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Chapter 3

Political discourse: talking about nationalization and privatization

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Traditionally, psychology's concern with political issues has taken narrow focus defining 'political' mainly in terms of party politics I assuming that individuals hold consistent political viewpoints which can be measured using attitude scales. These make way for categorization of participants into political 'types'. Many of these Psychological scales and surveys rely on detailed statements expressing opinion to which respondents register their level of agreement disagreement (see for a recent example, Jowell *et al.*, 1990). The statements only provide opinions towards certain topics, in some cases as set within a specific context (for example, 'If people worked hard at their jobs, they would reap the full benefits of our society' (Christie *et al.*, 1968)). However, the use of propositional statements has been criticized as being inadequate on the basis that the initial emotional response of the subject would be tempered by consideration of the qualifications and justification posed in the statement (Wilson and Patterson, 1968). It has been suggested that this form of statement hinders the respondent because they feel committed to providing a rational and considered judgment.

The question of context is the key focus here. The perspective ken by traditional approaches to measuring political attitudes was at respondents would be unable to express an opinion on an issue unless provided with a specific context. Wilson and Patterson (1968) early saw this as a limitation and proposed that if attitudes were help with the prediction of behaviour, it was necessary to measure the affective (emotional) stage and not the cognitions (as the traditional approach has done). As a result they abandoned propositions 'placing them with a list of brief labels representing familiar and controversial issues, for example, patriotism, apartheid and socialism, upon which they assumed people hold clear-cut views. [36] Consequently, their scale is drawn up of fifty words with no context provided. The researchers considered that participants' responses to these words allowed for individuals to be measured and categorized in terms of their 'conservatism' or 'liberalism

The assumption that these attitudinal studies share is that there is some enduring entity within individuals that can be measured. Potter and Wetherell (1987) reject this assumption and argue that when people fill in an attitude scale, their responses should not be thought of as indicating a pathway to some internal attitude, but instead thought of as specific linguistic formulations which are dependent on specific contexts. Further, while attitudinal research concentrates on consistency, seeing it as indicative of descriptive validity, a discourse analytic approach examines regularities in the linguistic resources used by participants. Consistency at the level of discourse is then viewed as a product of the function to which the discourse is put.

There is a further way in which discourse analysis studies differ from traditional attitudinal studies. Rather than attempting to restrict participants' responses, in terms of allowing only one response to a number of statements or items, it is seen as important that participants should discuss in full their ideas and understandings of the issues of concern. If this is allowed, then variation will emerge both due to the complexity of the issues explored and due to the functions of the discourse. This is the perspective that we will take in this study in working with in-depth interviews and allowing participants to discuss the issues of concern as fully as they wish. Finally, this discourse analytic study differs from traditional studies in its perspective on language. While attitudinal research sees language as an essentially colourless, transparent medium, unproblematically describing some underlying 'real' entity, discourse analysis takes language as actively constructing versions of the social world. Given that there are a number of ways in which any issue or event can be described, and that participants select linguistic resources out of a pre-existing pool, discourse analysis examines the linguistic resources made use of by participants. The important point here is that some ways of describing, making sense of, certain issues are so familiar, so 'obvious' that they appear to be 'common sense'. The fact that they are a construction, one particular version, is obscured.

In this chapter we will examine the ways in which participants discuss privatization and nationalization, traditionally associated with the 'right and left' political viewpoints (Dunleavy, 1979). We will [37] later consider the possible political consequences of the constructions used. What we are concerned with here, in this preliminary study, is how discourse of events and beliefs is manufactured (see also Hollway, 1989; Marshall, 1991; Potter and Reicher, 1987). The intention is to demonstrate how the meaning and use of political concepts vary according to context and as related to purpose. A main aim is to reconsider the attitudinal research by allowing participants to explore various considerations of privatization and nationalization which, we argue, problematizes the assumption that individuals can be placed exclusively into one political category in the way that attitudinal researchers, including Wilson and Patterson, would suggest.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Participants

Sixteen people known to one of us took part in the first part of this study. Participants came from a range of occupational backgrounds including graphic designer, psychiatric nurse, factory shift manager, pensioner, teacher, student and business consultant. Their ages ranged from 28 to 65 years. Participants were living in three areas of England: London, Norwich and Birmingham. They were first asked to complete Wilson and Patterson's 'New measure of conservatism' (1968). The two items of concern in the second part of the study - those of nationalization and privatization - were added to this scale. Using Wilson and Patterson's criteria the five highest scorers were categorized as 'conservatives' and the five lowest scorers as 'liberals'. These ten participants then took part in the second part of the study and were individually interviewed.

Interviews

Interviews comprised eighteen questions concerning various aspects of privatization and nationalization. The questions were broadly structured into four sections: section A, general

questions about privatization; section B, general questions about nationalization; section C, questions concerning specific contexts and industries in relation to privatization and nationalization; and section D, general questions about handling and future of privatization and nationalization. [38] The interviews were carried out in informal settings, mostly in the homes of the participants. Two were carried out in an interview room in a psychology department of a London polytechnic. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was tape-recorded and transcribed.

The analytic process followed was basically that set out by Potter and Wetherell (1987). The identification of recurrent patterns in the linguistic constructions, referred to here as repertoires, was tackled by reading and rereading the transcripts and taking out instances where there appeared to be terms, phrases or metaphors linked to the concepts of privatization or nationalization either in terms of (i) similarity in structure or content; or (ii) differences or variability in what was being said. Extracts were initially taken out if they seemed even loosely associated with each concept. This process was repeated a number of times, first, placing tracts under broad headings such as support for privatization, support for nationalization, rejection of privatization or rejection of nationalization. Second, attention was given to how the selected constructions were being used and whether they seemed to serve the same function. Finally, for the purpose of this study, consideration was given to the relationship of repertoires to the 'liberal' and 'conservative' categorizations of participants according to Wilson and Patterson's (1968) categories.

Each extract is preceded by 'C' or 'L' indicating categorization of participant as 'conservative' or 'liberal' respectively, followed by participant number. Instances where an ellipsis ...) is present in the extract indicates the material does not follow on directly. Interviewer's questions are prefixed with 'Int' to separate them clearly from participants' responses.

ANALYSIS

In the analysis which follows, two main repertoires are outlined – 'efficiency' and 'social justice', with attention given to how participants categorized as 'liberal' and 'conservative' using Wilson and Patterson's scale, make use of these repertoires. It will be demonstrated that the repertoires are not exclusive to any particular political viewpoint and that they function to allow participants to rationalize or disclaim privatization or nationalization, depending upon the context. [39]

Efficiency

The repertoire that dominated 'conservative' participants' discourse about privatization was that of 'efficiency'. This was used by four out of the five 'conservative' participants throughout their interviews. The extracts below provide some examples to outline this repertoire.

'Conservative' participants' use of 'efficiency'

- Int:* What do you think are the important arguments when discussing privatization?
C5: Getting industries to run efficiently, getting rid of bureaucracy which doesn't really operate industry to the benefit of the population. The best way to get the industry working

for the population is to get it working for profit.

- C4: You see if you provide better competition, it's bound to improve the price which you are going to pay for products. Also of major importance is efficiency. The trouble with nationalized industry is that it's totally inefficient and ineffective.
- C2: There are certain sections like, a good example would be council refuse. I think that's a good thing to be privatized and I think it has been, in a lot of councils and they've found that not only is it sort of cheaper, but it's more efficient and I think there are certain things like schools where there are certain sections that could be privatized which are not.
- Int: Are there any other arguments concerning privatization even if you don't necessarily subscribe to them?
- C5: Well some people say that it's wrong to privatize things that belong to the people but I think that's completely misplaced really because, okay, the government owns resources but by transferring them to the private sector then we can get them actually running more efficiently.

In all these extracts 'efficiency' is characterized as being a good thing and it is discussed as though it is taken for granted that it is equated with privatization. In the second extract a clear link is constructed between inefficiency and nationalization. What is meant by efficiency is not made explicit in that no participant attempts to define what this term means, and therefore it could refer to increased profits for industry, or improved service or production as a result of [40] restructuring, again either for the service providers or the consumers. The function of the 'efficiency' repertoire in these extracts is quite clear: it serves as a justification for the support of privatization.

Variability in 'conservative' participants' use of the 'efficiency' repertoire

A given participant will often use the 'efficiency' repertoire in different ways, this is illustrated in this section using extracts from one account (C2). Over a range of questions 'efficiency' is first brought up to support privatization, then to negate it, and finally to support nationalization.

- Int: What do you think are the effects of privatization?
- C2: Well what are there, efficiency covers a real wide scope doesn't it in respect of the efficient running so you get a better service for whatever industry or thing it is and a lower cost.
- Int: Other effects?
- C2: Oh yes, it's very impersonal, whereas you get state industries, old Fred's been a doorman of a certain hospital, or a porter and regardless of what he's done over the years he's always been there because that's his job and nobody would ever give him the sack. Whereas in private industry the efficiency and the very thought that if he were surplus to requirements he'd have been sacked years ago. ... We now have in Birmingham not just the West Midland Transport that used to be Birmingham corporation, we now have private coach firms which run along the same routes as the West Midlands go and, once again now I think that where they belong to West Midland travel, before they were probably more efficient.
- Int: Are there any other arguments you can think of when discussing nationalization?
- C2: Privatization of the right type of industry or service can be beneficial, it has some good

points. A good example of what a state-owned industry should be is the rail service. I think that should remain as a nationally owned one, because if it can't run efficiently and make a profit that's just too bad. What is the main thing is that it provides a service for the public.

Clearly when the 'conservatives' discuss privatization, the first thing that springs to mind is efficiency. However, as noted earlier, efficiency is not clearly defined, but nevertheless used as if it is the telling argument. As the participant continues to discuss privatization [41] disquiet emerges, as to whether the main concern should be efficiency, or whether there are other things to consider such as lack of social concern, 'impersonality', as discussed with respect to 'poor old Fred the doorman'. Furthermore, it becomes very difficult to determine what efficiency means when as illustrated in the above extract, a service is characterized as being unable to run efficiently, and cannot make a profit yet is apparently identified as being more desirably nationalized: at this point the 'efficiency' repertoire is no longer useful and is abandoned.

The 'efficiency' repertoire as used by 'liberal' participants

The 'efficiency' repertoire was also used by three out of five participants in the 'liberal' group when they discussed nationalization. However, the use of the term 'efficiency' is somewhat different from that of the 'conservatives', as these extracts demonstrate:

- Int:* What do you think are the important arguments involved in the issue of nationalization?
- L2:* Obviously the other side of privatization, how best to, if something is a nationalized industry then how best to, how most appropriately, how most efficiently that's the word I'm looking for, for the sake of the industry and for the sake of those working in the industry, how to manage it If you are making sure that water for people's drink is clean, then that would take priority, but the people working within the industry, yes, how to serve the public how to look after the people that are working within the industry and how to run it efficiently and not waste public money.
- L1:* In some instances, of course, price is neither here nor there. Certain provisions need to be made such as the National Health Service. I think if it was run properly on a nationalized basis then, you could have equal efficiency and innovation.

The 'efficiency' repertoire is used in these extracts in association with a number of different social concerns, in terms of doing the best for the industry, for those who receive the product or service and for those working within the industry. Although 'efficiency' is considered to be an important criterion in the running of industry, no presumption is made that privatization equals efficiency and nationalization equals inefficiency. It would appear that the objective here is to break the link between privatization and efficiency. [42] This is clearly demonstrated by the following extract which seems to drive a wedge between the association of privatization and efficiency.

- Int:* Are there any other arguments you can think of concerning privatization?
- L2:* I hear arguments about when people are pro privatization about efficiency, avoiding waste as public service industries seem to be very good at wasting time, man power, resources or at least accused of those things. When I hear those arguments about needing

competition to increase efficiency there's something in me which wants to say well, yeah, that may be true but there has to be ways of increasing efficiency without moving the power behind the control of those industries into privatization, into private hands.

In this extract as in the 'conservative' participants' use of this repertoire, 'efficiency' is identified as a good thing. But while 'efficiency' is used as a criterion to assess the running of industries, it is not assumed to be linked to privatization. Thus 'efficiency' is proposed but with the suggestion that this could be in association with nationalized industries.

The 'social justice' repertoire

A second repertoire, while not as evident as that of 'efficiency' was drawn on in a number of the interviews. The 'social justice' repertoire refers to the needs of the people, and discusses the importance of ensuring a good service, in the form of 'protection', good working conditions for those in the industry and a fair deal for those receiving the service or the goods.

The 'liberal' participants' use of the 'social justice' repertoire

The majority of 'liberal' participants made continued reference to certain services being best left in the public sector, because of social concerns, over and above 'efficiency' as the extracts below demonstrate. This repertoire was used repeatedly by 'liberal' participants to argue in support of nationalization and against privatization the following extracts demonstrate:

- Int:* What do you think are the effects of nationalization – beneficial or otherwise? [43]
L2: What are the benefits of nationalization? Well hopefully if the government is doing its job, control of that service, providing a good service, providing protection for the, good circumstances, situation for the people working within the service, putting money gained, resources gained back into the service, that sort of thing.
LI: I think it can achieve a balance in where the money goes, whether things are cost-effective, whether certain things are not cost-effective but necessary, so it provides a better service for the people receiving it and the people who are working within it.

The above extracts illustrate how the repertoire of 'efficiency' is overruled by that of 'social justice' when discussing certain industries or services. Here some services are characterized as being 'essential' or as providing 'basic necessities' which are said to be better nationalized.

- Int:* What arguments do you think are important in the issue of nationalization?
LI: How best the state can provide essential services to the public at the best possible price. In some instances, of course, price is neither here nor there. Certain provisions need to be made such as the NHS. I think if it was run properly on a nationalized basis then, you could have equal efficiency and innovation.
Int: Are there any state-owned services which you think ought not to be privatized?
L5: Well you know water is one of the basic necessities of life and it just seems awful to me that water can be privatized. Again the same sort of argument as far as I'm concerned as before, that water has already been paid for by the tax payer, and now we're being asked to buy shares ... I mean in the Midlands there were sort of funds raised years ago

apparently, to pay for the water to be brought into this part of the country from Wales and I just don't like the whole sort of feel of that. And as I say for such a basic thing that we all need to survive.

L3: I think in an ideal world I don't think health, education, funerals, anything that everybody in life needs, which is silly because everyone needs heat as well.

Int: Are there arguments for nationalization? [44]

L3: Yes again it's back to providing of services as cheaply as possible equal services.

Providing services where they are needed to people who actually need them regardless of their ability to pay.

In the above extracts the participants use a moral language suggesting that 'the people' should have 'equal rights' to certain essential requirements, necessary to their survival, although as seen in extract three above there is ambiguity in the definition of what services are 'needed'. The distinction between 'necessary services' and others is used to argue in favour of nationalization. This argument used not only by 'liberal' participants but also by 'conservatives' justify support for nationalization.

'Conservative' participants' use of the 'social justice' repertoire

The following extracts show how the 'conservative' participants abandon privatization in favour of nationalization using the 'social justice' repertoire as justification. In a similar way to that demonstrated in the 'liberal' participants' accounts, the 'conservatives' make repeated reference to the need to provide essential services being better served by nationalization. There is clearly a shift to an alternative 'moral' argument which concerns itself with public welfare. Participants indicate that there is a moral obligation for the state to provide certain requirements because it serves the nation.

Int: What do you think are the important arguments in the issue of nationalization now and for the future?

C1: I think if nationalization, going back to the railways, I think they should keep it and they should invest more money in it because it's such a public service, rather like the French have done.

Int: Are there any state-owned services which you think ought not to be privatized?

C2: There aren't so many these days are there? I feel all the services should remain nationalized, gas, water, electricity, railways. Anything which serves the nation, provides a service.

Int: What issues do you think are important when discussing nationalization?

C3: Those things that are giving a service, which ... that isn't going to be profitable and never will be, that gonna need investment from the people rather than giving people the [45] option of whether to invest you need to make compulsory investments like through national insurance. So things like the medical service where there's loads of it that just won't be profitable and never could be, but you need that service because it's going to affect people who wouldn't be able to afford it themselves therefore you need to insist that people pay and that everybody should pay, but that's the only real thing Basically all those services that are, it comes back down to what I class as essential. It's all the non-profitable services that society expects like health, someone to keep an eye on the law,

someone to sort of; community services like that, mainly that sort of thing, that's the best description of nationalized services.

As demonstrated earlier the 'conservatives' use 'efficiency' to justify their preference for privatization. However, they will abandon the use of this repertoire taking up the provision of 'essential services' and public 'need' to justify support for nationalization. The third extract in particular points to an idea posed on many occasions that government provision is needed because the industry would not be profitable on its own. However, while the 'conservatives' use the 'efficiency' repertoire, to argue that privatization results in efficiency, inconsistency in the argument emerges as the 'social justice' repertoire is used to argue that certain services, although inefficient are better served by nationalization. What is evident is that there is *not* unconditional support on the part of 'conservatives' for the privatization of all industries and services. The following extract shows how variability occurs within one participant's account about nationalization and privatization, resulting in inconsistencies within an argument.

Int: Why are you against privatization of British Rail and water?

Cl: Well, because they ought to be a public service and I'm not sure industries like that, that everybody relies on the way we do on the National Health Service should be privatized. Because you are going to get a big divergence maybe of interest, and also the cost going up as in water, our water is disgusting anyway. It's going to cost a lot to put that right, that's one particular thing I feel strongly about. The railways are the other. We ought to be like France where they've got a fantastic railway system. But the government injects a lot [46] of money into it. But as for other things like the hospitals, I think they do need some sort of privatization.

In this extract the participant questions whether the National Health Service should be privatized because it is a public service and one which everybody 'relies on'. To justify supporting national control the railways, reference is made to France, which is seen to provide a good nationalized service. This is explained as being due to government providing the funds. At the end of the extract a contradiction occurs: the recommendation is made for some form of privatization of hospitals, there is clear variability here.

It should be noted that although there is support for nationalization, certain parameters are set as to how far nationalization should go. The function of efficiency, as used by the conservatives, is to support privatization. However, in certain contexts this is then dismissed as not important.

The justification of privatization by 'liberal' participants

Finally, it can be shown that in the 'liberal' participants' discourse there are means by which they support the idea of privatization. In the following extracts the circumstances under which privatization is considered to be acceptable are discussed:

Int: How about food production and car production? How far would you go with state control?

L2: Production of goods like cars, right, production of material goods. I might at this stage leave that in the hands of private enterprise I think. The control of basic services I'd leave in the hands of the government.

Int: Are there any goods or services which you think it is appropriate for the state to provide?

L1: Health, water, the fundamentals of life. To give everybody an equal opportunity, yes I think the state should provide anything like that. I like the idea of the state being in control of everything which is national, of things which are a factor in every person's everyday life. I can come to terms with things which are or don't concern everybody being in private hands, so people can have a choice as to whether to use those facilities or not.

In the previous two extracts, privatization is justified by drawing on the notion that some goods are not essential nor part of [47] everybody's lives and therefore can be handled best by the private sector. Again, the emphasis for nationalization is on the provision of essentials or the 'fundamentals of life'. In the first extract a clear distinction is drawn between material goods as appropriate for the private sector, and basic services better left in the hands of the nationalized sector. In the second extract the suggestion is that those areas that don't concern everyone can be left to the individual to choose whether they want them or not. The shifts between nationalization and privatization can be seen in the following extracts.

Int: How about food production?

L5: Well I would prefer it not to be really. It's so sort of widespread and diverse isn't it that I feel it's probably better handled by individuals. That's not to say that in some cases to encourage farmers along the lines of growing crops that are necessary and not so profitable that they shouldn't have subsidies and everything. No I can't see the gain in having food and farming nationalized.

This extract raises the question about whether food production is not 'necessary', 'essential to survival' as used by this same participant to argue for nationalization earlier in the same interview. The definition produced earlier that industries which produce 'essential goods' which are used by everybody, are better nationalized, is not sustained here. Other 'liberals' can be seen to draw on arguments *against* nationalization, discussing the disadvantages of the loss of individual enterprise and reliance on the system as justifications.

Int: How far would you go with nationalization?

L4: There's a drawback with nationalization inherent in socialism where everybody starts to rely on state infrastructure ... the system to supply all their wants and needs and the kind of initiative starts to drop out of the window so you get very little change. You have to leave enough latitude for individual activity even in areas as apparently boring as food supply or water supply. You have to leave certain latitude for initiative. Without it there's no improvement in the services you're supplying.

Int: Initiative in what sense?

L4: You'd have to go into particular examples I suppose ... bread production. I mean if the government specifically dictated that a specific governmental loaf was to be produced, there would [48] be a huge vested interest in maintaining the governmental loaf and no-one would have invented granary bread or croissant. That applies right across the board even with water supply, you can't have Perrier water.

In the above extracts, nationalization is rejected for various reasons. 'First, on the basis that some

areas are too diverse and therefore best dealt with by individuals, thus implying privatization is appropriate here. The second extract points to what are considered to be problems of nationalization, making people too dependent upon the state and removing initiative. The suggestion is that nationalization leads to stagnation and loss of individual creativity. It must be noted, however, that while nationalization is not totally rejected is characterized as not appropriate in all cases.

In considering the above extracts it can be seen that participants do not hold consistently onto their notions of privatization and nationalization at all costs. Participants from both groups accept or reject both notions, depending upon the context in which they are faced. They dip in and out of the available discourses in order to make sense of the issues at hand. It seems that there are two 'moral' arguments at work here. The morality of privatization, which involves 'efficiency', is its most important characteristic for the conservatives. 'Efficiency' is also considered important for the liberals but is not necessarily constructed as being equated with privatization. The alternative 'moral' approach concerns the provision of basic needs and services needed by the public as voiced in the 'social justice' repertoire which, while not as prevalent as the 'efficiency' repertoire is made use of not only by 'liberals' but also by 'conservatives'.

DISCUSSION

Discussions of privatization and nationalization in these interviews were examined in relation to the pre-categorization of participants as 'liberals' or 'conservatives' using Wilson and Patterson's scale. Having outlined the 'efficiency' and 'social justice' repertoires we have analysed the ways in which each repertoire is used. 'Efficiency' used to set up an association with privatization and as such functions justification for privatization, but then 'liberal' participants, also drawing on the importance of 'efficiency', break the link between privatization and 'efficiency'. Instead a notion of 'social justice' is drawn on to argue for nationalization with both 'liberal' and [49] 'conservative' participants constructing a distinction between 'essential services' and material goods. What is clear is that neither conservatives' nor 'liberals' give unconditional support for either privatization or nationalization, respectively and inconsistencies can be seen clearly in all the accounts. As different aspects of privatization and nationalization are explored, the criteria used to discuss the conceptualizations shift. In order to make sense of; or justify the seeming contradictions, participants dip in and out of available discourses. What is quite clear is that asking an individual to respond to single words or even statements with agreement or disagreement is inadequate.

In this study, one main aim was to question psychologists' reliance on notions of consistent attitudes in researching political issues. In several cases we have pointed to the way a particular participant makes use of repertoires. It could seem as though we are seeking to link individual participants with particular repertoires, which is not our intent. Rather, we see it as important to make clear that the focus of discourse analytic research is on regularities in the construction and function of linguistic resources and a move *away* from the individual as the unit of analysis. Our analytic attention to the *variety* of discourses used by each participant is important at the level of theory as well as of method.

There are a number of problems and limitations that have become clear in using discourse analysis, some of which arise with any research, and some specific to this study. In general terms, the idea of 'letting discourses emerge' and not imposing a structure on the analysis is

problematic. Many attempts to follow through what appeared to be patterns in the constructions and functions, proved fruitless. Further, only two repertoires are outlined here. There were other repertoires we have touched on but not analysed in detail, for example, concerning 'individual choice' and 'individual enterprise'.

Further, for the most part our concern with the consequences of the discourse has been examining justifications, disclaimers and the construction of certain distinctions in definitions. We have given little consideration to large-scale political consequences. We would see it as important and emphasize the need to engage in the debate around these same issues in a macro-context, at the societal and political level.

The recurring use of two repertoires, in particular the 'efficiency' repertoire which was drawn on repeatedly by the majority of [50] participants, points to the limited linguistic resources drawn on by participants. Relatively narrow parameters are set as to how to make sense of these complex issues. This raises the question as to what conceptualizations are currently missing from the debate. It is at this point that consideration of the need for the articulation of new discourses becomes relevant. Deconstructing existing conceptualizations makes way for a reworking and construction of new discourses a means towards political change.

It has been argued elsewhere that through the 1980s British society and values have shifted to the right (Gray, 1990). Further though, and related to this study, political language has changed so that a core set of ideas emanating from the new right are used to justify the changing social and economic policies (Hall and Jacques, 1989). These 'core beliefs' include the desirability of individual enterprise, and the importance of reducing dependency on the state (Hamnett *et al*, 1989). We would argue that the repertoire of 'efficiency' as ked with privatization is part of this construction.

Related to this point, it should be noted that we have carried out an analysis which is concerned with everyday understandings. However, we have not tackled the question of where these understandings come from. What is also important is to examine the discourses around the same issues in the public domain, for example, at the level of policy and governmental debate. It is at this point that the question of power becomes of immediate concern, where the focus turns to examining agencies who hold the power to decide the terms within which such issues are to be discussed, and the means to circulate and perpetuate particular discourses. This relates closely to debates concerning 'political' bias in the media. We would argue that as well as considering whether certain political parties are allowed greater access to media coverage, that it is crucial to examine the parameters set by the media in the discussions of political issues, including nationalization and privatization. In these ways discourse analysis draws attention to the constructive effects of language use and can thus take the form, not only of political commentary but also of intervention.

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