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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS**

*'Division and Discord in the Labour Party: A qualitative and quantitative analysis of ideological and personal divisions between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown since 1994, focusing on speeches made to the party conference and the reaction of the press to these speeches'.*

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**Division and Discord in the Labour Party: A qualitative and quantitative analysis of ideological and personal divisions between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown since 1994, focusing on speeches made to the party conference and the reaction of the press to these speeches.**

**Introduction**

The aim of the research project was to analyse the well publicised divisions between the Prime Minister and Chancellor, both on a personal and ideological level. On assuming the leadership of the party in 1994 Tony Blair claimed that Labour ideology was ‘out of date’<sup>1</sup> and began to modify it. He has always been seen very much as the architect of New Labour, with Brown as the more reluctant partner. As the party approaches a general election where it hopes to win a third term in office, these long standing differences have once again come to the fore. Recent press coverage has focused relentlessly on personal division, with speculation as to Gordon Brown’s ambitions to be leader.

Whilst there are clearly differences between the two in terms of their basic ideology, it will become clear through this research that the appearance of ideological division in the conference speeches is actually more limited than their portrayal in the media. To borrow a phrase from Peter Riddell, ‘while Mr Blair has presented his approach in consciously ‘new’ terms, Mr Brown has sought to appeal to old labour as well, particularly in his conference speeches’<sup>2</sup>. Whilst Tony Blair generally takes a ‘new labour’ approach to both language and policy, Gordon Brown seems to cover ‘new labour’ policy in a traditional old labour gloss. Both have their own clear view of socialism, but retain the same core values of opportunity and equality. It is not so much ideological division, as an ideological partnership, successfully allowing an appeal to both sides of the party.

It will also become clear that any supposed ideological divisions are much greater in the years after a general election, than in the conference speech preceding one.

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<sup>1</sup> M Freedom, ‘The Ideology of New Labour’, *Political Quarterly*, Vol70, (1) January 1999, p 45.

<sup>2</sup> P Riddell, ‘Gordon Brown Knows How To Bridge Old and New Labour’, *The Times*, 1 October 1997.

Furthermore, press speculation into the supposed divide is substantial even when there is little appearance of it through the language used in the speeches. Both traditionally right and left leaning newspapers portray division and disunity in both language and policy. Most surprisingly, it is the left wing and traditionally labour supporting press, which initiates this speculation about divisions.

### **Methodology**

The project aimed to analyse conference speeches in the 1994-2004 period. This would have included a large number of speeches and so to allow a more detailed analysis a non random, purposive sample was used. The years of the speeches chosen for analysis were; the first speech to the party conference in 1994; 1996 and 1997 (to allow pre and post election speeches to be compared); 2000 (another pre election speech); 2003, as this was the year when there were significant reports of the Chancellor's speech being divisive, and the most recent 2004 speeches (see Appendix 1 for dates and venues). These were obtained from the Labour History Archive in Manchester. More accurate results may have been produced if a larger sample had been used. However, with the time available, the size of the sample was substantial.

It was intended that the quantitative analysis of the conference speeches would be conducted through SPSS. The number of words and phrases made by the Prime Minister and Chancellor such as 'new labour' and 'labour' were counted and compared throughout the years. The SPSS programme allowed standard deviations to be measured, to give an impression of ideological consistency or variation. There were however, some problems with this approach. The actual counting of the phrases lacked some definition. For instance, when counting the number of references to 'Labour', there were a large number of references such as to a 'Labour government', where there was no likelihood of finding a reference to 'New Labour government'. The 'find' tool on Word was initially used as it prevented human error, though this had to be changed to manual word counting as it would pick up references to 'labour market' and 'labour force' rather than simply the party label. Results were thus slightly less accurate than they could be. Anomalies such as the large number of

references to 'Labour' in Gordon Brown's 2003 speech may have been smaller had this been taken into account had other uses of the word 'labour' been excluded.

Furthermore, the fact that the speeches were analysed in written form in some ways hindered the results, though this was only a minor problem. In the 1997 speech for instance, Tony Blair introduces himself as the 'new labour prime minister of this country'. In written form it is unclear where the emphasis lies; if he is introducing himself as a *new labour* prime minister or simply a *new* labour prime minister. If an audio record had been used, it may have clarified some aspects of the speeches in a way that the written accounts cannot.

The analysis of these results was also more difficult than was originally anticipated from a practical point of inputting the data. It was difficult to know how best to organise the data within SPSS in terms of variables, to ensure that when analysed it would provide a picture of the number and range of references made throughout the 1994-2004 period, for both speakers. For instance, it was very difficult to formulate a graph and frequency tables showing this information for one phrase such as 'New Labour', to include both speakers, and the small values for some of the phrases resulted in some graphs not working correctly.

The speeches were coded into 'old' and 'new' Labour policies to demonstrate the more traditional tone taken in the Chancellor's speeches. However, there were problems determining which category some areas of the speech fell into. It would have been more helpful if the proposal had detailed what would be classified as 'old' Labour. This meant that during the analysis, rather than coding entire speeches in terms of old and new labour, different ideological themes were looked for instead. For instance, liberalism, equality and redistribution. References to these phrases were counted and paragraphs of the speeches coded along these lines. Although different from the initial intentions, this still enabled division to be analysed, whilst removing the rather blurred edges between old and new labour.

The newspaper articles which were analysed in the research project were collected from both the Guardian website ([www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)) the university library archives.

The research proposal outlined that articles from *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* would be analysed. However, this was not possible in practice as they were not available in the library. Whilst *Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* articles were obtained for the years 2003 and 2004, articles from *The Independent* and *The Times* were analysed for the earlier years in the sample. This still allowed for an analysis of traditionally left and right leaning newspapers. The articles chosen were those in the papers the day after each conference speech (see Appendix 2). As with the speeches themselves, both a quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted. Headlines were categorised into those which spoke of division and those which did not and the full text of the articles were coded in a similar manner. Phrases were also used to support findings, such as the classification of the relationship between the Prime Minister and Chancellor as a 'marriage' or 'fued'. The newspaper articles were used more heavily than was originally intended in the research proposal. This was a positive development, providing a more accurate view of the divisions and allowing a comparison between the actual divisions noticeable in the conference speeches, and those which the press seemed to create themselves, with little concrete evidence from the speeches.

### **Definition of Ideology and socialism**

It was very useful to find that in the 1994 speeches, both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown set out their own basic ideological position, including their own definition of socialism. This immediately demonstrated the difference in ideology between the two. Being Tony Blair's first speech to the conference as party leader, he outlined his 'New Labour Vision'. Yet it was interesting for three reasons, and can be used to look more broadly at the basic divisions between the two during the 1994-2004 period.

1) The actual references to 'New Labour' made by Blair were very small, much lower than in the following years. Only in the final paragraph of the speech are any such references made, with the line 'Our Party, New Labour. Our mission, New Britain. New Labour, New Britain'(1994:TB). This totals three references. Only at

the 2000 party conference did Blair make fewer references to New Labour<sup>3</sup>, the mean number overall being 4.83. This may not seem very high for someone who is usually identified as the pinnacle of New Labour. However, when compared to the mean number of references made by Gordon Brown (1.33), shows a clear preference for New Labour by Blair.

**References to 'New Labour' by Tony Blair**

|                    |         |      |
|--------------------|---------|------|
| N                  | Valid   | 6    |
|                    | Missing | 0    |
| Mean               |         | 4.83 |
| Standard Deviation |         | 3.87 |
| Minimum            |         | 1    |
| Maximum            |         | 10   |
| Sum                |         | 29   |

**References to 'New Labour' by Gordon Brown**

|                    |         |      |
|--------------------|---------|------|
| N                  | Valid   | 6    |
|                    | Missing | 0    |
| Mean               |         | 1.33 |
| Standard Deviation |         | 1.63 |
| Minimum            |         | 0    |
| Maximum            |         | 4    |
| Sum                |         | 8    |

2) Blair made more references to 'Labour' than to 'New Labour'. In total, he made 13 references to 'Labour' compared to just two references to 'New Labour'.

**References to 'Labour' by Tony Blair  
1994-2004**

|                    |         |       |
|--------------------|---------|-------|
| N                  | Valid   | 6     |
|                    | Missing | 0     |
| Mean               |         | 12.33 |
| Standard Deviation |         | 8.98  |
| Minimum            |         | 5     |
| Maximum            |         | 29    |
| Sum                |         | 74    |

**References to 'Labour' by Gordon Brown  
1994-2004**

|                    |         |       |
|--------------------|---------|-------|
| N                  | Valid   | 6     |
|                    | Missing | 0     |
| Mean               |         | 26.00 |
| Standard Deviation |         | 16.98 |
| Minimum            |         | 14    |
| Maximum            |         | 59    |
| Sum                |         | 156   |

However, Gordon Brown's 1994 speech contained nearly twice as many 'Labour' references (25 in total), with no references to 'New Labour'. Therefore, whilst the language used by Blair is surprising, there is still a clear divide between the two. An analysis of the usage of these terms through all of the speeches further reinforces this (see above tables). The mean number of references to 'Labour' is 12.3 for Blair and 26 for Brown, with the mean number of references to 'New Labour' showing a similar divide, standing at 4.83 and 1.33 respectively. Blair therefore regularly makes over

<sup>3</sup> In the 2000 speech only one reference to 'new labour' was made by Tony Blair.

three times as many 'New Labour' references than Brown, who, in turn, makes on average twice as many references to 'Labour'. This corresponds to the earlier view of Blair as the architect of New Labour. With only 8 references to 'New Labour' made by Brown throughout the sample, he can easily be identified as the reluctant partner, being more at home with traditional Labour ideology.

Analysis of the conference speeches also enabled measures of association to be calculated. This demonstrated the extent to which different ideological phrases such as 'new labour', 'labour' and 'new deal' were determined by the speaker. Phi coefficient was used to do this. As Miller demonstrates, 'absolute values of Phi ...range between 0 and 1, with 0 representing no association and 1 a perfect association'<sup>4</sup>. The association between speaker and the phrase 'labour' was particularly strong, standing at 0.882, as was the association between the speaker and 'new labour' references, which stood at 0.816<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, the speaker is a determining factor in the number of references made to these phrases. Other relationships, such as between the phrase 'socialism' and the speaker, had a much lower level of association (0.408), suggesting that there is perhaps a greater amount of unity between the two in this area. The full table of these results can be found in Appendix 4. Therefore, despite a surprisingly low number of 'New Labour' by Blair throughout the sample, there is a broad divide between them.

3) Brown spoke of a different form of socialism at a time when it would be expected that he would rally behind the leader's new direction. Blair's definition of socialism is also clearly a departure from the traditional Labour one. He specifically refers to it as 'my vision' and 'my socialism'(1994:GB), suggesting that it is his own unique brand. References to ideology in the 1994 speeches in particular, as well as in other speeches in the sample, have been placed in the table below, along with comments from the following days' newspaper articles. It allows a general classification to be made of both ideologies.

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<sup>4</sup> R Miller [et Al], *SPSS for Social Scientists*, (Basingstoke : Palgrave, 2002), p 134.

<sup>5</sup> A value of significance of  $p > 0.1$  was chosen, i.e. the result will be wrong 1 in 10 times. Therefore neither of these relationships were statistically significant, standing at 0.407 and 0.238 respectively. Therefore, whilst there is some relationship between the variables, there is also quite a high likelihood that they have occurred simply as the result of chance.

**The ideological approaches of Blair and Brown**

|   | <b>References to ideology during 1994 conference speech</b>  | <b>References in other speeches 1996-2004</b>   | <b>References in newspaper articles 1994-2004</b>   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Blair</b><br><br>New socialism/<br>Liberal socialism | <p>‘not the socialism of Marx or state control..’</p> <p>‘rooted in a straight forward view of society’.</p> <p>‘the understanding that the individual does best in a strong and decent community of people’.</p> <p>‘..change the traditional dividing lines between left and right’</p> <p>‘parties that do not change die, and this party is a living movement not an historical monument’.</p> | <p>‘a tradition far above ideology but not beyond ideals’. (1996:TB)</p> <p>‘..we are a democratic socialist party, but...bigger than any – ism’. (1996:TB)</p> <p>‘my heroes are not only Ernie Bevan, Nye Bevan and Attlee, they are also Keynes, Beveridge and Lloyd George’(1997:TB).</p> <p>‘I can only go one way. I’ve not got a reverse gear’(2003:TB).</p> | <p>‘the red thread..eludes him’ (2003:G).</p> <p>‘rehabilitated the word socialism’(1994:I).</p> <p>‘using little of Labour’s old time religion’ (1996:I)</p> <p>‘banish the old dogma’ (1994:T).</p> <p>‘wants to ditch socialism’ (1994:T).</p> |
| <b>Brown</b><br><br>Modified / Reapplied Socialism      | <p>‘the ideals of 1945 applied to the realities of today’</p> <p>‘a Labour Britain, built on the strong foundations of 100 years of socialist endeavour’</p>   | <p>‘embodying values traditionally Labour’ (1996:GB)</p> <p>‘the aims of the 1945 government that I now reaffirm in 1997’</p> <p>‘these are our values, our socialist values. Our faith, new labour’s faith’ (1997:GB).</p>   | <p>‘anchoring current policy in old time ideals’ (2003:G)</p> <p>‘bridge old and new labour’ (1996:T).</p> <p>‘putting old labour values in a new labour rhetoric’ (1996:T)</p> <p>‘not abandoning the party’s socialist bedrock’ (1996:T)</p>    |

This table demonstrates that neither could truly be described as being traditional labour. Both have adopted a different form of ideological outlook. Blair's ideology is fundamentally different to traditional Labour, and contrasts with that of Brown. In 1994 he clearly rejects traditional socialism with the line 'it is not the socialism of Marx or state control'(1994:TB). He incorporates both traditional left and right wing views to 'change the traditional dividing line between left and right' and is clearly of the New Labour mould, appealing to 'middle England' and aiming to represent 'all the British people'(1994:TB). The idea that 'parties that do not change die', suggests that he believes that he has made a fundamental change to the ideology of the party as a whole. This has been labelled as 'new socialism'.

Whilst the Chancellor's ideology is more closely linked to the traditional labour view and the 'ideals of 1945'(1994:GB), it is modified and reapplied to today's society. The socialism of the previous Labour governments is described as the 'foundation' for the new labour government to build upon. This is supported by the newspaper articles, *The Daily Telegraph* reporting in 2003 that Brown is the 'guardian of true labour values'<sup>6</sup>. Brown's ideology has therefore been labelled as 'modified or reapplied socialism'. Thus, the broad ideologies of the two are thus fairly distinctive; division can clearly be identified, although as will be discussed later, they are still working towards the same goals.

### **A More Liberal Ideology?**

In some respects, the language and tone taken by Tony Blair suggests a more liberal approach. In the previous table, his ideology was therefore described as both 'modified' and 'liberal' socialism. His language frequently stresses individual freedom in a way which is absent from the speeches made by Brown. This is demonstrated firstly in the 1994 speech where he says that his view of socialism is one where 'the individual does best' and that 'we are the party of the individual'(1994:TB).

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<sup>6</sup> T Helm, Brown Pledges To Carry on Spending, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 September 2003.

In his 1997 conference speech, he also comments that ‘my heroes are not only Ernie Bevan, Nye Bevan and Attlee, they are also Keynes, Beveridge and Lloyd George’(1997:TB). The first three figures are all associated with traditional Labour, being members of Attlee’s 1945-51 Labour government. This government implemented traditional socialism, with the creation of the NHS and the nationalisation of key industries such as coal, iron and steel. However, the following three figures – Keynes, Beveridge and Lloyd George, are less so, Lloyd George being a Liberal Prime Minister during the years 1916 - 1922. Indeed, they have been described by Michael Freedon as the ‘icons of British liberalism’<sup>7</sup>. Beveridge in particular, was associated with laying the foundations of the welfare state, with protection ‘from the cradle to the grave’. He insisted that society depended on individuals, who should be encouraged to save as private citizens. There are thus clearly two sides to Blair’s ideology; a liberal and a socialist one.

In his most recent conference speech Blair made a number of references to individuals having the right to choose in terms of public services. Evidence of this is also found in newspaper coverage, *The Guardian* commenting that ‘the Prime Minister came out clearly for ‘choice’ in public services – a word the chancellor avoided using’(2004:G). There is clearly an element of liberalism present in Blair’s ideology, although it is in no way dominated by it. It may simply be another means of appealing to Middle England, in the same way that he appeals to traditional Conservative voters with phrases reminiscent of Thatcher such as ‘I have no reverse gear’(2003:TB).

### **Signs of ideological and personal unity in the conference speeches**

Whilst broad ideological division is apparent between Blair and Brown in the conference speeches, there is also a considerable degree of unity. This can be seen from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Alongside references to ‘New Labour’ and ‘Labour’ other ideological phrases such as, ‘equality’ and ‘opportunity’ were counted. The results suggest that there is considerable consensus around core values.

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<sup>7</sup> M Freedon, The Ideology of New Labour, *Political Quarterly*, Vol 70 (1) January 1999, p 43.

| Phrase        | Speaker | Mean number of references | Standard Deviation |
|---------------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 'Opportunity' | Blair   | 8.17                      | 2.93               |
|               | Brown   | 10.17                     | 6.46               |
| 'Equality'    | Blair   | 2.50                      | 0.83               |
|               | Brown   | 1.67                      | 0.51               |

As the table demonstrates, the mean use of the terms 'equality' and 'opportunity' is very similar, much more so than the previous 'New Labour' and 'Labour' counts<sup>8</sup>. The standard deviation demonstrates a relatively consistent usage of these terms throughout the speeches. In the previous section, it was noted that the standard deviation was extremely high for Brown's usage of the term 'Labour' (16.9), whilst Blair had an equally large figure for 'New Labour' references (8.9). Therefore, whilst there may be a large discrepancy in the more sensitive phrases of 'Labour' and 'New Labour', they are relatively united around the core values of opportunity and equality, with a consistent usage of them across the speeches. Supporting this view, Blair commented in his 1997 conference speech that 'there are no old or new labour values; there are labour values'. He obviously believes in this unity. Press coverage further supports this, *The Guardian* commenting in 2003 that 'Like Mr Brown [Blair] repeatedly stressed fairness' and 'like Mr Brown he stressed Labour values, based on inclusiveness, equality and respect'<sup>9</sup>.

There are a number of occasions where unity is explicitly mentioned in the speeches, particularly by Blair. In 2000 he labelled himself as a 'unifier' and a 'builder of consensus'(2000:TB), adding that 'the Labour party, I believe today, is more united in its ideas and its policy than at any point in time that I can remember'(2000:TB). This is supported by a closer analysis of the phrases used. Both men made an explicit reference to 'equality' twice in their speech, with a similar mirroring of references to 'opportunity'<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> References to 'Labour' for Brown and Blair resulted in means of 12.33 and 26.00 respectively. 'New Labour' references resulted in a similar divergence with means of 4.83 and 1.33.

<sup>9</sup> M White, 'The Man Is Not For Turning', *The Guardian*, 1 October 2003.

<sup>10</sup> The phrase 'opportunity' was referred to four times by Blair and five times by Brown. This was a much closer result than in previous years.

However, perhaps the most significant result was the 2004 speech, the most recent of the sample, which demonstrated unity from both Brown and Blair. The difference in the usage of ‘New Labour’ and ‘Labour’ references between the two is at its lowest point in this conference, compared to all previous conferences. Explicit references are made to unity by both men, for the first time throughout the sample. Brown announces that ‘we are united as a party around our long term vision’(2004:GB), complementing Blair’s ‘united in our values’ comment. Furthermore, a new term appears to enter the conference language of both men; the idea of a ‘progressive consensus’. It is particularly emphasised by Brown, who uses the phrase fourteen times in what is a relatively short conference speech. Blair too however, used the phrase ‘progressive’ a total of seven times. For the first time, both appear to be united. Whether this is out of choice or necessity is not clear, yet it is a departure from previous years, and may be a response to the huge amount of press coverage resulting from the previous 2003 speeches, which will be analysed shortly.

**Does the political leaning of the newspaper make a difference?**

One would expect the more right wing newspapers to present a more divisive view of the conference speeches than the more left wing newspapers. However, this was not found to be the case.

|                                       | Number of headlines focusing on division |       | Number of paragraphs focusing on division |       | Number of paragraphs focusing on unity |       |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------|---|-------|--|-------|
|                                       | Left                                     | Right | Left                                      | Right | Left                                   | Right |
| <b>Political Leaning of Newspaper</b> |  |       |   |       |  |       |
| <b>Year of speech</b>                 |  |       |   |       |  |       |
| 2004                                  | 3  | 2     | 19  | 21    | 8                                      | 0     |
| 2003                                  | 4  | 1     | 53  | 0     | 1                                      | 0     |
| 2000                                  | 0  | 2     | 1   | 2     | 0                                      | 3     |
| 1997                                  | 0  | 1     | 0   | 1     | 0                                      | 8     |
| 1996                                  | 1  | 0     | 7   | 0     | 0                                      | 0     |
| 1994                                  | 2  | 5     | 4   | 9     | 0                                      | 0     |
| Total                                 | 10                                       | 11    | 84  | 33    | 9                                      | 11    |

As the above table demonstrates, whilst *The Daily Telegraph* had more headlines which could be labelled as divisive, *The Guardian* had a much higher number of paragraphs focusing explicitly on divisions between Brown and Blair.

One particular year stands out as showing exceptional amounts of division. This is the 2003 conference, and has been highlighted in the table. There were 53 divisive paragraphs in *The Guardian*, along with headlines such as ‘A Marriage on the Rocks’ and ‘A Blatent Pitch For The Leadership’(2003:G). *The Daily Telegraph* however, did not record a single divisive paragraph and concentrated much more heavily on the policy content of the speeches. The one headline falling into the divisive category – ‘Loyalty strained to breaking point’, did not focus on the Blair-Brown divide, but on the divide between the Labour government as a whole and the working class. From this conference alone, it becomes clear that it is the traditionally Labour leaning newspaper which is fuelling the supposed divisions between the two men, rather than the more conservative *Daily Telegraph*.

After each conference speech, a number of references were made to the Blair Brown relationship. These can be summarised as follows:

| <b>Newspaper</b>                            | <b>Description of Blair-Brown relationship at conference</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b><i>The Independent/<br/>Guardian</i></b> | ‘friend and rival’(1996:I), ‘marriage’(1996:I), ‘the political equivalent of a rhyme battle between two rappers’(2003:G), ‘opposing shots in a duel’(2003:G), ‘grisly bloodbath on sea’, ‘soap opera’(2004:G), ‘munchkins’(2004:G), ‘loveless marriage’(2004:G), ‘ideological shadow boxing’(2003:G). |
| <b><i>The Daily Telegraph</i></b>           | ‘the Cain and Abel of British politics’(2004:DT), ‘He is Hugh Grant to Gordon Brown’s Colin Firth’(2004:DT), ‘escalating row’ (2004:DT).  |

Again, this demonstrates the almost obsessive portrayal of the relationship in a negative light in *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, compared to *The Daily Telegraph* which has only three such references, all of which, interestingly came from 2004. The idea of a political ‘marriage’ is clearly associated with left wing newspapers, with *The Observer* also implying it when, at the end of the conference week it described John Prescott as a ‘marriage guidance counsellor’<sup>11</sup>.

In 2003, *The Guardian* even included pictures to stress the divide, including one of the Labour cabinet applauding Blair’s speech, with the caption ‘Spot the odd one out’(see Appendix 4), demonstrating the Chancellor’s refusal to clap or show any emotion after the Prime Minister’s speech. He was referred to as ‘the most miserable man in the hall’<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, whilst being a paper which is generally supportive of the Labour government, it seems to be doing its best to exacerbate talk of division.

However, it is interesting that whilst the left wing response to the conference speeches saw the most division in 2003, the right wing press spoke of more divisions in 2004 than in any other year. As earlier demonstrated, analysis of the phrases used in the conference speeches saw the greatest divide between the two in 2003, with the most recent conference actually showing more consensus than ever before. In 2003 *The Daily Telegraph* contained no explicit references to division. Yet in the aftermath of the 2004 conference speeches, there were 21 paragraphs dedicated to the rivalry between the two men, more than in any previous year.

It was particularly speculative about Brown’s speech saying that ‘as usual, it was not a Chancellor’s speech’, but ‘the speech of a man consumed with ambition to lead the Labour party’. The paper even appears to change its view of the previous year’s speech, which is now labelled as ‘a naked bid for the leadership’<sup>13</sup>(2004:DT). There was no evidence of this in the coverage of this in 2003. Furthermore, both the descriptions of their relationship as ‘Cain and Abel’ and ‘Hugh Grant’ and ‘Colin

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<sup>11</sup> A Rawnsley, A Marriage on the Rocks, *The Observer*, 5 October 2003

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> S Sands, ‘Chancellor’s Speech was a Bellow of Righteous Fury’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 September 2004.

Firth' are from articles written in 2004. There are no such inferences in the articles following any previous conference speech.

There is thus a discrepancy between the newspapers themselves and between the newspaper analysis and the analysis of the conference speeches. This suggests two things. Firstly, that where the left wing press perceived division, there was clear evidence of it in the language used by Blair and Brown in the conference speeches. The level of division was perhaps over-emphasised, with the 53 paragraphs devoted to division by *The Guardian* in 2003 not warranted by the speeches themselves. However, it still presents a largely accurate portrayal. Secondly, *The Daily Telegraph* seems to have missed any sign of division in 2003, but has jumped on the bandwagon for the 2004 conference, speaking of division when there is very little evidence of it in the speeches themselves. It has even changed its view of previous conference speeches, now believing all of them to be divisive<sup>14</sup>. This change demonstrates how powerful press coverage can be, playing on tensions which are not that apparent. Over the years, this appears to have created a momentum, with the right wing press feeling a need to compete. It may also be a sign that the press is more interested in creating a good story or adding to hearsay to increase circulation, than to report the true facts.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of the conference speeches themselves has demonstrated that there is a broad ideological divide between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, with Brown in particular stressing the importance of traditional labour values in his conference speeches. Whilst both are in tune with each other over core values such as equality and opportunity, they have a fundamentally different view of the party itself, and their own distinct version of socialism. To Blair, the party is moving forward, adapting its ideology and its version of socialism to as wide an audience as possible, while Brown still plays to the old Labour core of the party. Whilst he has not discarded the policy

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<sup>14</sup> The line 'as usual, it was not a Chancellor's speech' from the Daily Telegraph's 2004 coverage of the conference suggesting that previous speeches made by Brown demonstrated his ambitions to take over the leadership of the party.

direction of 'New Labour', in his speeches he constantly grounds New Labour policy in old Labour terms.

The presence of a divide is however, exacerbated by press coverage of the conference speeches. In the early years (1994-2000) division was mostly identified as being between the leadership and the trade unions. However, the 2003 and 2004 conference speeches generated a considerable amount of comment on divisions. These were seen to be on an ideological level, with *The Guardian* in particular commenting on Brown's use of the term 'Labour' in place of 'New Labour' in 2003, and on a personal level, with Brown supposedly wanting to challenge for the leadership. This was originally initiated by the left wing newspapers, who seem determined to highlight the fault lines within the party they traditionally support. From 2004 however, the right wing press also joined the fray, re-evaluating previous conference speeches and presenting them in a more divisive light. *The Guardian* considerably toned down its views about division in 2004 and so it is not clear whether *The Daily Telegraph* actually perceives division in the speeches, or whether it is intended to increase circulation or even to hinder the opposing political party. If the current trend continues and the 2005 conference speech also shows considerable consensus, it will be interesting to see the press interpretations. A divisive analysis by *The Daily Telegraph* will suggest that it is basing its opinion on partisanship rather than the actual evidence in the speeches.

Michael Freedon has said that 'the ideology of New Labour can only be understood as a internal arena of competition'<sup>15</sup>. This is certainly the case. It cannot be denied that Brown's frequent references to traditional labour values and in particular, his language during his 2003 conference speech, is a challenge to Tony Blair. However, this competition is perhaps vital to the future of the party. It is the indispensable element. Whilst Blair can appeal to a newer audience, Brown ensures that the traditional Labour members do not get left behind. It is, as *The Independent* portrays, a political 'marriage', but is much more positive than its media portrayal, both men being essential to the future of the party. Speculation about division and rivalry between them seems to have developed a momentum of its own, to the point where

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<sup>15</sup> M Freedon, 'The Ideology of New Labour', *Political Quarterly*, Vol 70 (1), January 1999, p 50.

there does not have to be any overt reference to a divide in the speeches themselves, for the press to interpret it as such, as was the case in 2004. Regardless of whether the Labour Party wins the forthcoming election, this speculation seems set to continue.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Conference speeches used in the sample**

#### **1994 Labour Conference, Blackpool**

Tony Blair: 4<sup>th</sup> October 1994 (1994:TB).

Gordon Brown: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1994 (1994: GB)

#### **1996 Labour Conference,**

Tony Blair: 1<sup>st</sup> October 1996 (1996:TB).

Gordon Brown: 30<sup>th</sup> September 1996 (1996:GB).

#### **1997 Labour Conference,**

Tony Blair: 30<sup>th</sup> September 1997 (1997: TB).

Gordon Brown: 29<sup>th</sup> September 1997 (1997:GB).

#### **2000 Labour Conference, Brighton**

Tony Blair: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2000 (2000:TB).

Gordon Brown: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2000 (2000:GB).

#### **2003 Labour Conference, Bournemouth**

Tony Blair: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (2003:TB).

Gordon Brown: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (2003:GB).

#### **2004 Labour Conference, Brighton**

Tony Blair: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2004 (2004:TB).

Gordon Brown: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2004 (2004:GB).

## **Appendix 2**

### **Newspaper Articles Used in the Sample**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October 1994:**

##### ***The Independent (1994:I)***

‘Rhetoric Against The Rich Fails to Satisfy Edmonds’.

‘Slipping Back Into That Old Language’.

‘Blair to Call for Unity after Day of Friction’.

‘Blair Sweeps Away the Past’.

‘Betrayal To The Left, Bravery To The Right’.

‘Blair Urges Politics of Courage and Trust’.

##### ***The Times (1994:T)***

‘Blair Stuns Left with Proposal to Scrap Clause Four’.

‘Scargill Rails Against Tory Party Mark II’.

‘Theatrical Blow Struck in Battle to Banish the Old Dogma’.

‘Blair Tells Labour – Now We Are The One Nation Party’.

#### **30<sup>th</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1996:**

##### ***The Independent (1996:I)***

‘Iron Chancellor Pledges 10p Tax’.

‘Labour’s Ruin or Redemption Lies With Gordon Brown’.

‘Blair: My Decent Society’.

‘It Would Be Nice If He Just Had A Bit Of Spice’.

##### ***The Times (1996:T):***

‘10p Income Tax To Be Target of Brown’s Budget Policy’.

‘Brown Declares His Aim of a ‘People’s Tax Cut’.

‘Man Who Would Be Chancellor Slipping Into Rivals’ Shoes’.

‘Blair Pledges New Age of Achievement’.

‘We Are Back As The Peoples’ Party, Says Blair’.

‘Labour Reinvented for the Age of Achievement – So Much For Marxism- It Is Now More the Party of Methodism’.

#### **29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1997:**

##### ***The Independent (1997:I)***

‘Radical Tony You May Be. But What Kind of Radical Exactly?’

‘Blair: We Must Make Our Nation Proud’.

‘Prudence Key To Prosperity Says Brown’.

***The Times (1997:T)***

‘Blair Has Vision For ‘The Giving Age’’.

‘Fine Performance, But Can He Live Up To His Promises?’.

‘Brown Rules Out Easing Public Sector Pay Freeze’.

‘New Labour Message Sounds Reassuringly Old’.

‘The Brown Version – Unpopularity Goes With A Labour Chancellor’s Job’.

**25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2000:**

***The Independent (2000:I)***

‘Brown Bows To Pressure Over Pensions’.

‘I Am Listening. I Hear. And I Will Act’.

‘Blair Promises To Quicken Pace of Reform’.

***The Times***

‘Brown Pins His Colours to Party’s Core Values’.

‘Grey Power Ponders Black and White’.

‘Old Labour Preacher Seeks Fire and Brimstone Salvation’.

‘When Will Gladiator Gordon Lose His Job?’

‘Blair: My Mission To Win’.

‘When The Going Gets Tough, He Gets Going’.

‘Forces of Normality’.

**29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2003:**

***The Guardian (2003:G)***

‘Love Me Do’.

‘Prudence With Passion’.

‘Brown Pledge To Help Child Poverty’.

‘The Man is Not for Turning’.

‘A Triumph of Style over Substance’.

‘A Blatent Pitch For Leadership’.

‘The Elusive Red Thread’.

‘A Marriage On The Rocks’.

***The Daily Telegraph (2003:DT)***

‘Loyalty Strained To Breaking Point’.

‘Brown Pledges To Carry On Spending’.

‘Brown’s Speech was a Reminder of How Few Great Orators There Are Today’.

**26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2004:**

***The Guardian (2004:G)***

‘Carrot and Shtick’.

‘Chancellor Swipes at Blair and Milburn’.

‘The Speech That Can Decide Blair’s Future’.

‘Unity on a Hiding to Nothing in Air Thick With Intrigue’.

‘In Place of Strife’.

***The Daily Telegraph (2004:DT)***

‘Chirpy Tony Rides His Luck to Survive Trial By Fire’.

‘Feud ‘Could Cost Us The Election’: Blair Appeals for Unity as Brown Stokes  
Row With Modernisers’.

‘A Dramatic Swansong From The Old Pretender’.

‘Chancellor’s Speech was a Bellow of Righteous Fury’.

**Appendix 3**

**Measures of association between the Speaker and the main ideological phrases,  
using Phi and Cramer's V**

| <b>Measures of Association</b> |              |                                 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Phrase</b>                  | <b>Value</b> | <b>Statistical Significance</b> |
| 'Labour'                       | .882         | .407                            |
| 'New Labour'                   | .816         | .238                            |
| 'New or New Deal'              | .782         | .395                            |
| 'Socialism or Social Justice'  | .408         | .736                            |

## Appendix 4

### **‘The Man is Not For Turning’**

**Michael White**

*The Guardian*, Wednesday 1 October, 2003.



Spot the odd one out ... Photograph: Russell Boyce, Reuters

