Report of the Review Group on Links between Trade Unions and the Labour Party" (1992), Archives of the Trade Union Links Review Group, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 15.

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid., 16; 21.

121. Ibid., 20.

of external democratisation alongside the proposed internal democratisation. Though limited to a very specific social group, many of the arguments offered for the system correspond to arguments later used for more general external democratisation schemes, regarding the "registered supporters" as a solid base in society and possible bridgehead to greater popular appeal.[122]

6.4.2.2 Programmatic changes, 1987-1992: the Policy Review

The most radical turnover in strategy between the 1983-1987 and 1987-1992 periods occurred in the field of programme. Before 1987, the party's attachment to its democratic socialist ideas seems to have prevailed and little attempts to broaden its profile were made. After 1987, it appears that the party was confronted with an electoral reality that made this untenable. As shall be argued in more detail below, the Policy Review process that dominated the programmatic efforts from 1987 onwards appears to have been particularly motivated by electoral expediency. In addressing its electoral liabilities, the party adopted not merely a broader profile, but was brought to shift various ideological boundaries as well, particularly on the acceptance of the free market.

The Policy Review was launched in 1987, soon after the general election. Having noted the tenacity with which the party stuck to its principles in the previous electoral cycle, it was rather surprising to find a large number of papers relating the work of the Review to the need for broadly appealing policies. *Moving Ahead*, with its reference to winning over those who had never voted for the party and the need to win in the South, was described as one of the review's points of reference by the General Secretary, Larry Whitty.[123] Similar statements are found in a statement by Kinnock to the PLP on the subject,[124] while the need to win in the South and/or "more prosperous areas" is referenced in the PLP records a number of times in the context of PLP discussions on the Policy Review.[125] The listening exercise with which the Review was to kick off also focused especially on areas where the party was weak, again mentioning the South as well as the Midlands.[126]

All this suggests an electoral motivation to the Policy Review. The essentially pragmatic backcloth of this wholesale policy overhaul becomes evident even further when studying its practice. The Policy Review Groups (PRGs) of the NEC and the Shadow Cabinet charged with the Review were presented with a polling report entitled *Labour and Britain in the 1990s* at the start in 1987.[127] The *Britain in the World* group also received a

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122. Labour, TULRG, "Trade Unions and the Labour Party," 5-7.

123. L. Whitty, "Policy Review and 'Labour Listens': Note by the General Secretary" (1987), KNNK 2/2/1, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2.

124. Kinnock, "Neil Kinnock Address to PLP," 2; 4; Labour, PLP, "Minutes of the Party Meeting Held on Wednesday 4th November 1987 at 11.30 AM in Committee Room 14," 1.

125. For instance: Labour Party, Parliamentary Labour Party, "Proceedings of the Party Meeting Held on Wednesday 6 July 1988 at 11.30 AM in Committee Room 14" (1988), Parliamentary Labour Party Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester; Labour Party, Parliamentary Labour Party, "Minutes of the Party Meeting Held on Wednesday 17 June 1987 at 12.00 Noon in Committee Room 14" (1987), Parliamentary Labour Party Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

126. Labour Party, "An approach to policy-making" (1987), KNNK 2/2/1, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 5.

127. Labour Party, "Labour & Britain in the 1990's." (1987), Multiple copies found among others in

report on specific attitudes to international issues which singled out defence policy as a "significant" factor for desertion of voters.[128] The terms of reference for this particular PRG also strikingly pose the electoral impact of the choices made as to Britain's role in the world as the first question to discuss during a preliminary discussion on values.[129] This PRG would later, after much discussion, rid the party of its unilateralist policy.[130]

Before any policy reports were authored, the boundaries of the party's ideological discourse were already being shifted. Kinnock and his deputy, Roy Hattersley, produced the first-ever formulation of the Labour Party's principles outside of the Constitution, *Democratic Socialist Aims and Values*, to serve as a foundation for the Policy Review.[131] The document notably contends that "... the true purpose of socialism is (...) a genuinely free society, in which the fundamental objective of government is the protection and extension of individual liberty."[132] *Moving Ahead* already took an advance on this earlier, and in a July note on policy development the Policy Director had also made a similar statement, but it does remain a remarkable departure from the usual collectivist understanding of the ideology.[133] This is especially notable when seen in conjunction to the youth and women communications reports of 1985, which had argued that this individualism was an area in which Thatcherism usually beat Labour.[134]

Comparison with alternative versions proposed to the NEC by left-wingers such as Tony Benn and David Blunkett and Bernard Crick is informative here. In the former, individualism is absent in favour of anti-capitalism and solidarity.[135] In the latter, it is enshrined in the French Revolutionary tripartite "liberty, equality, fraternity" as a framing device.[136] *Aims and Values* stands out by making enhancing individual liberty the sole aim of democratic socialism, showing the influence of the spirit of the times on the thinking of the soft left-right leadership tandem.[137]

This has been some time coming – in fact, the theme of a more individualist presentation of socialist values already occurs in a 1983 memo outlining Kinnock's strategy for

Britain in the World and Economic Efficiency PRG papers, Papers on the Policy Review, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

128. R. Osborn, "Britain in the World Policy Review Group: Quantitative Polling on These Topics" (1987), PD(I):2104/December 1987, Papers of the Britain in the World Policy Review Group, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 9.

129. Labour Party, Policy Directorate, "Policy Review Group Britain in the World, 10 January 1988 - Discussion on Values and Principles" (1988), PD(I):1247:Jan88, Papers of the Britain in the World Policy Review Group, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 2.

130. Labour Party, "Meet the Challenge, Make the Change: A New Agenda for Britain: Final Report of Labour's Policy Review for the 1990s" (1989), Papers on the Policy Review, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

131. Kinnock and Hattersley, "Democratic Socialist Aims and Values."

132. Ibid., 3.

133. Labour Party, Policy Directorate, "Policy Development for the 1990's: A Preliminary Note from the Policy Director" (1987), KNNK 2/2/1, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, 2.

134. Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Female Voters"; Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Young Voters."

135. T. Benn, "The Aims and Objectives of the Labour Party: A Note by Tony Benn" (1988), KNNK 2/2/1, the Papers of Neil Kinnock (KNNK), Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

136. D. Blunkett and B. Crick, "The Labour Party's Values and Aims: an Unofficial Statement" (1988), Parliamentary Labour Party Archive, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

137. Kinnock and Hattersley, "Democratic Socialist Aims and Values."

the leadership election that year.[138] This memo also contains some of the lines of thought that would later be prominent in the policy review, among others its change in attitude to large-scale nationalisation, a shift in attitudes to statism away from top-heavy state control and its attention to ecological concerns.[139] The line of thinking was further confirmed by the above-mentioned 1985 round of communications research with an eye to developing a strategy for young and female voters, which found that Thatcherism had changed voter's attitudes to be more individualistic, entrepreneurial and more hostile to left-wing extremism in particular.[140] The report on women, an important target constituency to Labour also mentioned in *Moving Ahead*, recommended a communications strategy to "play down ideological heritage".[141]

Building on *Aims and Values*, the Policy Review's reports endorsed the market principle for the allocations of "most goods and services", rejected old-style nationalisation as the only form of public ownership and put special focus on the Environment with an entire section on quality-of-life issues, among others.[142] This rapid change in policy direction was aided by the total sidelining of the Conference by a NEC-Shadow Cabinet tandem (the Policy Review Groups were officially working groups of the two bodies and their reports were made non-amendable).

The change is especially notable in the most controversial policy area of the decade, being nuclear disarmament. As already mentioned above, evidence to the PRGs as well as opinion in the PLP seems to be that it was a potential liability, far from the dogged adherence to it in the 1983-1987 electoral cycle. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Policy Review abandoned it in favour of a multilateral nuclear disarmament policy, helped along by international developments, although the issue was still left open in the first report.[143] And while employment and public services still figure in *Meet the Challenge, Make the Change*, the final report of the Policy Review, the report chooses to focus on education and training in employment more than on job creation, and takes a consumer perspective to public services.[144]

In effect, it seems that the reports constitute an attempt by the Labour Party to regain its economic credibility by redirecting and broadening its policies. The acceptance of the market mechanism and the concept of the state as a means instead of an end, referred to as the enabling state by Shaw,[145] was central to this extension strategy. In addition, the efforts to extend into new politics issues, which were also present in memos from before Kinnock's leadership, were seen as being of particular importance to winning in the South,

138. Labour, Leader's Office, "Memo to Neil Kinnock on Leadership Campaign Themes," 2.

139. Ibid., 2-3.

140. Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Female Voters"; Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Young Voters."

141. Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Female Voters."

142. Kinnock and Hattersley, "Democratic Socialist Aims and Values," 10; Labour, "Meet the Challenge, Make the Change," 5; Labour Party, "Social Justice and Economic Efficiency: First Report of Labour's Policy Review for the 1990's" (1988), Papers on the Policy Review, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 5.

143. Labour, "Meet the Challenge, Make the Change," 86-87; Labour, "Social Justice and Economic Efficiency," 48.

144. Labour, "Meet the Challenge, Make the Change," 6-7.

145. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 92.

as evidenced by a memo from the Environment spokesman to the Shadow Cabinet which also seems to have been inspired by good electoral performance by the minor Green party.[146] The clear electoralist backcloth of the overhaul seems to further underscore the general extension strategy, swinging Labour back well beyond the traditional pragmatism of the old right. The evidence linking the Policy Review to the 1987 defeat, but also to documents in the previous cycle, further strengthens the evidence that the electoral system and the constraints it imposed upon Labour played a large role in the radical change of direction the Policy Review represented.

6.4.2.3 Tactical changes, 1987-1992: continued broadening

Moving Ahead showed very clearly that the party leadership had now accepted the electoral realities, with a stark message to the conference: if the party did not win in the south and broaden its appeal, it would never again win a general election.[147] This matches the expected impact of the British electoral system in that it was a constraint upon Labour's actions. It is significant that *Moving Ahead*'s aims of working to broaden the party's appeal, and particularly its stated objectives of winning in the South, appear to have been strongly linked to many of the measures taken on other dimensions. The electoral motivation of the project, in this way, becomes very clear: Labour had every intention of broadening its appeal.

The most far-reaching changes in campaign strategy had already been seen through. *Moving Ahead* praised the party's new professionalism in the organisation and implementation of its campaigns.[148] The party can still be said to have intensified its already extension-focused tactical strategy of broadening its core electorate. However, now it was imbued with a new sense of purpose, as the other dimensions were also put in the light of this commitment. This provides support for the idea that while internal factors might have a differential impact on the strategy, the impact of the electoral system can be felt across the board. The fact that the geographical and demographic elements of party competition remained at the forefront of the leadership's mind is evidenced by a number of explicit references to them underlying other measures.[149]

While between 1987 and 1992 not much had been done to project a more inclusive image through candidate selection, the second electoral cycle saw an attempt to diversify the party's slate of candidates. A consultation report on the representation of women in Labour from 1990 assigned Labour a "male" image, despite its relatively high quantity of women MPs.[150] In conjunction with the fact that *Moving Ahead* consciously proclaimed women voters a target group, this produced a need to increase the number of women

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146. J. Cunningham and J. Newbigin, "Quality of Life: Proposals" (1988), Parliamentary Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester; J. Cunningham, "Developing Our Political Momentum on Environmental Policy Issues" (1989), Parliamentary Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester.

147. Labour, NEC, "Moving Ahead," 3.

148. Ibid., 2.

149. See the discussion on programmatic changes in section 6.4.2.2. above.

150. Labour Party, National Executive Committee, "Consultative Document: Representation of Women in the Labour Party" (1990), National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 3.

in the PLP in particular.[151] The 1987 Conference had already made a start, adopting a rule that required CLPs to put at least one woman on the shortlist during selection procedures where one had been nominated.[152] In 1990, the Party Conference went even further, supporting a NEC statement calling for a 50/50 representation of women in ten years or three electoral cycles time.[153] Consultation for this statement also included other quota proposals, including for the NEC itself and CLP executives.[154] The PLP had already adopted a quota for the Shadow Cabinet.[155] This commitment put a strong compulsion to act upon the NEC, which was already conducting its review of parliamentary selection.

The NEC realized that positive discrimination measures would need to be implemented to achieve the quota set by Conference, leading to proposals for all-women shortlists being considered. Here, the executive committee seemed willing to consider it, spurred on by the Women's Committee and the Women's Conference, who published a number of reports and papers advocating this far-going measure to increase the number of women Labour MPs.[156] However, they ran into the influence of the CLPs, who jealously guarded their influence on shortlisting and selection in general from national interference. After a consultation paper showed the reticence of the CLPs towards new rules on selections and to increase women's representation in particular, the matter appears to have been dropped until after the 1992 election.[157] Though this is never explicitly stated, it might be that the party's leadership had to pick its battles carefully once again, and prioritized the implementation of OMOV in selections over the implementation of all-women shortlists. Still, the concrete initiatives taken by the leadership to increase women representation fit into the picture of a tactical extension strategy.

With the parallel changes going on in policy, Labour became much better equipped to build on the work it had done in the previous Parliamentary term. In fact, despite the professionalism of the campaign in general, there might even have been a tendency to overdo it, as witnessed by the final rally of the 1992 general election campaign at which Labour, confident that it would beat the Conservatives, presented itself as the government-in-waiting, a type of arrogance that was lampooned by the press.[158] Nevertheless, even this rally shows how conscious Labour had become of publicity and how consciously it courted a broader appeal. Alongside the 1987-1992 changes on the tactical dimension, therefore, Labour's campaign saw it continue and strengthen the extension-based strategy of the previous electoral cycle.

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151. Labour, NEC, "Moving Ahead," 4.
152. Perrigo, "Women and Change in the Labour Party, 1979-1995," 127.
153. Labour, NEC, "Consultative Document: Representation of Women in the Labour Party," 6.
154. Ibid., 3-4.
155. Ibid., 3.
156. Labour Party, National Executive Committee. Women's Committee, "Parliamentary Selection" (1991), NECW/1/91, National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 3-4; Labour Party, National Executive Committee. Women's Committee, "NEC Consultation Paper on the Selection of Parliamentary Candidates: Notes of Comments from the NEC Womens Committee at the Meeting held 9th of April 1990" (1990), NECW/22/6/90, National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 1.
157. Labour Party, National Executive Committee, "NEC Consultation on Selection of Parliamentary Candidates" (1990), DO/84/6/90, National Executive Committee Archives, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Manchester, 6-7.
158. Shaw, *The Labour Party Since 1979*, 143.

Table 6.2: Overview of the Labour Party recovery strategy, 1983-1992

Cycle	Organisational	Programmatic	Tactical	Overall
First cycle, 1983-1987	Internal democratisation (*reinforcement*) • First push for OMOV in the form of Local Electoral College (*reinforcement*)	Highlight traditional values (*reinforcement*) • Stance on nuclear disarmament maintained (*reinforcement*) • NHS, the welfare state and industrial relations named as policy priorities (*reinforcement*)	Broader targeting (*extension*) • Red rose logo (*extension*) • Floating vote as "primary target voters" (*extension*) • Mandatory shortlisting of at least one woman candidate (*extension*)	Reinforcement
Second cycle, 1987-1992	External democratisation (*extension*) • Local Electoral College reintroduced with individual votes for "registered supporters" among trade unions (*extension*)	Downplay traditional values (*extension*) • Declaration of individual freedom as aim of socialism (*extension*) • Policy Review explicitly tasked with policies appealing to non-core voters (*extension*) • Unilateral nuclear disarmament and large-scale nationalisation dropped (*extension*)	Broader targeting (*extension*) • Conscious effort to win in the South (*extension*) • Quota for women on the Shadow Cabinet and failed push for All-Women Shortlists (*extension*)	Extension

6.5 Conclusion: The inexorable march of New Labour?

Labour's recovery strategy unfolded in two phases corresponding to the two electoral cycles, as can be seen in table 6.2. In the first electoral cycle, the party appears to have been beholden to the ideological attachment of the Labour left and the strong electoral base attachment resulting from the link with the unions. The strategy on the organisational and programmatic dimensions during the first cycle is unabashedly reinforcing, highlighting socialist values and traditional Labour issues as well as strengthening the power of party members. The resolve with which the leadership clung to positions such as unilateral nuclear disarmament as policies that were not to be changed merely for the sake of electoral expediency, in spite of their popularity, shows how ideological attachment contributed to the programmatic reinforcement strategy. Meanwhile, the link with the unions played a strong role in determining the form of OMOV as a Local Electoral College in candidate selections. This shows, at least on these specific dimensions, that factors such as ideological attachment and electoral base attachment do play a role in determining the preferred recovery strategy in the first cycle. Admittedly, the reinforcement strategy could also be the result of the functional need to win back core voters lost in 1983, but this seems less likely, especially when considering the tactical dimension.

The first-cycle strategy on the tactical dimension presents an outlier, because it sought to broaden the party's appeal and is therefore an extension-based strategy. It poses a problem for both the purely functional explanation noted above and the general influences of electoral base attachment and ideological attachment expressed in propositions 3 and 4. The tactical dimension is the first place where on would expect a party with strong electoral base attachment to show its commitment to its core voters. It is puzzling that this does not appear to be the case and that, in fact, Labour was both playing the floating vote and consciously trying to dismantle its previous radical and arguably male-dominated image. A logical explanation for this seems to be that the leadership could operate with a reasonable degree of autonomy here after the NEC, determined to improve the communications of the party, established the CSC and the Communications Directorate headed by Kinnock's appointee, Peter Mandelson. From the archival documents, it appears that Kinnock was reminded at multiple times of the decline of the working-class base and the threat posed by Thatcher to elements of Labour's core vote.[159] This might explain why on the tactical dimension, the party pursued an extension strategy rather than a reinforcement strategy.

Before moving onto the second cycle, it is good to raise and discuss another possible alternative explanation: that a party like Labour, upon being defeated quite badly, would always retreat into the familiar issues they were "most trusted on".[160] While this is, in most regards, a question only comparative research can answer, it has to be addressed. Perhaps the best way to do so is to recall that the leftward turn had already been explored under Michael Foot's leadership and that 1983 had clearly shown that this had been out

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159. The earliest examples of this are found in Labour, Leader's Office, "Memo to Neil Kinnock on Leadership Campaign Themes," 2; Hain, "Memo on leadership strategy," 11.
160. Labour, CSC, "Campaigning Strategy."

of tune with public opinion. Furthermore, the presence of the very strong centrist Alliance vote could have suggested to Labour leaders that they needed to move to the centre. It would have been perfectly reasonable for figures in the party to suggest that policy as well as presentation needed to change, but the party was clearly not ready for it. It seems likely that the combination of the trade union connection and entrenchment of left-wing ideology within the party combined to inspire a more traditional strategy in the first Parliament following the shock. This fits well with the idea that initial preferences are shaped by attitudes to the electoral base and the party's ideology.

If the first-cycle strategy provides considerable evidence towards an effect for ideological attachment and electoral base attachment, the second-cycle strategy seems to strongly confirm proposition 6 on the effect of the electoral system. Where the first-cycle strategy contained clear reinforcement elements, the second-cycle strategy is uniformly extending in orientation. The 1987 election, which was lost again while the Conservatives retained their landslide majority, seems to have driven home to the leadership and the NEC that the electoral system would not allow Labour to win another election (as noted in *Moving Ahead*) if changes were not made.[161] The biggest contrast is no doubt on the programmatic dimension: from a purely reinforcing strategy adamantly against downplaying any policy liabilities for electoral expediency to the Policy Review, which downplayed and reinterpreted Labour values by introducing a more individualist and market-based version of socialism. Given the strength of the left only a decade ago, this is remarkable. What is also remarkable is that the NEC and leadership made no attempts to obscure what they were doing: starting from *Moving Ahead*, the electoral background of the Review is made quite clear, and indeed many references in the minutes of various bodies to the need to win in the South and among non-Labour voters in general seem to provide strong evidence that the change of strategy was indeed related to the constraints of the FPTP system. The party seems to have paid a lot of attention to other parties and their success stories. Obviously, this is the case with Thatcherism, which was successful (as the 1984 communications studies showed) in part because of its individualist and market-based focus.[162] However, it also monitored some of its smallest competitors: when the Greens did well in local elections in the South where Labour needed to win, the Shadow Cabinet took it as a sign that the efforts on quality-of-life and environmental policies needed to be stepped up.[163]

Looking at the battle for OMOV, it becomes clear that the unions remained an important factor even when Labour adopted its extension strategy. We have seen that Kinnock and his team wanted a mandatory system for selection and reselection that would shut the union vote out entirely in favour of a vote by individual members.[164] They never put this proposal to Conference or even the NEC because, as they themselves well understood, the unions and the left would not suffer such a diminishment of their influence lightly.[165]

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161. Labour, NEC, "Moving Ahead," 3.
162. Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Female Voters"; Labour, "Report on a Communications Strategy for Young Voters."
163. Cunningham and Newbigin, "Quality of Life"; Cunningham, "Developing Our Political Momentum on Environmental Policy Issues."
164. Hewitt, "Reselection: One Member One Vote"; Clarke, "Reselection - Issues and Possibilities."
165. Hewitt, "Reselection: One Member One Vote"; Clarke, "Reselection - Issues and Possibilities."

Eventually, the second-cycle proposals that included individual registered supporters from the trade unions in the party's OMOV elections and selection procedures were developed as the solution. These proposals may have shifted power away from Labour's members and they may have been justified by the reasoning that it might bring the party more in touch with a broader group of voters, but their scope was limited to the unions. This shows that, in the final version of OMOV adopted under Kinnock's successor John Smith (still against significant union resistance), the value placed on the link with the trade union movement was still a major factor.

The final, more radical recovery strategy pursued under Tony Blair's leadership from 1994 onwards is directly connected to the outcome of the 1983-1992 recovery process. The agency of Blair and his allies Mandelson and Brown is key to the way the strategy was taken even further into the extension direction, most prominently through re-writing Clause IV to omit the commitment to nationalisation of the means of production from the Party Constitution. However, this would not have been possible or indeed conceivable had the Policy Review not reinterpreted the programmatic and to some extent the ideological foundations of the party to become more individualist and less statist. Although strengthened by the takeover of a new generation after the sudden death of Kinnock's direct successor John Smith in 1994, the same dynamic we have described above is at play. Forced by the constraints of the electoral system, Labour pursued an extension strategy in which it reinterpreted key parts of its heritage such as its ties to the unions and its democratic socialist ideology, ending up in the end as the aptly-named New Labour.