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Original Citation

Goscinski, Reece (2016) There's Power in a Union: A Case Study of a Northern Trades Council. Masters thesis, University of Huddersfield.

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There's Power in a Union: A Case Study of a Northern Trades Council

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc by Research (Human and Health)

University of Huddersfield

May 2016

<u>Abstract</u>

This thesis explores the issue of trade union decline through a discursive case study of a Trades Union Council located in the North of England. It is argued that the debates surrounding trade union renewal are wedded to structural theoretical frameworks which are challenged by contemporary experiences of modernity, and emerging organisational literature based on flexible accumulation and identity formations. As such this thesis has sought to identify the effects and tensions within trade unions emanating from these bodies of literature through the employment of a post-structural method. This has allowed the research to expose contested meanings and power relationships apparent within the organisations. The case study data is composed of four forms of discourse including a meeting observation, analysis of the organisation's literature and images, as well as eight semi-structured qualitative interviews. It is concluded that the key to trade union renewal lies in the tensions of knowledge and power relationships within the organisations. It is further suggested that the institutions will need to employ a flexible framework to engage new members and allow for a period of re-discovery.

Copyright Statement

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

Contents

This thesis consists of 26,447 words excluding cover page, abstract, copyright statement, acknowledgments, contents page, in-text references, data quotations, bibliography, and appendices.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Trade union decline has been an issue which has dominated many academic debates in recent years (see Kelly, 2015; Milner & Mathers, 2013; Machin, 2000). Since the development of post-industrialisation in the 1970s, trade unions have struggled to regain the membership densities and influence they once obtained in previous eras (Gall & Fiorito, 2011; Laybourn, 2009; Crook & Pakulski & Waters, 1994). Many of the assumed theoretical and philosophical foundations on which they stood, such as notions of collectivism and social class politics, have been distorted due to social and economic transformations within contemporary capitalism (Evans & Tilly, 2012; Harvey, 2005; Kitschelt, 1994; Peck & Tickell, 2007; Crook & Pakulski & Waters, 1994; Roche, 1992).

Such developments have led scholars to debate the grounds for trade union renewal, formulating varied strategies for trade unions to apply in order to redeem their situation. Some of the most influential methods within the literature have included: mobilisation theory, the idea that the mobilisation of workers against employers will create collective solidarities strengthening trade unionism (Kelly, 1998); a need to identify new forms of collectivism within the workplace (McBride & Lucio, 2011); and the aspiration of developing an organising model. This latter approach has been designed to organise and empower workers to define and pursue their own interests through collective organisation (Turner & O'Sulivan & D'Art, 2011). Whilst there has been much discussion on the organising model, its development and application has been uneven (Parker & Rees, 2013; Gall & Fiorito, 2011; Hodder & Edwards, 2015).

The need for reform has been recognised by many researchers and commentators. However one possible way of understanding and therefore tackling the social changes which

have led to trade unions' current situation has largely been neglected. The ideas of postmodernism have provided new tools for analysis in order to observe a world characterised by autonomous identity formation and flexible accumulation which has ultimately impacted their organisations. Kelly (1998; p. 108) suggests its failure to infiltrate the literature is due to the subject's Marxist underpinnings of class struggle, whilst McCabe (2007; p. 244) argues authors of the topic have subjected such discussions to "political conservatism, individualism and/or a failure to consider resistance" (also see Tinker, 2002; p. 262; O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001; Parker 1999; Knights, 1997).

Yet the ideas of postmodernism have certainly found resonance amongst other subjects in the social sciences; having obtained identifiable notions in the means of politics, culture, and intellectual criticism. For one of its key theorists Jean-François Lyotard (1984; Williams, 1998) these ideas make up part of the human condition and what it means to exist within the modern world. If this is the case, then surely these ideas have a place within the trade union renewal debate?

One of the central claims of postmodernism has been its rejection of totalising narratives. These are narratives developed within the sciences which unify understandings and present themselves as a truth linking into a grand narrative of historical progress (Lyotard, 1984). If the current literature is grounded in Marxist underpinnings, as Kelly (1998) suggests, then the adoption of postmodern techniques can act as a useful tool to move away from these foundations – which are potentially stifling debate – and reconnect with issues of trade union renewal and decline.

Aims and Objectives

From initial investigations into the potential of postmodern perspectives to offer original and constructive insight into contemporary trade unionism an overall aim was formulated for the project. This was to draw upon postmodern theories, thus far largely neglected in the

literature, to explore and challenge the dominant assumptions of trade union organisation and activism. In order to pursue this aim a number of objectives were set for the project:

1. To offer different insights into trade unionism than those offered by traditional approaches and contribute to the body of knowledge around the topic.

2. To expose multiple interpretations around issues of identity and power in order to understand how they affect modes of organisation and activism within contemporary trade unionism.

3. To engage with the issue of trade union decline by encouraging critical self-reflection amongst those active in the trade union movement as a means of reinvigorating these organisations.

To meet these aims and objectives the project will not put forward a hypothesis as to do so would confine the statements to a narrative. Instead a set of research questions, derived from literature concerned both directly with the trade union movement and with wider issues relating to work and identity, shall be put forward to enable the researcher to observe these institutions within the present historical moment. This will allow the study to not only rupture the structures and assumptions of the literature, but also witness the effects of autonomous identity formation and power relations currently embedded in their organisations. Such a method has been influenced by Michel Foucault's use of history (Foucault, 2002b; p. 403; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). History should not be viewed on assumptions of progress or regress or attempting to understand chains of causality. History should be seen as a way of diagnosing the present to disturb the "taken-for-granted" (Kendall & Wickham, 1999; p. 4; Rowlinson & Carter, 2002). Therefore the project aims to investigate four research questions to observe their institutions which have been derived from established literature bodies:

1. What is a trade union from the subjectivity of activists?

2. What does it mean to be a trade unionist from the subjectivity of activists?

3. What are the power relationships within the organisation?

4.   How have these discourses emerged?

Framing the collection and analysis of data around these questions will locate the project within established bodies of relevant literature while still making an original contribution to knowledge. It will also underpin the choice of research design detailed in the methodology chapter.

Overview of the Methodology and Thesis Rationale

This project will utilise a qualitative methodology to generate phenomenological data to investigate the research questions. The data was collected through the use of a case study method. This involved observing an organisation to witness practises and relationships; conducting a series of individual interviews with organisation members; and an analysis of material produced by the organisation and presented by attendees. The organisation was a Trades Union Council located in the North of England. Trades Councils are local organisations uniting varying trade unions across the locality to discuss local issues and organise local campaigns. The Trades Council was selected as it encompassed a range of trade union experiences within a defined geographical location. It was also selected to provide a focus for the research topic. Once the material had been collected it was analysed through the use of discourse analysis.

The rationale for this research arises from concern regarding low trade union membership during a period of extended wealth inequality (Piketty, 2014; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). If trade unions' can rediscover their organisations and appeal to a contemporary workforce they may prove to be a useful tool for bucking this trend (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010; pp. 244 – 245; Lynch & Smith & Hillemeier & Shaw & Raghunathan & Kaplan, 2001; p. 196).

Structure of Thesis

The thesis shall be organised in the following way: Chapter Two will provide the literature review; here the chapter will introduce key concepts which will be explored in the literature

review; identify the literature bodies explored; overview established understandings and debates surrounding organisational identity; analyse bodies of trade union literature surrounding Richard Hyman's model of market, class, and society to locate established positions regarding trade unions' functions and identities; observe the emerging literature regarding contemporary change within capitalist society regarding identity and work to witness its effects on trade unionism; cite relevant commentators associated with postmodernism to discuss its implications on the literature explored in previous sections; and produce a summary of the literature to formulate the research questions to be explored in the project. Chapter Three will outline the methodology of the thesis. This will include outlining the theoretical framework by providing discussions of postmodernism, phenomenology, qualitative discourse analysis, and the case study method to highlight how the chosen methods help meet the projects aims and objectives. The methodology will also discuss how postmodern theories will apply to the data analysis as well as research limitations and ethical considerations. Chapter Four will provide an analysis of the collected material applying the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Five will provide a discussion of the collected material and relate the findings of the study to the literature. Finally Chapter Six will provide a conclusion to the thesis; answering our research questions, observing the studies limitations, and posing suggestions for future research and trade unions themselves.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Trade Union Identity and Identity Theories

Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter will provide a brief introduction to the wider literature before introducing the various bodies of literature to be explored in the subsequent sections. This will then be followed by a discussion summarising the literature bodies where the research questions will be formulated on the basis of the findings.

Within the following chapter seven bodies of literature have been drawn upon in order to review established understandings and debates surrounding trade unions', organisations, and their identity. These seven bodies of literature have included identity literature; organisation and management literature concerning identity; historical and identity literature regarding trade unions; labour process literature; industrial relations literature; literature surrounding citizenship; and relevant theoretical commentators associated with postmodernism.

When enquiring into the question what is a trade union? It must be acknowledged that this question has not been put forward to probe the vast and varied academic and legal definitions of the institutions. Such an enquiry would not delve deep enough into the questions the study intends to investigate. Alternatively, when asking what a trade union is the research will be intending to look at the core functions of their institutions as well as identities they possess. There are however some common definitions and assumptions of trade unions which shall be briefly observed to highlight the complexities of their

organisations. Amongst this short overview the rise and fall of trade unionism can be charted relating to evolutions in political policy and models of citizenship.

The most common definition of their institutions is provided in the opening page of Sydney and Beatrice Webb's *The History of Trade Unionism:*

> "A trade union, as we understand the term, is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment." (Webb & Webb & Peddie, 1907; p. 1)

In this early definition trade unions are seen as economic actors working within the free market to improve conditions of employment. Whilst this definition continued to gain validity more liberal writers began to expand this understanding. Writers such as Allen (1954; pp. 11 - 12) related the voluntarism of trade unionism to growing political enfranchisement. In this sense trade unions could be defined as guardians of political liberty, granting them a far more political definition than that of free market haggling.

Further interpretation can be found in legal definitions. For example, the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act of 1974 defined trade unions as organisations consisting of "wholly or mainly workers of one or more descriptions" whose purpose includes "the regulation of relations between workers and employers" (cited in: Coates & Topham, 1980; p. 2 – 3). Here trade unions are understood as mediators within industrial relations. By the 1980s however these previous definitions were challenged by writers such as Hayek (1980). For Hayek trade unions were understood to stifle the labour market by keeping certain groups of workers unemployed to improve the fortunes of their own members (ibid; p. 61). This presented a far more illiberal characterisation of these organisations.

More recent understandings have defined trade unions as social partners relating to the integration of European Union industrial relations policy (Pulignano, 2011). A social partner therefore defines trade unions as an element within a cooperative and collaborative network between employers and the European state (ibid).

Whilst these understandings provide an overview of the multiple definitions of trade unions, they illuminate little on the identities of the people who take part and maintain the organisations. An analysis of the relevant literature will therefore identify the established assumptions of these organisations and how it relates to participating individuals. Engaging in the critical review of these bodies of literature has given further shape and direction to the project by informing the chosen research questions; this is outlined in the conclusion section of this chapter (see Conclusions and Formulation of Research Questions).

Identity Theories

Within social research discussion on the topic of identity has spawned countless research papers and academic journals. The questions of "who am I?" and "who do I want to be?" are questions that have been applied to a range of subjects bringing differing meanings and theories to the study of identity theory (Gioia & Patvardhan & Hamilton & Corley, 2013). The notion of identity has proven to be a complex process establishing a multi-dimensional classification of the world and our place within it as individuals' and members of collectives (Jenkins, 2008), with recent research indicating that collective groupings and kinship can serve as a protective mechanism solidifying identity development (Howe & Aberson & Friedman & Murphy & Alcazar & Vazquez & Becker, 2015; p. 623).

The aim of identity theory is to link self-attitudes to role-related behaviour which influences actions and sets expectations of the self, forming a recognisable identity (Desrochers & Andreassi & Thompson, 2004). When discussing identity theory it is important to note that many scholars recognise a difference between identity theory and social identity theory (Desrochers & Andreassi & Thompson, 2004; Stets & Burke, 2000). Identity theory focuses on the individual comprised of multiple roles – an employee may also identify as a parent and female – whilst social identity theory holds that a social grouping can provide members with an identity (Desrochers & Andreassi & Thompson, 2004). Whilst some writers have

criticised this separation (Stets & Burke, 2000) this project shall focus on the latter as it reflects the aims of the project.

Whilst identity has been recognised as crucial to the individual its development as a research topic has seen it expand to a macro level of analysis (Stets & Burke, 2000). Whilst this research will mainly be observing collective identity development, tensions rest between individual and collective identity studies due to the dominance of individual-orientated literature (Mizzi & Rocco, 2013).

Since the 1970s an array of literature has been produced concerning the identities of institutions. These studies have generally been separated into two categories: corporate identity and organisational identity (Dowling & Otubanjo, 2011).

Corporate identity is a term that developed amongst graphic designers before taking on a more theoretical role. Today when we refer to corporate identity we are addressing the "who do I want to be?" question. Corporate identity research generally investigates concerns of how an organisation presents itself to its employees, customers, or members (Dowling & Otubanjo, 2011). This differs from organisational identity which alternatively asks "who am I?" investigating the perception of an organisation from the point of view of its members (Zachary & McKenny & Short & David & Wu, 2011) – the latter is internal while the former is external. Whilst there may be scope to look at how trade unions present themselves to their members and the wider community, the literature analysed will mainly focus on their organisational identities.

As Laybourn (1992; p. 1) argues the structures of trade unions have changed over time. In the eighteenth century they were insecure societies of skilled and semi-skilled workers, but by the nineteenth century they had broadened their membership and established national organisations. This literature review shall focus on recent developments within trade unionism in order to debate identity transformation and challenges. Within the literature these trends are cited as emerging within the decade of the 1970s. As a result this period

will mark the beginning of our study progressing through to the present which will be detailed in later chapters (see Contemporary Challenges to Trade Union Assumptions).

The subsequent section will draw upon the theoretical ground work surrounding organisational identity before observing its relationship with trade union organisation. This will be followed by an overview of assumptions regarding trade unions' roles and purpose within the literature based on Richard Hyman's (2001) "Eternal Triangle" of trade union identity. This will then lead to a review of the challenges to these assumptions due to changes within contemporary capitalism and developments within the literature, before analysing the postmodern challenge to these theories.

Organisational identity

Organisational identity is a relatively recent concept developed within organisation and management research. Its theoretical foundations are generally attributed to the work by Albert and Whetten (1985; Rughase, 2006; p. 15) who aimed to show that organisational members can capture essential features of an organisation.

Within their theory identity is a relational construct formed by interaction with others (Hatch & Shultz, 2002). In order to recognise an institution's organisational identity they put forward three questions: what is taken by organisation members to be *central* to the organisation? What makes the organisation *distinctive* from other organisations? And what is the *enduring* feature that links the institution's past with the present? (Albert & Whetten, 1985; p. 292). The combination of these factors can lead to members internal to the organisation holding a recognisable identity unique to the collective.

The theoretical foundations of organisational identity are deeply rooted in theories of social identity. This holds that members of a group of two or more persons can share an affinity between each other based on common identities through social categorisation (Turner, 2010; p. 15). These identities are collective identities establishing a difference between members and non-members. Generally these groupings employ hierarchies of authority to

establish a common sense amongst members and give the identity legitimacy (Jenkin, 2008; p. 170); thus ensuring consistency as well as maintaining their distinct categorisations.

The work of Jenkin (2008; p. 169 - 183) aimed to expand on this analysis by highlighting two sets of criteria that show how institutions form and maintain coherent social identities. The first regards the organisation identifying individuals as organisation members; this involves trajectories of recruitment in order to maintain and renew the lifespan of an organisation. This means external social categorisations of the individual – such as gender, parentage, or age group – and their perceived criteria for membership begin a process for forming an organisational identity. The second criterion regards affirmation. This is an individual's confirmation of group membership, marking their identity with internal and external relations as well as allowing the individual into the shared common knowledge (ibid). Further research suggests that such an identity can impact notions of the self, such as a team member retiring from a group due to perceived personal failure (Ellemers & Spears & Doosje, 2002).

Criticisms of Albert and Whetten (1985) emerge due to their failure to develop specific criteria for measuring these claims in order to realise organisational identity (He & Brown, 2013). For example how do researchers' measure what is central to the organisation? They did, however, highlight that identity investigations are more complicated. Organisations may be composed of multiple identities that can be ambiguous and contradictory as well as complimentary leading to complications when applying their framework (ibid). Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2002) complicate these concerns further by stating that different social situations may have specific implications on identity issues. Whilst some group-based identities may be central to an individual, others may be corrosive and overpower other identities of the self (ibid). Hodgkinson (2013) argues that this has resulted in scholars of the subject fracturing into four perspectives: functionalist, social constructionist, psychodynamic, and postmodernist. Such radically alternate perspectives have led to rigid barriers for analysis and the development of an inconsistent framework. This has led to Whetten (2006) criticising the emerging literature for giving organisational identity an identity crisis.

Functionalist studies on the subject hold that organisational identities are tangible and reliant on an organisation's corporate identity (He, 2012; Zarchary & McKenny & Short & David & Wu, 2011). However, the work by He (2012) argues that different organisation members can hold alternate perceptions of their organisations' identity based on interpretations of corporate identity, it is suggested that these are beneficial for renewal of the brand over time. Thus for this theory the corporate and organisational identities are intertwined and reflect each other. The internal members' perception of corporate identity impacts their own identity and *vice versa*.

Social constructionist studies are closely related to theories of social identity and the model drawn up by Albert and Whetten (1985). This approach investigates how shared interpretations by members of the institution construct the internal identities (He & Brown, 2013). This differs from the psychodynamic perspective which investigates the unconscious processes and threats – such as the administrative process – which bind people into collectives (ibid).

Postmodern studies of organisational identity are notable for their criticisms of the previously mentioned approaches. As Chia (1995; p. 581) states:

> . . . 'Modern' sociological studies of organization . . . tend to deal with results or organized states rather than the complex social processes that lead to these outcomes or effects. In such an idealized sociology, the 'state of rest' is viewed as normal and hence implicitly privileged in social analysis. . .

Thus many postmodern studies of the subject focus on linguistic deconstruction to observe the emergence of organisation (ibid).

Despite a rigid framework and radically fractured perspectives, organisational identity provides a useful focus for looking at the development of trade union members, activists, and employee's identities. It is these theoretical foundations that secure the long-standing

nature of their organisations and reflect the successes of forming recognisable trade unionist identities.

A relation between groups of individuals in a workplace and membership of a trade union provides a useful explanation for notions of solidarity and how some workers function in the workplace. A trade union's ambition of unionising certain industries and sectors – targeting certain groups of workers to bring them into the organisation (Mundlak & Shamir, 2014) – also reflects the target and affirmation model proposed by Jenkin (2008). The hierarchical nature of their internal structures to create a common sense highlights power and effects within their organisations. Such structuring can contribute to shaping the history of their organisations' – the enduring feature – and mould the identities' of activists and officials. Similarly, according to a psychodynamic perspective, people are drawn into their institutions to escape corrosive practises within the workplace further binding a sense of common identity.

Richard Hyman and Trade Union Identity

Theorising on trade union identities has proved to be a difficult task due to the complexity of their institutions. This has led to waves of sociological research which, as Hodder and Edwards (2015) argue, has resulted in the production of a "jungle" of literature fabricating a range of individual interpretations. Despite the vast amounts of enquiry the literature does highlight some key features regarding trade unions' ideology, purpose, and outcomes which contribute to the framework of organisational identity. This section will now analyse research concerning trade union identity and its relation to the literature on organisational identity. The literature bodies that have been drawn upon include trade union literature concerned with their identity and history, and industrial relations literature.

Some of the most influential work attempting to unify this jungle of literature has been Richard Hyman's (2001) "Eternal Triangle". Here Hyman identifies the practical and ideological differences between international labour movements, highlighting that trade

unions' agendas have evolved out of historical contexts. In doing so he puts forward three ideal and contradictory forms of trade union organisation: unions as interest organisations with labour market functions, unions as vehicles for class war, and unions as vehicles of social justice (ibid). These three ideal forms create the "Eternal Triangle" where different unions have crafted their ideological purpose based on a combination of two of the above outlooks, but, as Hyman argues, they cannot escape being influenced by all three perspectives.

The aim of Hyman's model was to highlight ideological similarities amongst international trade unions despite their obvious national and historical differences. This was to contribute to the aspirations of developing a transnational labour movement emerging out of the new Social Europe (Hyman, 2001). Recent literature has however contested such ambitions with the work by Woolfson and Sommers (2015) arguing that the 2008 financial crisis has brought about a paradigm shift. They argue that Europe has retreated from the development of social and labour rights in favour of fiscal disciplinarianism displaying an apparent weakness in Hyman's argument.

Whilst Hyman's theory focused on the ideological aspect of trade unionism, more recent developments of the model have attempted to link their ideology to the organisations' purpose. The model developed by Hodder and Edwards (2015) argues that the degree of market or class focus contributes to a trade union's distinct ideology which is influenced by wider society and forms its purpose. This purpose then influences its internal structures and negotiations with employers which result in outcomes. It is the purpose of the organisation that can be said to contribute to the distinctive feature of the syndicate forming internal organisational identities.

The three outlooks of market, class, and society are dominant themes within the literature that fit into the framework of an organisational identity. As the outlook of each individual union has developed out of a unique historical experience, the ideologies of the union can

be said to be the enduring feature of their organisational identity. If a union has always had a focus on class then this feature can be the lineage granting continuity between its past and present. But the function of a trade union's ideology can also serve as its central feature. A mining union may have more of a focus on class than market due to its historical context, but it is this feature that categorises the union's central focus. This then links into the union's purpose producing outcomes which separates their functions from that of the employers highlighting their distinct feature. It is the recognition and combination of these elements that lead to a recognisable trade unionist identity as argued by Hyman (2001) and Hodder and Edwards (2015).

Trade Unions' Roles and Assumptions

Whilst Hyman's model presents us with a framework for looking at and identifying a trade union's organisational identity, further enquiry into the outlooks of market, class, and society develop an understanding of what a trade union is as well as expand the studies understanding of their organisational identity. Overviewing the literature regarding trade unions' role in industrial relations, citizenship, and social class will therefore highlight established assumptions of their institutions relating to Hyman's model.

Market

Traditional theorising on trade unionism places their institutions within the heart of industrial relations systems. These systems are dependent on the industry or company the union represents and are multiple, varied, and specific to each workplace. However John T. Dunlop (1977) argued in *Industrial Relations Systems* that there are specific universal traits which maintain the model.

Ultimately the role of industrial relations systems is to produce a "web of rules" which then governs the industry. These systems are made up of three actors: trade unions, employers' organisations, and the government. Whilst these relations remain internal to each

organisation they are externally influenced by factors such as markets and technology which further influences each system (Kaufman, 2004; Poole, 1981).

Dunlop's work was later expanded by Flanders (1970) who observed that the "web of rules" produced are made up of four personalities within a workplace: economic, environmental, political, and social. The first personality produces and distributes incomes by operating within a nexus of factor and product markets; the second concerns the working environment; the third concerns the government of the organisation where authority is exercised by managers and capitalists; finally the fourth personality concerns the social relationships between work colleagues in terms of interests, values, and beliefs (ibid).

Trade unions' role within the industrial relations model can be said to fall under their market functions. As outlined in the Webbs' earliest definition (Webb & Webb & Peddie, 1907), this function sees them negotiate the labour contract of individual workers with employers against the demands of the market – cutting wage costs and intensifying production (Hyman, 2001; p. 6). Their role within industrial relations frameworks gives them opportunity to express the organisations' central feature and produce outcomes which reinforces internal identification.

The literature on industrial relations systems also presents a problem for trade union identity. The fact that trade unions' are reliant on the industry they represent means they share their identities with workplace identities. This refers to workers' feelings of how well their skills are utilised as well as their loyalty to the employers (Banerjee, 2013). As a result trade unions' are reliant on companies in order to form their identities depending on members identifying with their profession. This is reflected in many worker organisation names such as the National Union of Mineworkers or Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers. Organising on the grounds of profession contributes to the unions' unique quality, sets the division between internal and external relations as well as displaying one unions difference to another. This is further aided by ideological divisions within unions which have led to

tensions and problems when organising on united bodies such as the Trades Union Congress and the International Trade Union Confederation (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2013).

Society

Though it is clear that trade unions have a role to play internally within individual companies their influence and position in wider society is an inescapable component. For T. H. Marshall (1950) the historical development of trade unionism was a turning point in modern citizenship. Here citizenship refers to a complex order of rights granted to full members of a nation-state that does not depend directly on the market mechanism (Gersuny, 1990). The popular emergence of trade unionism, coupled with the dilemma of individual citizens' attempting to group together in order to pursue collective goals, produced a tear of political and economic citizenship commonly referred to as industrial citizenship (ibid). As groups required incorporation of individual rights they could legally act as individuals. This led to criticisms as their limited liability could be seen as an infringement of individual responsibility. But the development of trade unions did not obtain incorporation and had the ability to exercise vital civil rights whilst masking the individual responsibility of the worker. This allowed their members to use the unions as a tool to pursue social rights to improve their economic and political situation; transferring the political to a civil sphere of citizenship (Marshall, 1950; pp. 68 - 69). As all citizens of a nation-state are equal the growth of industrial citizenship would overcome inherent class tensions and allow workers to fight for workplace rights and, eventually, the welfare state.

But a key component of Marshall's theory of citizenship was the balance of rights and duties. As Bagguley (2013) points out, Marshall was critical of trade unions organising unofficial strike action as it was an abuse of their civil rights and neglected their national obligations. Their collective bodies could obtain social rights whilst their individual members had no duties to preserve them. In an extension of Marshall's work Barbalet (cited in: ibid) argues

that industrial citizenship rights are universal like property rights which similarly holds no duties to society.

In any case the work on industrial citizenship articulates further assumptions and roles establishing understandings of what a trade union is. Trade unions act as a collective mechanism exercising and developing individuals' industrial citizenship rights. In doing so they help to ease inherent class tensions of master and worker but also hold the duty of responsibility to the nation.

The concept of citizenship and its relation to the nation-state presents a further dilemma to the issue of organisational identity. In order to receive industrial citizenship you must first be a full member of that society. This would exclude such groups as migrant workers who have not yet obtained their full citizenship status. Due to the close relationship with the nation-state their institutions are also locked into nationalist debates, with trade unions having to represent the views of the home nation (Krings, 2009). This has posed dilemmas within their history, a key example being the West India Dock workers strike protesting the dismissal of Enoch Powell from the Conservative Party following his "Rivers of Blood" speech (Schofield, 2013; p. 243).

Class

The underlying acknowledgement of trade unionism and its relation to the working-classes in Marshall's theory highlights another key feature in the literature. Their outstanding function to represent workers within an organisation against the interests of the owners has seen most trade unions influenced by ideas of socialism – in its most general meaning – throughout their history. In Britain alone the influences of Labourism (Miliband, 1975), Syndicalism, and Marxism (Church & Outram, 1998) have each had a major impact on their institutions over time. Yet despite its influence the trade unions have shared a politically contentious relationship with it over time; whether it was the gradual jump to affiliating with the Labour Party (Laybourn, 2001; pp. 2 - 3) or Orthodox Marxism's frustration with their development

(Kelly, 1988). But it is the underpinnings of class war which have attracted many politically affiliated scholars to the subject. There are therefore certain understandings of class which link to trade unions' roles and assumptions.

Most historians associate the modern emergence of socialism and class awareness with the development of capitalism and the Enlightenment (Bevir, 2011). Whilst many scholars attribute its arrival to growing class consciousness as argued by Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, more recent investigations have cited its relationship with Protestantism and reflections of socio-economic reality (ibid). But the growing momentum of socialist ideas coupled with the popular emergence of trade unionism in the late nineteen century. Socialists' focus on the emancipation of the working-class and trade unions' function to represent that class in the industrial contract would lead to the formation of a relationship.

From Marx's perspective, the militancy of the emerging trade unions initially posed exciting prospects for the revolutionary cause. Yet their sectionalism and embrace of the collective bargaining relationship proved frustrating to his historical determinism (Kelly, 1988). This would lead Lenin to later conclude that without the guidance of revolutionaries they would ultimately function within the capitalist labour market (ibid). Lenin's conclusions were then built on by Gramsci who argued that trade unions are:

> . . . nothing other than a commercial company, of a purely capitalistic type, which aims to secure, in the interest of the proletariat, the maximum price of the commodity labour, and to establish a monopoly over this commodity in the national and international fields (cited in: Upchurch & Taylor & Mathers, 2009; p. 19).

Regardless of Marxism's theoretical dismissal of trade unions as revolutionary organisations, the ideas continued to penetrate the political identities of the institutions throughout history (Church & Outram, 1998). The ideas of Marxism have also had an influence on scholars of trade unionism (see Miliband, 1978; Hobsbawm, 2010; Tinker, 2002; O'Doherty & Willmott,

2001; Parker, 1999) such as Richard Hyman (1982) viewing them as a medium of control by workers over their industrial conditions.

As the trade unions evolved and became increasingly focused on the collective bargaining agenda, Upchurch, Taylor, and Mathers (2009) argue that European trade unionism began to develop a distinct political identity. This identity was a social democratic identity forming from calls for representation in the wider political sphere. As a result many nexuses emerged where the unions continued to pursue rights in the social sphere and a political party pursued the politics of the state (ibid). This relationship would further enforce Marshall's balance of rights and duties to the national interest.

This enquiry into their relationship with class brings forward further understandings of the roles and dilemmas for their organisational identity. Whilst their main feature has been to represent a class of wage earners in an industrial relations framework, as they developed there was a need to represent their interests on a political scale. This has led to many trade unions favouring a social democratic partnership granting them political functions, political identities, and an arena to establish those outcomes. These components impact trade unionists' identities as they will be expected to reflect the identity of the institution.

Although the social democratic partnerships were pursued by the organisations, individual members could also hold contradicting identities based on political affiliation. This includes various brandings of socialism. Similarly in order for these identities to emerge the membership must recognise themselves as members of a class to join the polity. As a result trade union identities are further reliant on recognition of class identity in order for their identities to exist.

The wider literature surrounding Hyman's model of market, class, and society has presented assumptions of what a trade union and trade unionist is. Their organisations role in an industry sees them negotiate the labour contracts of its members as well as contribute to the development of workplace policies in an industry. Their role in industrial citizenship provides

a platform for individual citizens to exercise and develop rights in the civil sphere whilst having a duty of responsibility to the nation. The role of class has been a dominant feature of their development seeing them encompass a social democratic political identity; this gives them a platform to pursue political outcomes for their members. It is all of these assumptions which link into trade unionists understandings of the self but these elements are also impacted by other notions of self-recognition in society. As individuals' function in industries, adopting workplace identities, trade unions are reliant on reflecting that identity within their organisational structures which the trade unionist must recognise. Trade unions responsibility to the nation-state sees them tied up in issues of wider society such as nationalism, ethnicity, and race which further impact unionist identity. Political identities are also reflected in trade unionists due to organisational affiliation but have proved to be an area of contention due to conflicting political ideologies. Finally they also share an identity relationship with class recognition due to the function of their institutions' and development of centre-left politics. It can therefore be understood that trade union identities are reliant on certain external identifiers in order for their identities to exist.

Contemporary Challenges to Trade Union Assumptions

It can be argued that the assumptions recognised in the previous section are closely related to the concept of modernity. This represents a transition from a traditionalist society to a modern one characterised by industrialisation, law, welfare, wealth, and science through education (Schifirneţ, 2012). But social, political, and economic changes since the 1970s (Harvey, 2005) have seen the emergence of a new form of society differing from the modern. This new society has undertaken various labels such as neoliberalism (ibid), the consumer society, or post-industrial society (Sarup, 1993; p. 143) but ultimately it is recognised that a paradigm shift has occurred. Whilst academics are in debate as to whether these experiences are advancing modernisation (Giddens, 1991; p. 3; Webb, 2004) or new experiences of post-modernity (Crook & Pakulski & Waters, 1994; p. 1) the literature suggests that these political, social, and economic transformations have had an impact on

trade unions' assumed functions and identities. This section is therefore drawing upon identity, labour process, citizenship, and trade union literature in order to uncover established positions on the challenges to previous assumptions of trade unionism and their identity.

One of the most significant transformations in this paradigm shift is the concept of identities themselves. Where in the period of modernity identities were said to be unified due to the various components of identity being drawn from a common source – an individual may be identified by occupation, attendance of the working man's club, community, trade union membership, educational status, or political affiliation – recent shifts have seen these identities begin to disintegrate (Kelly, 1998; p. 114; Lloyd, 2013; p. 14). McDowell (2003; pp. 42 - 43) argues that these identity transformations have occurred due to new patterns of consumption and production. Where commodity production was previously considered to uphold Fordist techniques of mass production, standardised products, and the deskilling of Taylorism (Lundy, 1996; p. 4) from the 1970s onwards firms have developed new strategies of production referred to as post-Fordism (Warde, 1996). An important characteristic of this contemporary development has been the increased focus on flexibility. Warde (1996; p. 231 - 234) argues that this model developed in response to heightened competition in world recession requiring employment of new flexible technologies, a flexible workforce, and specialised production strategies to meet dominant needs of the consumer. Crook, Pakulski, and Waters (1994; p. 40) argue that transformations in technology from mechanical to electronic or information-based technologies have paved the way for small-scale organisations focused on service with an ability to rapidly respond to market demand.

The notion of post-Fordist flexibility has not just been limited to the patterns of production and consumption. Crook, Pakulski, and Waters (1994) further argue these ideas are characteristic of the new society affecting all aspects such as popular culture, political participation (the rise of new social movements and NIMBYism as opposed to big party politics), and the running of the state. This means constructs of identity are increasingly

unstable and schizophrenic. McDowell (2003; pp. 7 – 8) argues that their formations are on-going performances, variable in space and time, regulated by social conventions and cultural expectations. The idea of stable identities is further disrupted by the development of other interconnected identities such as gender, race, and ethnicity (ibid) as well as consumer (Bhattacharjee & Berger & Menon, 2014) and digital identities (Al-Khouri, 2014). But this interpretation has been contested by Giddens (1991) who argues that whilst identities have to be reflexively produced, firm constructions of self-identity have not eroded but granted the individual increased autonomy over their formation. Yet Webb (2004) critiques this flexible form of identity development as limited by realistic constraints of political economy, family, and intimate relations. This reflects Lloyd's (2013) argument that due to the uneven development of post-industrialisation former industrial towns suffer from limited opportunities of identity development.

Regardless of the debates surrounding flexible identity their recognition has had a significant impact on trade unionist identity. The introduction of the flexible workforce has led to the emergence of shortened employment contacts, temporary work, diverse forms of occupation, and precarious labour (Carmo & Cantante & Alves, 2014). The notions of a lifetime career and long-term employment associated with modernity have begun to disintegrate (Doogan, 2001). The qualitative study conducted by Carmo, Cantante, and Alves (2014) concludes that younger workers entering these labour market conditions have split into two perspectives when constructing projections of their employment future. The first views it as a point of arrival dependant on accumulation of education and training, whilst the other views employment prospects as unforeseeable; any future projection is therefore interpreted as risk as it escapes individual control (ibid). But the assumptions of lifetime careers and long-term employment reflected trade unions' and trade unionists' reliance on work identities for their organisational identities to exist. With the decline of industries associated with the employment contracts of modernity many trade unions have had to merge in order to stay afloat (Waddington, 2005). These mergers have resulted in

generalisations of trade unions' appeal to worker identity. Laybourn (2009) argues that they have become flexible in their recruitment activities offering services such as reductions in consumer goods and holidays. Similarly Waddington (2005) contends that many employers have become accustomed to view trade unions as an impediment to workplace re-organisation; having either advocated union structural reform or favoured human resource management. This has led many unions to pursue methods of social partnership to establish common interests between employers and trade unions (Waddington & Whitson, 1996). Whilst this latter method has featured heavily in contemporary trade union debates, evidence suggests they work better amongst senior managers and unionists than line managers and stewards (ibid). This suggests that one of the central features of trade unionist identity has been dealt a significant blow and in response the reliance on workplace identity has been replaced with a new consumer identity.

Trade union identity has also suffered challenges with regard to other interconnected identities. Podshibiaakina (2001) argues that since the 1980s trade unions have attempted to accelerate women's participation into their organisations; this has mostly been attributed to the increased feminisation of the workforce owing to post-Fordism and second wave feminism (Ledwith, 2012). Yet whilst it is recognised that they have become more sensitive to diversity, Munro (2001) argues that these shifts have only occurred within their structures and are not reflected as outcomes in the workplace for working-class women and black workers. As a result many employees in the new workplace are put off joining. This has led Ledwith (2012) to argue that unions continue to be embedded by hegemonic white masculinity. These developments have posed a problem for trade unions relying on class identity as it can no longer be said to be the most salient identity.

The development of globalisation has had further implications for organisational identity development. The work by Mizzi and Rocco (2013) highlights organisations operating within various multicultural contexts as a result of an international workforce. Organisations' emerge within national contexts resulting in the formation of common collective

organisational identities emulating the values of the home nation. When these structures are exported they risk marginalising individual identities of the host nations based on culture, language, religion, and education (ibid). It is as a result of the globalised workplace that these multicultural identities risk being marginalised challenging perceptions of collective identities.

Similarly the reduced privilege of class identity has been significant for trade unions' social democratic identities. In many cases the political party has drifted away from traditional models of the relationship (Kitschelt, 1994). The work by Seyd (1999) highlights voting reforms within the British Labour Party in the early 1990s diluting trade union influence and favouring "one member one vote" systems. In the face of this Upchurch, Taylor, and Mathers (2009) as well as Laybourn (2009) argue this has seen trade unions begin to work with new social movements in the search for a new political identity.

Changes within the practical development of citizenship have also had an impact on trade unions' social role within society. Roche (1992) argues that in western nations since the 1980s the rise of "New Right" conceptions of citizenship began to emerge associated with the Thatcher and Reagan administrations. This challenged common political assumptions of citizens' access and development of social rights as it sought to re-emphasis the duties aspect of Marshall's theory. Previously the political left and liberal centre had embraced Marshall's theory assuming egalitarian implications of strong social rights (Ibid; p. 77). The New Right's application of citizenship therefore stressed individual responsibility and social obligations of membership. This included personal duties of self-care and self-development as well as work and family duties (ibid). But this development in citizenship has later been challenged by post-national change responding to globalisation. The creation of the European Citizen coupled with national membership of the European Union has brought changes to national citizenship. Its development has been seen as a way to extend social and political bonds beyond national boundaries creating collective experiences with a diverse group of people (Lister & Pia, 2008; pp. 162 - 163). Zhang and Lillie (2015) argue

that the development of the European Citizen and its requirement for European Citizens to identify with its institutions has eroded Marshall's conception of industrial citizenship. This has a significant impact on trade unions' social role as they are excluded from the citizenship process. Similarly they argue that citizens no longer identify with national institutions and call on national labour movements to change their narrative and embrace a European Cosmopolitanism – meaning an embrace of transnational working-class cultures (ibid). This position is however challenged by commentators such as Delanty (2007) and Nemţoi and Ignătescu (2014) who argue that the features of European citizenship and cosmopolitanism have been overplayed. Whilst European citizenship has led to the development of Europeanisation in national regimes – such as nation states judicial relation with the supranational actor – notions and values of cosmopolitan solidarity have been ineffective. As a result post-national citizenship has not supplanted national citizenship. Academics have found evidence to back this contention by observing the domestic rise of Euroscepticism and nationalism on the continent following the 2008 financial crisis (Brack & Startin, 2015; Gifford, 2015; Verney, 2015).

These challenges have also had an impact on the emerging literature, specifically regarding labour process theory to which trade unions are implicated. These tensions within the literature revolve around the concepts of adopting and rejecting the observation of subjectivity (Knights, 1997; O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001). For writers such as McCabe (2007) incorporating subjectivity into the analysis of the labour process can shed light on our understandings of individualism, collectivism, and why action occurs in the workplace; this interpretation being influenced by the notions of autonomous identity formation. Tinker (2002) on the other hand argues that such theorising is in the "twilight of its decay" crafting frivolous and politically timorous characterisations of the worker. Through developing a politically efficacious subject, such as that structured by Marx, theorists can seek to remedy the unjust aspects of the labour process.

To summarise, the emergence of new bodies for literature regarding identity, workplace transformations, citizenship, and the labour process have brought about new challenges to traditional theorising on the concepts which affect trade union organisational identity. The appearance of concepts such as flexible identity and consumption has challenged stable conceptions of class, gender, and employment. Political challenges in the domain of citizenship have dissolved previous understandings of industrial citizenship and debate arises between those wishing to produce a theory of the individual based on notions of either collectivism or individualism.

The Postmodern Challenge

This section will now seek to outline and analyse the postmodern body of literature, citing relevant commentators associated with the term and highlighting its implications on the previous literature.

Postmodernism has been one of the most theoretically significant developments regarding the analysis of identity and organisation in recent years. Whilst postmodern theorisation has been attributed to varying interpretations across a diverse range of academic subjects – from art and architecture to literature and the human sciences – different authors apply different meanings to the term (Alvesson, 2002). Although on the surface this can appear to be a limitation, it is within this lack of meaning that the study can develop an understanding of the postmodern. In order for this to become clearer it will first be necessary to provide a brief discussion on the term modernism. This will allow the review to identify with some form of clarity what postmodernists are reacting against. Secondly, when simultaneously approaching the concepts of modernism and postmodernism it is important to view them as languages, themes, or an element of the human condition that runs through discourses as opposed to ideologies. This is to liberate the terms from all-encompassing narratives that categorise and restrain works which may have very little in commonality. For example, the writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx are frequently cited as modernist works yet they share little in terms of ideology.

Though modernism and postmodernism have been presented as oppositional ideas, it is the understanding of this thesis that postmodernism is an element that informs present conditions of modernity – postmodernism not post-modernism – and reflects the limitations of modernist philosophical thinking (Chia, 1995). This is despite commentators such as Berman (2010; p. 17) arguing that the present modern age "has lost touch with the roots of its own modernity."

It is with reference to the work of French philosopher's Jean-François Lyotard (1984; Williams, 1998), Jacques Derrida (1976) and Michel Foucault – particularly his works *Madness & Civilization* (1988)*, The Order of Things* (2002b), and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002a) – that the current studies understanding of postmodernism has developed. This is due to the authors' oeuvres addressing issues of identity, organisation, and language transformation. Whilst there is no attempt to define either postmodernism or the writers' texts, there are some underlying themes which characterise such works which will now be investigated.

Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism is the experience of modern life shared by men and women of the world today: the experience of modernity. It is an existence composed of contradiction, progression, and understanding that cuts across all societal subjectivities (Armstrong, 2005; Berman, 2010; Harvey, 1989). To define oneself as modern one must be anti-modern; simultaneously embracing the periodic notion of change before critiquing and damning the change itself (Lee, 2013). It is due to modernism's perpetual quest for transformation that it has developed such a contentious relationship with history; rejecting traditions as well as the past and favouring narratives of progress (Barrows, 2010; Harvey, 1989; Wood, 2011; Veer, 1998). Such ideas can be traced back to Enlightenment thinking influenced by the eighteenth century revolutions (Berman 2010; Veer, 1998; Wagner, 2012). The philosophical speculations on the state of nature claimed to have established foundations where universal

knowledge could be erected on topics such as freedom, reason, and science (Wagner, 2012). The adoption of universal principles, such as rational governments organised through hierarchical administration accompanied by promises of freedom and self-determination (ibid), would lead us towards a just and democratic society – what Habermas termed s*ensus communis* (cited in: Sarup, 1993). Such notions are apparent in the workings of Rene Descartes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant, with this understanding of modernism culturally expressed in art, literature, and the sciences.

Closely associated with this philosophical concept is the methodological theory of structuralism; a theory which has had a dominating influence on a variety of academic subjects including the social sciences. Structuralism is essentially a theory revolving around linguistics. For one of its key theorists Saussure (citied in: Olssen, 2003; Easthorpe, 1991), the study of language was not through historical change in language, but through focusing synchronically on its underlying structures as part of a semiological system (Barthes, 2009; p. 133 – 134). These language systems are composed of three indications of meaning: the signified, the signifier, and the sign. The signified is the concept, the signifier is the mental acoustic image, and the relation between the concept and the image results in the sign; forming a concrete entity (ibid; p. 137). This form of analysis therefore indicates that individual discourses could be taken and linked into an overarching structure which creates a form of understanding (Olssen, 2003; Easthorpe 1991). In terms of data analysis, structuralism allowed academics and philosophers to construct theories and general conclusions out of the discontinuous and fragmented. Such an analysis can be seen in the work of Karl Marx, where all discourses are linked into the class struggle which will eventually lead the proletariat to revolutionary consciousness (Foucault, 2002a).

The relationship between Marx and the emancipatory project of modernism can be distinguished with clarity within a section of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered forms, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeoisie epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new found ones become acquainted and ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober sense his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind (Marx & Engels & Harvey, 2008; p. 38).

Marx begins by discussing his dissatisfaction with the effects he interprets from bourgeoisie experiences of modernity; the instability, uncertainty, and fragility of human relations. Yet, towards the end of the fragment, Marx embraces the very notions of the destroy-and-rebuild modernism he critiques. The final lines where the individual will realise their condition of life, ultimately leading them to the absolute knowledge of revolutionary consciousness, means they will see the world as they know it melt and a new one establish with the similar promises of progress, freedom, and self-determination. Marx also shares modernisms fear of instability (Morrison, 1997; pp. 247 - 248) and as such seeks to organise, unify, and structure relations to produce a globalised vision. Marx not only does this to fulfil his own promises of a unified future but also provides a structure to understanding the condition of bourgeoisie modernity. Similarly Marx employs the structuralist usage of binary oppositions. Binaries rely on the pairing of words which contrast each other with one being viewed as positive and the other as negative. Each term depends on an understanding of the other in order to decipher meaning. In the case of the extract proletariat is viewed as positive with bourgeoisie being viewed as the negative. We cannot understand the position of the proletariat without understanding the negativism of bourgeoisie, thus leading to the development of a hierarchy

displaying the dominance of one term over the other (Ross & Fotheringham & Crusoe, 2014).[1]

For writers associated with the term postmodernism the concept of applying structures to the dispersed presented a variety of limitations. A key postmodern criticism of these structures and narratives of change are the privileged positions or centred theories of components such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity consciously or unconsciously present (Tickamyer, 2004). Yet it is due to this rejection of structures, genres, and forms that makes postmodernism so difficult to define.

The first theme, and one of the major criticisms deriving from modernism, rests on their rejection of totalising narratives (this can also be referred to as metanarratives). The work by writers such as Marx and Rousseau presented society with the promise of a correlative, continuous history that, accompanied by time, would restore unity to the subject and return to it the things that were removed by difference (Foucault, 2002a; p. 13; Lyotard, 1984). Such narratives produce theories where all things can be connected and represented as a definitive truth (Glendinning, 2008). For postmodern writers truth exists in worldly forms through modes of verification and lived experiences of individuals (Faubion, 2002; pp. xvii – xviii; Boje, 1995). It has sought to reject totalising narratives, embrace the fragmented and discontinuous, pull apart the unified individual, and emphasise the power of discourse on subjectivity.

This conception of truth requires further examination. Influenced by Nietzsche's writings (Derrida, 1976; pp. 19 – 20) of knowledge and the position of the subject, the postmodern analysis of truth represents a break with the established traditions of contemporary philosophy. Where Descartes indicated that the unity of the subject was ensured by the desire for knowledge forming a body of truth – his famous method of doubt concluding "I

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[1] Though parallels have been drawn between the work of Marx and the spirit of modernism, Filc and Ram (2014) argue that this relationship forms only one interpretation of contemporary Marxism. The development of postmodern ideas has affected interpretations of Marxism leading to different positions including Marxist Postmodernism, Synthetic Marxist Postmodernism and Post-Marxism.

think therefore I am" – Nietzsche rejects such notions. For Nietzsche knowledge was an invention and not an instinct implying that subjectivities are invented as opposed to being a natural occurrence – this challenging Descartes by decentring the human subject (Foucault, 2002d; pp. 6 –10; Withers, 2008). Knowledge is therefore something that is unnatural. It plays a game in the presence of the instincts. Knowledge is an obstruction that stands between us and the world that needs to be known. In order for us to truly discover what is to be known, knowledge must struggle against a world without order, connectedness, wisdom, or law. Once knowledge has been stripped away all that can be left are relations of violence, domination, force, and power. Therefore if we wish to discover truth, or what is to be known, we must look past knowledge towards the political; why people hate each other, dominate each other, and exercise power over one another (Foucault, 2002d; pp. 8 – 12; Foucault, 2002b; p. 422).

This latter emphasis on power forms another theme attributed to postmodernism. Some of the most detailed and influential work concerning this conception of power has been credited to Foucault. Whilst Foucault offers no coherent general theory of power – rejecting the production of totalising narratives – his work analysing the relationships between power and knowledge has produced a recognisable analytical theme (Gallagher, 2008; Foucault, 1998; p. 82).

A key element of this theme concerns the power of discourse. Discourse plays a vital role that produces knowledge creating subject positions within which individuals can place themselves or be placed within (Foucault, 2002c; pp. 326 – 327). It is through such relationships we observe that power is not just centralised within our institutions (the state, the asylum, the school) but is dispersed and localised within ourselves acting as a form of social control (Foucualt, 1991; pp. 170 – 195; Bevir, 1999). If we use the discourses of the judicial system as an example, they produce knowledge which labels individual identity and set the contours for the good and the bad (the officer, the criminal, the lawyer). Similarly, if we take the image of a national flag it exerts knowledge of who belongs within the nation,

who does not, and what characteristics are associated with the identity (Foucault, 1988; pp. 38 – 65).

> This form of power that applies itself to the immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects (Foucault, 2002c; p. 331).

Within this theme it is important to acknowledge that power is not concentrated in individuals or sustained by systems. Power is ubiquitous and exercised within these institutions through complex relations of individualisation influenced by a negotiable field of knowledge or discourse (Freie & Epply, 2014; Foucault, 1998; pp. 92 – 93; Foucault, 1991; pp. 125 - 126). This means that forms of power are both diverse and fragmented but can change depending on the available, contested forms of knowledge. Our interactions between managers, colleagues, or friends all display power relations but it is how power is exercised and its effects with which we are concerned (Gallagher, 2008). Whilst this may seem like a negative concept, Foucault is keen to point out that different forces of power can cause new forms of knowledge to emerge:

> We should not be content to say that power has a need for a certain discovery, a certain form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information . . . the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power (cited in: Faubion, 2002; pp. xv – xvi).

It is through such relationships within the nexus of power relations that resistance can also be identified. Just like the ubiquitous existence of power, these forms of resistance should be seen as mobile and transitory, fracturing unities, effecting regroupings and furrowing across individuals (Foucault, 1998; pp. 95 – 96). Thus enacting a constant state of transformation where nothing is solid.

In order to illustrate this Hall (1992, p. 293) uses the example of the West Bank to show Foucault's theory in practise. Palestinians fighting to regain the land from Israelis can be described as either freedom fighters or terrorists. Whilst it is a fact that they are fighting, what does the fighting actually mean? The facts alone cannot decide and therefore we turn to language. Descriptions, whether true or false, are made true if people act on them and they have real consequences. The knowledge we act on therefore forces us to perceive things as truth.

If human relations are so complex and incoherent, how then do researchers' form understandings of these relations? For postmodernists or post-structuralists this is generally through the grouping of discourses that can be used to define conditions of existence; embracing both their similarities and differences; representing the statement for what it says; and recognising the statements as a fragment of a system (Foucault, 2002a; pp. 119 - 133). Such notions have been attributed to Jacques Derrida and his deconstructionist approach (Gaschè, 1987; Schirato, 2011). Deconstructionism highlights that texts can hold multiple forms of understanding with each reading obtaining equivalency (Rescher, 2010; p. 62). Language is never stable and meanings can always be challenged – what Derrida refers to as *differance* (Derrida, 1976; pp. 23 – 24; Leonard, 2000; p. 10). This means that the statement comprises multiple understandings based on its binary oppositions all of which rely on the interpretation of the researcher or reader which itself becomes another text (Gaschè, 1987; Rescher, 2010; p. 62; Schirato, 2011). Roland Barthes (1977) described this intervention as "the death of the author". Instead of looking to the author to provide us with meaning we instead turn to the reader to provide interpretations of the text disturbing the power of the author.

Implications of Postmodern Thought and Criticisms

The criticisms identified in postmodern thought present the theories of identity, trade unionism, and organisation with a set of challenges. The first of these regards trade unions'

objectives to transform workplace policies, labour contracts, and citizenship rights. Such ambitions rely on knowledge of what is good and bad based upon claims to truth peddled by academics, organisations, and information outlets. Where postmodern criticisms challenge these moralities is by observing how these good notions of justice may essentially have the same end result as the bad; both conclude in exclusion, domination, and punishment, informing us of how we should behave and what is acceptable within given domains to suit certain ends. That is not to say that all forms of knowledge presented as good are inherently bad or withhold ulterior motives; the surgeon using their knowledge of the body emits power over the patient's anatomy to remove the tumour which cannot be considered inherently bad. Yet there is a role for such studies of power in organisations to identify its effects. Similarly the research surrounding the development and analysis of organisational identity is challenged due to its methods assuming identity is a natural occurrence. A postmodern perspective, as understood here, would be arguing that these identities are an invention of knowledge and are the product of power technologies located within discourse to produce ideological results as opposed to being independently conceived. As knowledge transforms within historical contexts it exerts power forming new types of subjects.

Whilst postmodernism has mounted various criticisms towards dominant theories of understanding, the school of thought itself has undergone criticisms from various disciplines. Commentators have argued that postmodern criticism is ambiguous and lacking in meaning. This charge has mostly being mounted by literary pragmatics arguing that post-structuralism is oblivious to grounded meaning (Schirato, 2011). Whilst there is no denial that some meanings are privileged, postmodernists' would argue that the legitimacy of these understandings should always be put into question.

Postmodernism has also been criticised by modernist writers for its embrace of nihilism due to its rejection of Enlightenment rationality (Gantt, 2001):

There is no point trying to resist the oppressiveness of modern life, since even our dreams of freedom only add more links to our chains; however, once we grasp the total futility of it all, at least then we can relax (Berman, 2010; p. 35).

It is due to such claims on the unfinished project of modernity that postmodernism is viewed as an element within contemporary experiences of modernity. Postmodernism is an experience that reflects the limitations of modernism just as modernism reflects the limitations of postmodernism.

Conclusions and Formulation of Research Questions

This section will now summarise the main conclusions drawn from the literature review and formulate the research questions to be investigated.

An overview of the literature surrounding organisational identities suggests that personal constructions of trade unionist identities are based on common interpretations of a trade unions ideology, historical construction, and means to measure outcomes. It is the individual's reflection and identification with these three elements that form a trade unionist identity. But these identities have also been reliant on other identities such as work identity, national identity, class identity, and political identity.

Within the literature there are also several roles and assumptions revolving around Hyman's Eternal Triangle of market, class, and society which tell us what a trade union is. Firstly trade unions' play an important part in industrial relations, negotiating the individual labour contact, and contributing to the web of rules which govern an industry. Secondly they have a social role to play in a nation's industrial citizenship. Citizens' can use their institutions to collectively exercise, gain, and develop social citizenship rights whilst detaching the liability of the individuals. But this conquest for social rights is further grounded in the duty of responsibility to the nation. Finally trade unions also have a role to play in representing a class of people within society. This function is practised through a countries social democratic nexus between trade unions and its associated party. These three elements

within their organisations further reflect their power through an ability to influence these three fields.

Socio-economic changes since the 1970s have posed many threats and challenges to the traditional framework of trade unions' identities, functions, and powers. The creation of the flexible workplace has eroded some of the foundations trade unionist identity relied on. Due to precarious work, diverse occupations, and small workplaces notions of a solid work identity which they relied on have disintegrated. In order to overcome this many unions have attempted to develop a consumer identity to attract a new workforce. Similarly it is noted that many employers now view them as a hindrance to the industrial relations process. Whilst some unions have embraced social partnerships their effects are limited by day-to-day practises between stewards and line managers. This has seen them removed from many industrial relations frameworks denying them an arena to achieve outcomes.

The notions of flexible and interconnecting identities have also proved challenging for their identities and particularly conceptions of class. Whilst trade unions have adopted various strategies to incorporate these changes, interconnecting identities are still perceived as absent from union outcomes proving potentially off-putting to a new workforce. This has further affected trade unions' political identities seeing them pair with new social movements as opposed to social democratic parties.

Trade unions' social role has also been undermined by responses to globalisation. The development of the European Citizen has led to the erosion of industrial citizenship leaving them seeking a new platform and purpose.

Much of the literature regarding trade unions' roles and assumptions has also been developed from a Marxist perspective. In this sense the literature surrounding identity and organisation have chosen to move away from analysing trade unions and instead these new modes of analysis have been applied to corporations. This identifies a tension between two competing forms of knowledge regarding the study of trade union identity; the trade union

literature is wedded to an older, Marxian body of knowledge whilst organisation literature has focused on subjectivity and flexibility.

The intervention of postmodern criticism holds implications for these two means of understanding trade unions and their identity. The trade union literature suggests there was a body of knowledge concerning their roles in the workplace, citizenship, and politics which exerted power on how the individuals' within should behave and understand themselves. It could be argued that through these technologies of power unions' were able to mobilise workers to suit their causes. The development of contemporary research regarding the invention of flexible identities can be seen as a resistance to this previously superior understanding. This new dominant form of knowledge based on flexibility has broken up trade unions' previous power monopoly but has resulted in a new form of power benefitting conceptions of flexible production and consumption.

It is therefore the aim of the current study to analyse the present positioning of the historical trade unionist subject – historical in the sense it has been constructed in the present moment amongst the competing discourses of flexibility and stability – to observe how these bodies of knowledge effect trade unions and which body dominates in order to identify limitations and its consequences. The philosophical and methodological notions put forward in postmodern criticism will work as a tool for observing positions of knowledge and power within trade unions which characterise their identities. The use of a postmodern approach will allow us to disturb the structures the trade union literature currently rests on and expose the multiple understandings derived from subjects' personal experiences. As such the research will investigate four research questions in order to identify the multiple interpretations of their organisational identity:

1. What is a trade union from the subjectivity of activists?
2. What does it mean to be a trade unionist from the subjectivity of activists?
3. What are the power relationships within the organisation?

4. How have these discourses emerged?

The following chapter will outline the project's methodology. This chapter will cover the papers' interpretation of postmodernism, the theoretical framework applied as well as research limitations, reflections, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter will provide discussion on the methodology employed throughout the research. This will involve looking at how the data was collected as well as how the data was analysed. It will further provide discussions of postmodernism, phenomenology, qualitative discourse analysis, and the case study method before explaining how these will be applied in the analysis whilst laying out the limitations and ethical considerations. The chapter will also discuss how the chosen methodology meets the aims and objectives stated in the introductory chapter. All of the elements in this chapter will allow the study to fulfil its objective and answer the research questions listed in the previous chapter.

The main aim of this research is to use postmodern theories as a tool to identify present positioning's of historical subjects and uncover dominant forms of power emulating from discourses of knowledge within trade unionism. The application of this methodology will therefore see us work within the structures of trade union identity in order to bring to light the tensions of power and perspectives that exist within, before fragmenting these entities by observing the similarities and differential meanings within the discourses to obtain the minimal structuring effect.

Throughout the research the recurring word *discourse* shall be used. As this is a key term within the thesis it is important that a definition be provided. Discourse shall refer to the study of language in use; this could include telephone conversations, archival material, social media conversations, or recorded interviews (Wetherell & Taylor & Yates, 2004; p. 2). Whilst most discourse analysts remain firmly within its linguistic realm, this research relied on broadening the definition to embrace both the language and practise aspect of the analysis. This interpretation of discourse was developed by Michel Foucault and looks at the

production of knowledge through language (ibid; p. 72). Since all social practices entail meaning and meanings influence what we do all practises therefore have a discursive aspect (Hall, 1992; p. 291). This means a wide range of objects including imagery, architecture, and video can be considered discourse, language, or speech due to their omission of knowledge forming a text (Barthes, 2009; p. 133). It is due to this wider definition of discourse that we concern ourselves with the macro analysis of texts as opposed the micro analysis of traditional discourse methods (Parker, 2014; pp. 8 – 9).

From this section forward both the terms modernism and structuralism shall be used interchangeably and will refer to the understanding outlined in the previous chapter – the creation of totalising narratives representing a superior truth. But these philosophic and linguistic categorisations will differ from the term modernity which shall continue to refer to the historical period detailed in the previous chapter. The terms postmodernism and post-structuralism will also be used interchangeably and refer to the themes of fragmentation, knowledge, and power outlined in the literature review. This approach will allow the study to reconnect with the issue of language transformation, the effects of knowledge, and decline within the British trade union movement.

Throughout the analysis the term subject shall be used to apply to the participants. By subject the study is referring simultaneously to the individuals' own subjectivity formed through self-knowledge and their subjection to the organisation which produces the knowledge and resulting form of power – the individual is both a subject and a subject (Foucault, 2002c; p. 331). This terminology has been developed from Foucault's work detailed in the previous chapter.

The methodology will begin by providing an outline of the theoretical framework applied. The final section will discuss the case study research method as well as outline the projects limitations, reflections, and ethical considerations.

Qualitative Discourse Analysis

This research employs a qualitative methodology to generate phenomenological data to which an understanding of trade union and workplace identities might be understood. Phenomenology has been widely credited as being a major philosophical movement throughout the twentieth-century (Glendinning, 2008). Within the thesis it shall be presented as a theoretical point of view advocating the study of individuals' experiences. This is due to the belief that human behaviour is determined by direct experiences as opposed to described reality external to the individual (Art & Bowe, 2014). The adoption of phenomenological study will allow the analysis to identify continuity and changes within trade union discourses and observe the effects of knowledge on the subjectivity of the individual.

Qualitative research strategies have been adopted in the project due to the nature of the research. As the paper has not set out to test a theory or hypothesis, it is relying on the accumulation and analysis of soft data which lends itself to qualitative methodology. This differs from applying quantitative approaches which are generally characterised by the analysis of hard data, usually numerical, to measure an amount of something (Berg & Lune, 2012; Neuman, 2014). Qualitative research therefore refers to analysing meanings, concepts, definitions, descriptions, and characteristics which benefit this project as the conclusion cannot be meaningfully expressed numerically (Berg & Lune, 2012). It is feasible when observing trade union decline to measure change both qualitatively and quantitatively. The dominant method for defining this decline has tended to favour the latter and as a result, this has seen trade unions employ American organising models in order to make up the numbers (Parker & Rees, 2013). However, this approach has not halted decline. The use of qualitative research methods will allow the research to delve into personal experiences, look beyond the figures, and provide a deeper understanding of this decline. Similarly, previous research adopting such methods has not halted their decline, potentially offering new avenues for reform. Furthermore, the employment of qualitative research methods will allow the study to observe the internal contradictions of the movement and not just the structural challenges, in order to observe real word effects.

The research will also be applying the analytical approach of discourse analysis which is closely associated with qualitative data processes and constructions (Sayago, 2015). As pointed out by academics such as Cheek (2004) and Howarth (2000), discourse analysis can have a multitude of meanings due to its application in a variety of academic disciplines. Indeed, the term discourse itself withholds a range of meanings so it is important to define what is meant by the term. Discourse analysis shall be used to refer to the reading of texts, or the reading of talk in action, in order to obtain understanding of the phenomenon under study – in this case trade unionism. This reading shall not only perform a linguistic function but shall also look at a range of material and actions through Foucault's analysis of knowledge and power. This is due to all social practices entailing meaning and as meanings influence what we do all practises have a discursive aspect (Hall, 1992; p. 291).

The forms of discourse that will be used in the study include a selection of verbal and textual performances – whether sentences, paragraphs, or fragments – gathered from a case study of self-identified trade unionists. In order to remove these statements from predetermined totalisations, the discourse shall also be used to describe a limited number of statements that, through their grouping, can define conditions' existence (Foucault, 2002a; p. 131). The interviews will therefore be presented as a series of statements that reflect the lived experiences of the participants and emphasise their interrelated, subjective, and oppositional understandings (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). This will aid the elimination of narratives imposed on every individual and represent the regularities and conflicted meanings observed in the individual discourses. To clarify, the research will not be looking to locate just one body of knowledge which flows through discourses but note competing bodies of knowledge which coexist with the dominant understanding. There will be no attempt to link these statements to a narrative or hypothesis; neither will there be any attempt to represent these statements as part of a continuous historical understanding of trade unionism. This form of discourse analysis shall be described as ontological due its concerns regarding the nature of subjectivity, structures, and interactions (Glynos & Howarth & Norval & Speed, 2009).

The application of discourse analysis will allow the analysis to view language not only as a tool for description and communication, but as a means to observe what is "above" the sentence through the use of linguistics, such as what is implied and what is meant by the statement (Wood & Kroger, 2000; p. 4; Cameron, 2009; pp. 10 – 11). Using the example of *it* presented by Cameron (2009; p. 11): "The baby cried. The mommy picked *it* up" there is an automatic assumption that *it* refers to the baby. Similarly, it is natural to read the above statement as a narrative or sequence: the baby cried and then the mother picked it up or because the baby cried the mother picked it up. The word *it*, like many other words in the English language, also holds multiple meanings depending on its form or function. The phrase "it is cold" does not necessarily hold an informative function (the subject is literally cold) but the phrase could also be interpreted as a command (it is cold, let us go inside). It is therefore the cooperative practise of our social behaviour that ensures our linguistic intentions are understood by those with whom we interact (Woods, 2006). Through this intricate analysis of verbal discourse provided by participants the analysis is granted the ability to deconstruct statements and observe the possibilities of what is being communicated (Schirato, 2011).

Another way the study will be looking at language is through the force of utterances. In this respect words do not only communicate meaning but convey action. Specifically enunciations withhold three basic features: the locutionary meaning (what the statement is about), the illocutionary force (what the speaker does with them) and their perlocutionary force (the statements effects on the hearer) (Wood & Kroger, 2000; pp. 4 – 5). Using the example of "you stole my money" the locutionary meaning is the money being stolen, the illocutionary force is the statement's accusation and its perlocutionary force is its resulting reception by the hearer.

Finally the research shall observe participant utterances as a means to discipline the narrative. These are utterances adopted to mould and re-shape statements in order to communicate a privileged, preferred, central understanding that marginalises others

(Korgan, 1998). It is through the observation of such discipline and shaping of the central understanding that influences the content and shapes meaning. This will allow the work to represent individuals' enunciations and clearly observe what is meant within statements by looking at the implied (Fairclough, 2003; pp. 10 -11).

For these interviews further elements will be taken into consideration when analysing statements. The first of these is the intertextual links; this is where participants bring other voices into the discourse. Using the example: "we all know what Thatcher did to us," it implies a whole discourse derived from a shared experience that people know what happened. These intertextual links can be used by participants to set up opposing positions, dramatize situations, or present evidence to support their viewpoint (Abell & Myers, 2008; pp. 153 – 154). The context of the situation will also be taken into account; this will include looking at the time and environment of the interview, their understanding of the interviews purpose, and their relationship with the researcher (ibid; p. 154). The context of the situation is an important element as meanings within discourse can change due to context.

To further emphasise the postmodern influence of this analysis it is necessary to outline how postmodern understandings of power and knowledge will be used. When participants are discussing their understandings of trade unions these definitions will have been shaped by the varied discourses available to them (such as conversations with other trade unionists, internal literature, or even newspapers produced by the Socialist Workers Party). Power is exercised through these mediums by producing knowledge that categorises and defines the roles and values of their institutions and the subjectivities within (Cameron, 2009; pp. 15 – 17) – this shall be referred to as discursive formations (Springer & Clinton, 2015; Wetherell & Taylor & Yates, 2004; p. 73). Discursive formations are systems and rules that operate beneath the consciousness of individuals' which define what can and cannot be said within a given context or domain (Springer & Clinton, 2015). Using the example of an examination, the marking system determines what demonstrates sufficient understanding and acceptable critique resulting in a normalising gaze; this gaze therefore provides the means to classify,

punish, and exclude (Wetherell & Taylor & Yates, 2004; p. 76; Foucault, 1991; p. 184). It is these technologies occupying the discourse that the research will unmask to identify the dominant, institutionalised bodies of knowledge and tensions from competing understandings.

The work by Parker (2014; pp. 6 - 22) highlights a series of 20 "steps" which have influenced this projects approach to unmasking these forms of power through data analysis. Whilst Parker (ibid) goes into significant detail within his steps, this project has broken them down into five processes which informed the theoretical framework. The first process applied included recognising themes within the texts such as explicit and implied understandings, making sure that their analysis remained at a macro level of interpretation. The second process involved exploring the similarities and differences within the discourse; this could include varied criteria of trade union identity as well as speculating what could be said by individuals' occupying those criteria – the discursive formations. The third process included looking at how the discourses emerge as well as describe change and transformation. This allowed the research to locate the historical period of the discourse and share information of how these dominant discourses emerged. The fourth process led to the identification of institutions reinforced or subverted within the text. Finally, the fifth step involved looking at the power relationships within the text. Which categorisations of people lose or gain from the discourse? How are the different discourses being used?

Further influence has been drawn from Derrida and deconstructionism's notion of the spectre. Here the spectre represents an ontologisation and localisation of the dead whose manifestation emphasises a disjunction between the past and the present (Derrida, 2006; pp. 9 – 21). In this sense the revenant represents a repetition in which the ghosts of the past – such as philosophers, artists, and writers – lead us to question the present but are never apparent in their complete form. It is due to the reoccurring nature of the phantom that it is viewed as a deconstructive figure as it is constantly differed (ibid). These ideas will be applied to the data analysis in order to identify which spectres haunt trade unions, how they

are being applied, break the continuity of historical narrative, and articulate a history of the discourses.

Through the employment of this knowledge and power deconstructive method it will be possible to observe how discourses have enacted power to shape individuals' identities. This understanding will also allow the research to observe changes and transformations regarding what a trade union is or what it means to be in a trade union; it will also allow us to look at who is excluded from these identities – what a trade union is not or who is not a trade unionist – and measure the varied and contradictory criteria. Furthermore, through the adoption of a deconstructive technique, we can take these discursive formations and pull them apart to identify the contours of what their institutions could be within the conclusion.

The concept of power will also be applied when observing the running of the meeting. Who is allowed to speak and who dominates the conversations – this could be through verbal assertiveness or interruptions – will be seen as individuals applying power and its effects on the meeting shall be observed (Fairclough, 1993; pp. 43 – 45).

Such a methodological approach will benefit the project as discourse analysis will allow us to transform conversational elements such as rhetorical patterns, implied statements and assessments into data we can interpret (Sayago, 2015). The removal of preconceived totalisations will also grant the verbal performances originality, move past notions of "heard it before", and represent individual statements removed from utopian understandings.

The Case Study

This research is a case study of a Northern English Trades Union Council to observe the present position of the historical trade unionist subject and identify the power relations at play and how the discourses emerged. This section will now describe how the methodology was conducted.

The application of case study was used due to the nature of the project. As we are adopting postmodern understandings of power and knowledge, a collection of singular interviews would fail to uncover how different forms of knowledge exert power on individuals' identities and perceptions. The case study method enabled the project to look at varied discourses including internal literature, meeting observation as well as individual interpretations keeping the research at a macro level of analysis (Yin, 2003). The case study method provided a depth of knowledge occurring out of a natural and unique social situation (Hammersley & Gomm, 2002), further enabling the project to observe the data as a condition of existence within a particular historical moment as opposed to a totalising structure of relations.

A Trades Council was used for observation as individuals involved emerge from a variety of working backgrounds, trade unions, and experiences but also occupy the same locality, long term relationships, and community. There are, however, limits to choosing a Trades Council as an object of study as opposed to a singular trade union and its relations within a workplace. This study will be unable to observe trade unions in connection with managers and the workforce but it will provide us with a wider definition that these discourses run across trade unions as opposed to being concentrated. Similarly observing a Trades Council proved ethically viable compared with seeking permissions to observe management meetings or member consultations.

Throughout the case study the research analysed three different forms of discourse. The first included literature and leaflets freely available to those at the meetings as well as publications produced by the Council. The second was through the observation of a monthly meeting, identifying how delegates interacted with one another and how the agenda was formed. Finally, the third form through eight semi-structured audio recorded interviews with trade union delegates. By semi-structured interviews we are referring to a set of questions which were used to maintain a theme and flow for the discussions, but allowing participants to expand and elaborate their answers to communicate understanding (Harrison, 2001). It

should be noted that all of the questions were not bound to the same wording. The wording of the questions changed depending on the flow of conversation.

Once the auditory data was collected it was transcribed using the Jeffersonian method of transcription (Gibson & Webb & Lehn, 2014). This involved presenting the discourse as play script to observe the organisation of talk between the speakers, witness the specific aspects of utterances detailed above, and familiarise the researcher with the data (see Appendix 1). Each line was numbered to quickly identify where the specific statements were. Following each interview notes were made in the header of the transcript page concerning how the interview went, the participants' conduct, and discussions prior to the interview. Before each interview was conducted informal discussions were held to ease the participant.

Once the data had been transcribed each discourse was approached individually. The processes developed from Parker's (2014) work was then applied before evaluating the forms of power within the texts.

All of the participants who took part in the project have obtained training and experiences whilst being involved within trade union organisations. It is because of this that the participants have been classified as elites – their acquired statuses and knowledge are things the public at large have not had access to. It was therefore necessary to employ elite interviewing techniques whilst conducting the data collection; this included maintaining transparent and open relationships with participants prior to the interviews and keeping the questions open so they could articulate their knowledge (Harvey, 2011). Prior to conducting the case study, the Trades Council's Secretary was invited to an informal meeting to discuss the project. The researcher was then invited to attend a meeting of the Council as a guest speaker to outline the project to the group; this allowed the relationships to be open and transparent. Each delegate was presented with a formal letter inviting them to take part in individual audio recorded interviews with a separate sheet outlining the wider project.

Researcher contact information was provided and candidates were made aware that their participation was optional.

The candidate recruitment outlined above all relates to the interviews situational context. The importance of establishing relationships with participants before conducting the interviews allowed the process to be more relaxed and informal. The openness and repeated communication reassures participants of who the researcher is, what is trying to be achieved, and the nature of the discussions. Similarly, after the researcher was introduced at the Trades Council meeting – communicating an understanding of the phenomenon – it would be assumed that there is a pool of knowledge the researcher is aware of. These two observations were important when analysing the data; they feed into both the situational context and intertextual links. Participants interact in a certain way due to repeated communication with the researcher; this achieved informal, confident, and relaxed answers. Due to the introduction of the researcher at the Council meeting certain understandings of communal knowledge were assumed and are apparent in the interviews.

Despite the benefits of such a data collection technique, the method did encounter some limitations. Given the awareness of the researchers' academic background and expertise on the topic, as well as the awareness that their statements would be analysed, in some instances participants hesitated in their response:

S1: The core of, what being, what a union is? I think, could be missing something, you could tell me something, I could say "yes, I agree with that".

R: I don't think there's a right or wrong answer to be honest.

S1: [*Laughs*] No, but, I mean, I think, erm [*pause*]. And I suppose historically . . . (Steward 1).

R: So just going back to the key functions we spoke about. You mentioned political issues and defending terms and conditions, how well do you feel [your union] fulfils these functions?

S6: Erm. Like, like, well, like I said earlier like [my union's], like, any union's a branch. It's how erm. It's how – I can only talk about my experiences really (Steward 6).

R: I'm just going to go back to the–

S5: [*Laughs*] Will you be able to pick the bones out of this?

R: Oh yeah don't worry. (Steward 5).

This limitation was overcome by reassuring the participants that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions and that the research was only concerned with personal experiences and understandings.

This method under went further limitation as the interviews were conducted before and after a general election period. The majority of participants seemed eager to discuss their political positions with regard to voting intentions and views on the political process (Steward 3; Steward 4). But despite this slight derailing, by allowing the subject to expand on these points it provided further information regarding trade unions and their political orientations.

The original aim of the research was to interview ten participants within the case study. Unfortunately not enough people came forward and, as this was a single case study, were unable to widen the pool of contacts. Some individuals came forward to volunteer but were unfortunately not available in the time constraints of research. The project did however finish with eight participants from a broad range of perspectives. Similarly the sample is mostly made up of trade union activists or active members as opposed to general members of trade unions. This meant we could not look at more passive affiliates within the organisation, but the activists' stories and reflected experiences of what was expected of them provided a fill for this gap.

Similar limitations occurred due to the reputation of the researcher. References were made to the researcher within some of the discourses:

He explored, went through things like, er, going through nineteenth century Marxist attitudes, theory of alienation and Durkheim and all, I mean I don't know just how much you've come across some of these things yourself? (Steward 4)

"I joined through a stall at the [union] conference and I joined through [a colleague] who you probably know?" (Steward 5)

S3: . . . Labour's current manifesto, less than a month before the election in May 2015, isn't saying we're going to do anything about that. And I think that's an abomination, I think that all the trade unions that are affiliated to the Labour Party should be, really, knocking on the door of Milbank – the location of the Labour Party headquarters – and going "what the hell you doing? Get this in the manifesto". But they won't of course. Too much at stake.

R: Bit of a bomb shell really.

S3: I may ask a Labour candidate like you questions in regards to this.

R: [*Laughs*] Feel free afterwards.

S3: [*Laughs*]. (Steward 3)

This means the researcher would have achieved different answers to that of an anonymous researcher. Whilst this may be a limitation, as participants will be assuming levels of subject knowledge, it is also a benefit as these relationships can draw out intricate answers. Though the researcher may have been removed as an observer looking in, this participant-researcher relationship reinforces the philosophical notions of power within the paper. Researchers are caught up in these relationships as much as anyone else making it impossible to be objective. The work by Roller and Lavrakas (2015, p. 6) describes the

interview as a struggle to control the research environment as each party tries to control what is and is not being said. The participant-researcher relationship is a prominent issue within qualitative research as the method does not remove the researcher from the object of study (Eide & Kahn, 2008). The work by Eide and Kahn (2008) suggests that the participant-researcher relationship can act as a therapeutic function allowing participants to vent frustrations whilst maintaining an ethical understanding

Further limitation related to the issue of reflection. Some participants' had trouble recalling past experiences:

I was erm. I grew up in the early to mid-seventies and erm. At a fairly, I mean I, these days, *well*, *then*. Political issues don't interest a lot of young people but there must have been some sort of spark there? (Steward 4).

"I, I, it was a belief. You know? It just was a. Was something that, you know? I'd. I can't actually remember the specifics" (Steward 1).

This is a common limitation of qualitative research and elite interviewing techniques. A similar limitation includes participant's possible unreliability due to ulterior motives such as issues with individuals or the organisation in question (Harrison, 2001). As a result these factors were taken into consideration during the process of analysis.

Participants' training also proved to be a limitation whilst conducting the interviews. As subjects had received training from their institution marking them as elite, part of this training requires them to approach situations objectively. This limited some from describing personal experiences and instead they attempted to describe the bigger picture. Whilst this was a limitation it also benefitted the project by providing information about wider factors affecting the discourse.

The interview environment was also taken into consideration when conducting the discussions. It was important to use venues and surroundings that were familiar to the

participant in order to achieve open, confident answers and relaxed interview sessions (Harrison, 2001). This led to discussions been conducted in community centres, community institutions, and local cafés. But some of the interview locations also proved to be a limitation due to the level of background noise. This was overcome by selecting quiet locations within the venues and the use of high quality recording equipment.

The postmodern methodology employed within the thesis is also liable to the same criticisms of postmodernism as a theoretical perspective that have been cited previously in the project. These charges mainly concern the creation of a politically timorous character as argued by Tinker (2002), the usage of narratives and structure in postmodern works, and the inescapable component of the conclusion of truth in academic writing (Rowlinson & Carter, 2002).

In regards to Tinker's criticism it is argued that the human experience is by no means homogenous and whilst there is merit to such arguments there is always a darker side to these totalities. This is why the project has employed Foucault's method of knowledge and power to observe who is excluded from these emancipatory narratives; in this sense post-structuralism can further be understood as political in its attempts to allow the other to speak.

Whilst there has been much discussion regarding postmodernism's rejection of structures and homogeneity, such ideas are dependent on structures in order to deconstruct (Gaschè, 1987; pp. 5 – 8). After all, forms of knowledge, whether the spoken or printed word, are presented systematically. But as Derrida (1976; p. 24) points out:

> The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them in a certain way, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing

them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work.

The application of post-structural theory will therefore see the analysis work within the structures of trade union discourse in order to shine light on the spectres and power relations within. Similarly the research has also been presented systematically due to the limitations of the marking scheme and academic convention – the chapters flow into each other as opposed to plateaus allowing the reader to approach the text at their own discretion (see Deleuze & Guattari, 2013). This research has, however, taken certain measures in order to minimise the structuring effect such as the removal of a hypothesis. Similarly the theoretical framework developed acts as a way to deconstruct texts making the collected statements independent of a totalising structure.

As this project will inevitably deduce a conclusion this conclusion should by no means represent a utopian truth. Applying Derrida's philosophy allows the work to view the conclusion as one possible truth amongst many. The thesis should therefore not be viewed as concluding an absolute truth, but as the researcher's interpretation of many possibilities. This method will also allow the investigation to find the limits of what can be said on the phenomenon – what a trade union or trade unionist is or is not – as well as identifying the possibilities and varied subject positions. It is these themes that will inform the methodological base for the project and will allow the study to reconnect with the phenomenon under study.

This project has adhered to the ethical code laid out by the British Sociological Association (2002). These guidelines were adopted so the project could uphold academic integrity with explicit ethical approval sought and received by the University of Huddersfield's ethics committee.

Throughout the data analysis participants' anonymity was ensured and every participant has been referred to through the use of pseudonym. Similarly, disclosures of roles and

anecdotes which may identify the participants have been left out to protect the subjects' identity. Interviewee's informed consent was received before conducting the discussions with an explanation of the study provided before and after the interview. Participants were also given the option to withdraw from study for any reason before Monday 24 August 2015 and information for psychological support was provided if it was required. Collected audio and transcripts were stored on an encrypted external hard drive to ensure data was stored safely and securely.

Chosen Research Methods and Objectives

The methodology described in this chapter will allow the project to meet the aims and objectives detailed in the introductory chapter. These include:

1. To offer different insights into trade unionism than those offered by traditional approaches and contribute to the body of knowledge around the topic.
2. To expose multiple interpretations around issues of identity and power in order to understand how they affect modes of organisation and activism within contemporary trade unionism.
3. To engage with the issue of trade union decline by encouraging critical self-reflection amongst those active in the trade union movement as a means of reinvigorating these organisations.

The methodology employed will allow the research to offer different insights into trade unionism by adopting a method of discourse analysis based on a post-structural understanding of power and knowledge. It will also allow the study to view the present position of the organisations and activists as being in a state of tension between competing bodies of knowledge as opposed to identifying a definitive truth which would overlook such insights. This method will also allow the paper to view identity as a product of knowledge, locate different bodies of knowledge, and observe how knowledge results in power by forcing the internalisation of knowledge. As such, the identities formed within the

organisation will be portrayed as results of power as opposed to being conceived independent of power. This meets both the first and second objective as the method produces different insights into the organisation, namely the organisation creates identities as opposed to the identities being independently conceived, and allows to the research to look at multiple forms of identity and power as opposed to producing a definitive truth. The use of discourse analysis will also allow the study to meet the third objective as looking above the utterances will enable the study to engage in a critical reflection which will lead to suggestions in the conclusion.

With the methodology outlined the following chapter will go on to provide the discourse analysis. This will allow the examination to observe themes within the discourses regarding what the subjective understandings of a trade union is; what the subjective understandings of a trade unionist is; the different positions subjects occupy with regards to these themes within the texts; how these perceptions and identities emerged; which institutions are supported or subverted within the texts; and what are the power relationships at play? This will lead on to a discussion of the collected material before providing an overall conclusion to the project which will answer our research questions and discuss the implications for future research and their organisations.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

This chapter will now provide the data analysis section of the paper. Here we aim to answer our research questions using the post-structural methods developed from Parker's (2014) work detailed in the previous chapter. The analysis began by organising the data into themes to uncover what the individual stories tell us about trade unions' organisational identities. This involved looking at what the texts understood to be their institutions' central characteristics, what makes the organisation distinctive, and what their enduring features are as developed by Albert and Whetten (1985). This will then lead to a discussion in the following chapter of the similarities and differences within the discourses; where these understandings emerged and how they describe change; observe who is reinforced or subverted within the texts; and finally identify the power relationships within the language. The initial identification of these themes allowed the research to pursue the discourse analysis method as it opened the data up to spectres reflected in the literature review.

Arising from the texts were four definitional discourses which were used to describe trade unions' organisational identities arising from Albert and Whetten's (1985) model. Firstly there was the need to provide its members with a financial reward within the employment contract; the second involved defending pay and conditions within the employment contract; third was the understanding that they were a collective organisation; and fourthly they were viewed as a vehicle for enhancing social rights. Each of these themes will be taken in turn before applying the data analysis methods to each theme.

Financial Reward

Each participant discussed the need for trade unions to provide their members with a financial reward within the employment contract as being a "central" or "core function".

". . . the most important aspect is wages because wages are the thing that workers go to work for. And, erm, so that's their prime interest in the job" (Steward 1).

Predominantly this involved negotiating wage improvements in the labour contract.

R: What do you think some of their core functions are?

S7: I think, obviously, making sure people get decent pay . . . negotiating wages with management, so, I think that's an important part of it (Steward, 7).

For many of the participants the need for the institutions to provide a financial reward for their members extended to other aspects of the employment world including pensions and legal disputes.

When I went to work in a factory I ended up with a repetitive strain injury in my thumb. Because the equipment I was supposed to use on a particular job wasn't sufficient . . . eventually I got twelve thousand pounds and I wouldn't have got that without [the union] (Steward 5).

"There are big issues on pensions – which are part of wages really – that is the wage issue really altogether; for teachers and a lot of workers at the moment" (Steward 1).

Ultimately this function of providing financial reward and improving the material living standards of its members led to some participants defining them as a workplace insurance policy.

"To me trade unions are just a brand, they're just like a business . . . I think a lot of members look at trade unions as an insurance policy" (Steward 6).

The function of the organisation to provide its members with financial reward in the workplace can generally be categorised as being one of the institutions' distinct features. One participant in particular cited a trade union mantra to confirm this institutional objective.

"I've always said I believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work" (Steward 5).

Hovering over this institutional objective uttered by Steward 5 presents us with a spectre of Chartism (Blackburn, 2007; p. 19). In this sense the spectre presents a purpose and repetition – a trace of the past to question the present – which has been adopted and reimagined by the subject and the organisation to apply to the present. "A fair day's pay for a fair day's work" indicates not only historical repetition and organisational purpose but also an interpretation of the past which looms over the present. The statements usage of the concept of fairness also highlights an element of organisational power; given the historical duration of the term, what constituted as "fair" in the nineteenth century will be different to what constitutes as "fair" in the present moment. Acknowledgement of this transformation can be found in the previous dictations describing trade unions' financial objective. Steward 7 had put forward this concept of fairness or decency as resulting from negotiations between the trade union and the firm's management – ensuring remuneration was without discrimination and met an acceptable standard held by the organisation. The tone of Steward 5's statement regarding a workplace injury transforms this concept of fairness into a feeling of justice provided through the legal system serviced by the union. This tension between two competing forms of knowledge is reflective of positions in the literature regarding trade unions' removal from industrial relations systems. Due to changes within industry their traditional role negotiating labour contacts has minimised. As a result trade unions' are seeking new outlets to produce the objective of fairness or decency as defined by their organisational standards using consumer mechanisms – in this instance a legal service.

In either case the concept of fairness can be viewed as a weapon used by the organisation against a dominant power in society with the aims of replacing it with their preferred conception – reversing the societal power structures as opposed to removing them. To clarify, the trade union imposes knowledge of what is "fair" on its members in order to challenge other conceptions of fairness in society such as that emitted from employers or the state. In doing so the union aims to occupy this understanding of decency in society to fulfil

its financial reward function. The economic function provides an outlet by which to measure its successes through gains in the labour contract. This focus has however shifted in some instances to servicing other ways to achieve financial outcome due to wider changes in knowledge.

Defence of Pay and Working Conditions

Another definition provided by subjects was their central role to defend pay and conditions in the workplace.

"Well my [*exhales*] speaking from my point of view, the key function of how I operate here is protecting what we've got . . . trying to protect our terms and conditions and our pay . . ." (Steward 6).

Within this fragment the language suggests that this is more of a recent function. Where previously their role was to advance and develop working conditions, the current understanding sees them defend conditions previously obtained. The exhale used by Steward 6 suggests disappointment with this change. It implies the participant would like to tell the researcher that their role in the organisation continues to obtain improvement; instead they must reluctantly describe the function as altered to something regarded as a negative change. Many of the stories posed by participants who described this transformation within the organisations' identity also implied it to be a negative identity development.

. . . I mean I grew up in the seventies, you know what I mean? . . . the great industrial disputes of car workers, steel workers, and the miners, and stuff, certainly, it's, you know? In the seventies I saw it more of advancing pay and conditions. At the present time, with the cuts, and all this, you know? It's more about defending what you've got. Certainly there's a different role now, you know? Situation where I see trade unions as defending what we've got . . . Where in the past it has been for more, advancement more for more holidays, more pay and I certainly see the different type of things . . . You know, fighting

to keep erm, workers in the public sector, not been privatised and stuff like that? It's more defending of us pay and conditions (Steward 2).

. . . some people still think it's the nineteen seventies and you can just go like that and everything will be sorted. We live in different times and you can't do that anymore. Basically, I mean, I wish you could . . . (Steward 6).

". . . the effects of globalisation it's made it very much more difficult . . . Therefore, you know? Of necessity they, a lot of the battles in recent years have been defensive" (Steward 4).

The concept of "defence" and its relationship with a previous time cited around the 1970s suggests that this defence is not just a defence of issues in the workplace, but also a defence of an ideal, belief, or spectrality. Changes occurring since the 1970s cited in the texts such as cuts, privatisation, and globalisation threaten the assumptions of advancing pay and conditions, therefore their organisations must defend and justify their political convictions. Similarly the 1970s is also interpreted as an ideal representation of trade unionism and its purpose. But the resistance of "privatisation" cited by Steward 2 presents us with a binary between the owners of labour cited in the discourse. Private employers are viewed as bad compared with public employers, as a result public employment is viewed as privileged but this binary has implications on trade union identity.

Yeah I do, I don't think they, and having worked in both sectors, having worked in the private sector and [public sector], I think the [public] stewards have it easy. I certainly think they, maybe that's, maybe easy is the wrong word, but they've got all the procedures in place, you know, everybody knows the rules . . . Fulltime officers are involved, you know? They don't have to do any local negotiations or anything. You know? I think they've got it relatively easy. Er, and that's only through what they've done in the past like. Don't get me wrong I'm not saying, you know? It's what's gone on years ago and they've kept that. Whereas in the private sector it's a lot, it's a lot harder man. It's a

lot harder to be a trade unionist in the private sector than the public sector without a shadow of a doubt (Steward 6).

Within this fragment we can learn that a trade unionist in the public sector is regarded as a true trade unionist whilst those in the private sector are not or are limited in achieving this status. As such it is implied that the public sector trade unionists are privileged and wield more power over the private ones as they better fit this spectrality. Despite this acknowledgement of the privileged position of the public sector worker, we see the subject conflicted as they try to discipline the narrative in an attempt to maintain unity. The subject implies disobedience through their descriptions further emphasising the power and privilege public sector workers have over the institutions' narrative.

The historical transformations described were also linked to changes in corporation structures. Trade unions previously had a large workforce to bargain with the employer. Due to the breaking up of large industries their ability to mobilise a large workforce has been described as hindered.

> . . . you've had places where there were, or *work* areas where there was high union representation, but the more fragmentised they've become, the more privatised and outsourced they've become, then the less the new owners of that work as such, the new providers of that work, erm, the less they need to bother about these things (Steward 3).

For some subjects this transformation has led to a new relationship between the workplace and the union.

> "Managers come, erm, we see it as we train them up and then they go to somewhere else like" (Steward 6).

The majority of the participants, however, described these transformations as excluding them from negotiating advancements (Steward 1; Steward 3; Steward 7; Steward 8). These

statements insinuated trade unions have been removed from the industrial relations models described in the literature and therefore have to defend internal structures from the outside.

What these statements tell us about the historical transformations of their organisational identity is that during the 1970s a transition occurred which has forced trade unions to change their organisational identity. The reasons cited for this are reflected within the literature such as the adoption of post-Fordist production techniques, government fiscal policies, and the advancement of globalisation. As a result this has led to the development of two new functions for their organisation. The first sees them excluded from the industrial relations frameworks and the second sees them adopt a new position within the industrial relations framework. Though there have been transformations these new identities have failed to resonate to some internal to the organisation. The quote "some people still think it's the nineteen seventies" (Steward 6) suggests that within organisational structures individuals' continue to cling to the discourses of the 1970s, implying a dislocation of time and a resistance to a dominant body of knowledge in society.

It can also be observed within the fragments how subjects' internalise notions of power by the overall communication indicating an acceptance that they are losing the battle. Despite the discourse advocating previous notions of advancing pay and conditions, there is an overall acceptance that their role is now to defend the already obtained.

Collectivism

Another definition of their central function was the notion of collectivism. Unions serve as an institution which brings groups of people in work together. This description by participants further highlights how the knowledge of collectivism acts as a form of power which subjects' internalise.

". . . a union member you aren't an individual it's a collective body of where you work, it gives you a voice, it gives you safe, you know what I mean?" (Steward 2).

Participants' also highlighted the historical morality of their organisations' functioning as collective bodies by recalling a proverb perpetuated by trade unions':

> "There's an old tenet of trade unionism . . . erm, that basically says "unity is strength" and that's what it's about" (Steward 3).

The adage "unity is strength" is of course problematic due to its ambiguity potentially leading different individuals and organisations to conceive it in contrasting ways to suit certain ends. But the usage of this motto can be identified as a principle of knowledge or truth which sets particular roles and values. These are imposed on those within to achieve the organisational outcomes of justice and attract the disenfranchised:

> And collectivism is the thing ruling elites fear most, because if you see a termite you can crush it with your finger. But you see what they do to the landscape when they all work together? That's pretty impressive (Steward 8).

Whilst collectivism was a characteristic cited by most participants the ideas as to what defined this collectivism were multiple. For some participants it was the notion of taking part in the voluntary structures of the trade unions and this was usually presented by diminishing engagement with them.

> The internal democratic machinery of the trade union movement, in general, generally going across all unions, is absolutely magnificent. Your reps, your employees electing reps, your employees electing members of a branch. You have the individual ability to vote for national exec members for officers . . . Perfectly designed. Imperfect on the basis of one major fault. And the one major fault is that people do not participate in it (Steward 3).

Pausing briefly over the participant's use of the term "democratic" we can see how it is further used as an instrument of power and provides contradictory connotations. "Democratic" we can interpret as relating to the principles of democracy. Democracy can be

interpreted as a system governed by the whole population on the basis that everyone is equal; naturally such principles can feed down into smaller organisations where control is theoretically held by its members who are not hierarchically ordered. The statement therefore assumes that all "employees" are equal, including the officers nominated to these positions, with the implied assumption that the individual holds the power. If we contrast this understanding with that of another participant's conception of collectivism, it is shown that collectivism entails supporting the decisions of the organisation applied from the top down:

> . . . acting together, being unified as possible in a world where divide and rule is all too common. So [*pause*] that would come down to supporting the union in ballots which aim to you know? Secure a majority to pursue a given line of action . . . (Steward 4).

It can therefore be said that the notions of "unity" and "democracy", implying empowering and egalitarian practices, are used to disguise a far more regimented form of organisation orchestrated by a particular class of member. Whilst members' are free to vote there is an expectation that they vote a certain way to support policies and actions a hierarchy wishes it to take. Further evidence of this regimented organisation can be found in the running of the Trades Council's meeting. Prior to each meeting attendees are presented with an agenda outlining the order of the evening's discussions (who speaks, on what issue, and when). Similarly during the running of the meeting the president and secretary occupy the top end of the table whilst the delegates sit around producing a far more controlled environment.

Predominantly the discourses described the notion of collectivism through the partaking of protesting or strike action (Steward 1; Steward 2; Steward 3; Steward 6; Steward 7; Steward 8). Much of the Trades Council's history leaflets echoed this understanding through descriptions of varied campaigns or marches concerning social issues or strike action in the area (Trades Council, 1985; Trades Council, 2010). The language used when describing some of these campaigns – "the great miner's strike", "civil disobedience in the traditions of the Chartists and Suffragettes" (Trades Council, 2010) – suggests not only that these were

large campaigns with popular support, or that this collectivism reflects previous historical performances considered iconic within the discourse, but that taking part in these forms of collectivism reinforces the credibility of the organisation and individuals associated. When discussing a recent dispute leading to strike action one participant discussed how it encouraged feelings of belonging.

> And it was good like. We marched round town and we had people saying, er, you know? About pensions and low pay . . . You just got a feeling you belonged to a great movement of people (Steward 2).

But the notion of belonging here deserves deconstruction. Belonging in this context could be interpreted as a performance confirming the subjects' identity. It is by taking part in this union led action that secures the subject's understanding of themselves, displays their affiliation and reflects that to others in society. Yet the idea of belonging could also be interpreted as a confirmation that this identity, this self-understanding of collectivism and its historical connotations, continues to exist and is accepted, associated, and reinforced by the actions that are being taken.

Similarly in the meeting observation and collected statements the phrase "solidarity" was also associated with the latter definition of collectivism (Steward 1; Steward 2; Steward 3; Steward 6; Steward 8). This meant showing support towards other groups of trade unionists who were organising strikes or protests. A female delegate during the observation discussed showing solidarity to a local group of striking workers which met the approval of those present. This was done through conveying messages of support to a picket line.

Though participants placed a strong emphasis on collectivism many also described tensions with the binary opposition of individualism. This tension was usually displayed between the trade unionists and the trade union members.

> . . . how [they] thought it were brilliant being on a picket line and how, you know? . . . And I think do you actually talk to normal people? Because they couldn't give a fuck about

stuff like that half of them. They just want to get their wage and go home. That's what a

lot of people want you know? And be left alone when they're at work. That's what they

want . . . You've got to engage them and let them think there's something in this for them

(Steward 6).

Amongst some participants this perspective on trade unions' individualist understanding was

considered not just an opposing concept but inherent generational tensions.

Younger people nowadays – it's obvious to say they're growing, erm, workplace, er,

potential recruits. When they do join trade unions I look at it – again this is only my

experience of dealing with these people, I'm trying to help young people – is the aspect of

an insurance product. Yeah? It is not part of a "represent our views *en masse* let's

change the world" type situation. It's what affinity deals am I going to get? (Steward 3).

But some participant's understood individualism by members' relationship to the

organisation. Some statements cited members increased need for individual representation

responding to workplace issues specific to the individual (Steward 5; Steward 6; Steward 7).

The reasons cited for this higher need of individual representation was due to changes in

industrial working patterns and management techniques.

". . . it became more and more the more you had Ofsted and more and more people taken

up on competency and stuff like that" (Steward 7).

". . . when you come into the private sector, you know? They think that's the way to

incentivise the, er, workforce. Disciplinary like you know?" (Steward 6).

The coexistence of an individualist body of knowledge can be identified as a resistance to

the dominant self-knowledge of collectivism. The need for individual servicing brought about

by transformed work practises and members' new relationships with organisations – "you've

got to engage them and let them think there's something in this for them" – emulates

positions in the literature regarding flexible consumption (institutions' meeting the dominant

needs of the purchaser) and transformed workplace relationships. This system of knowledge can be viewed as a weapon occurring from other positions of power in wider society which is engaging in a struggle to appropriate the functioning of trade unions.[2]

The binary oppositions of collectivism and individualism also provided an insight into how some of the participants' understood their own standing within the organisation. For many their embrace of the different types of collectivism identified categorised their trade unionist identity within the organisation against that of the members (Steward 3; Steward 8). Individuals who categorised their identity opposing the members implied levels of hierarchy within the institution with the trade unionist acquiring a higher position than the member.

> The difference is if you're a trade unionist you put something back in . . . Whereas if you're just a member I think you're just, you're just out to take I think. Nah, that's a bit unkind like. I'd say the vast majority are just out to take and take and use the union when they want to use the union rather than, sort of, contribute to the whole collectiveness (Steward 6).

Others, however, recognised a separation but interpreted this understanding as a different type of trade unionism, conforming to the value "unity is strength".

> Well there are many different levels aren't there? I mean there's somebody who just pays their subs, sort of, classic trade unionism. But what I've always believed in is the more active trade unionism (Steward 7).

Despite this view contradicting the trade unionist and member definition, the idea that there are different levels of involvement, or different types of trade unionists, continues to highlight how participants and the institutions classify the actions of others to define roles within the organisation. It further embeds understandings of organisational status with higher

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[2] Naturally this individualist perception withholds its own relations of power and discipline. Though no further detail will be provided on these wider relations of power it is important to bear this in mind for the purpose of the analysis.

participation considered more senior. The idea of looking out for others also suggests some participants view their role as shepherding others.

The uncovering of organisational statuses also led to the identification of another position which trade unionists defined their identity against. This group was characterised by their waged positions within the organisation, leadership roles, and were usually criticised for not reflecting the positions of both the trade unionists and membership.

I mean they're *obviously* attracted to recruit and recruit and recruit. That's, sort of, the *raison d'être* of the regional officers, their jobs depend on the income. At regional level, very much in the bigger unions, it is very much about generating the income to keep the organisation going as opposed to particularly representing the workforce (Steward 3).

The statements described the organisational positioning of the waged group as challenging some of the collective values that define the trade unions for other members. Generally this was described by their reluctance to initiate collective action.

"Even though on ballots and so on they were in favour of action and they ditched the action even though the workers voted for it" (Steward 7).

"I think things have changed over the years but they have in all unions. I've always found the people at the top haven't represented as well when we were in strife" (Steward 5).

Drawing briefly here to the participant's usage of the word "strife" to describe trade union conflict, we can observe that the term is conventional within labour movement discourse – most notably Labour MP Barbra Castle's white paper *In Place of Strife*. Though strife has declined as a manner of speaking in contemporary culture, its peak of usage occurred in the nineteenth century where historians cite the emergence of the modern labour movement developing from New Unionism (see Adelman, 1996; Laybourn, 1992; Webb & Webb & Peddie, 1907). Its employment here therefore gives the word a historical context and a set of values based on historical knowledge to measure the actions of the waged group. This again

revealed contentions between two competing moralities which Steward 1 described as leading to a poor result with regards to fulfilling the financial reward function:

> . . . I think the union has been terrible on pensions. Dreadful! I think there has been a betrayal . . . the members were willing to fight, and they did fight when called on. But the union leadership . . . they pulled out . . . without any consultation or concessions (Steward 1).

The word "betrayal" here could not only describe the waged group going against the decision of the other groups arriving at a bad result, but also suggests a suppression of how the trade unionist reflects their identity. It challenges the perception that taking part in action continues to be a contemporary function of a trade union suggesting a struggle between two organisational perspectives. The waged groups actions described within the utterance is therefore categorised as treacherous, duplicitous, and disloyal.

Despite the criticisms towards this organisational group, one participant described their job as being limited by increased legislation and responsibility.

> They used to be able to represent people better than they do but that's not their fault. Because the laws have changed and things have happened; unions' hands are tied these days . . . (Steward 5).

This statement suggests that there has been a transformation in the identity of the waged group which was further reflected by internal structural change and wider transformations.

> I were in NUPE, right? And NUPE had a different kind of thing. . . They had monthly meetings and anybody can go to the meetings. If there were any problem . . . you could always tell because people used to come to branch committee, right? Since we merged with NALGO . . . They have a branch committee which meets every month, but you have to be a shop steward. And I do disagree with that (Steward 2).

. . . there's a battle going on nowadays, with the presence of social media and all the rest

of it, you know? People get bombarded by so much information in an average day people

do – it's in my mind – they form ideas very quickly these days and . . . It's, it's difficult

(Steward 4).

This tells us that the discourse describing the waged groups' categorisation and increased

demand of centralisation has emerged from merging structures with other trade unions, legal

restrictions, and its inability to distribute clear messages in an information society. One

participant also indicated that this group within the organisation have not always existed in

their current conception.

. . . I think *prior* to that the bureaucracy was a lot smaller. And I hate using the term

bureaucracy but that's the recognised term. There was a lot more volunteer, lay people

working at higher regional level, er, than there is in terms of full-time officers now

(Steward 3).

These discourses tell us that the participants' feel the organisations have not always been

this way. The emergence or extended presence of a top layer of people organising the union

is a new phenomenon and formed in a response to wider challenges to their organisational

structures. The transformation of organisational governance has led the participants to

experience a shift in power relations resulting in feelings of exclusion, but there seems to be

little reflection on how previous conceptions of trade unionism may have proven

exclusionary.

Though there appears to be tensions within trade union organisational identity due to the

demand and facilitation of increased individual servicing, the discourses suggest that this

has not always been the case. Some of the individual statements collected describe higher

levels of participation from members in the collective mechanisms at a previous time

(Steward 2; Steward 3; Steward 5; Steward 7). This new understanding of individualism was

attributed to a range of transformations. The dominant reason stated for this change was the

British Government's legal restrictions on trade union behaviours often cited as "the anti-trade union laws" (Steward 2; Steward 3; Steward 4; Steward 5; Steward 6; Steward 8). This reflects Steward 2's feelings of belonging as their identity is confirmed in spite of the legal challenges imposed upon their identity. Other understandings provided included the need to balance a high-pressured job, a personal life, and fulfilling the voluntary expectations of the union (Steward 4; Steward 5). Some also cited the decline of the communities' industrial base and dealing with the expectations of new private employers as a reason (Steward 2; Steward 5; Steward 6).

Vehicle for Advancing Social Rights

Another common definition apparent within the data was the notion of unions advancing social rights. This included advancing rights for different groups of people both in the home nation and abroad. Within the meeting observation issues regarding the people of Venezuela (Viva, 2015) and Scotland were raised on the agenda. Various participants also described the issue of advancing social rights as being a defining characteristic.

> ". . . I see trade unions as, as a vehicle for progress. You know? I think, like, over fighting racism, sexism, you know? Trade unions can play a leading role . . ." (Steward 2).

The knowledge of advancing social rights was further reflected in the Trades Council's history pamphlet conveying an understanding of this function within their organisation.

> That this . . . Trades Council condemns the horrible massacre of school children in Soweto by the apartheid regime in South Africa and fully backs the Africans in their struggle for democratic self Government. We call upon the Government to end all military links with the apartheid regime and to stop the supply of arms (Trades Council, 1985).

A further understanding of this definition is provided in an image by artist Walter Crane presented on the Trades Council's (2010) official history pamphlet (see Appendix 2). The image is titled "A Garland for May Day" and is dated 1895. It sees a May Queen propping a

large wreath draped with a weaving ribbon baring statements regarding the advancement of social rights. Such rights included within the image cover child labour, remedies to the effects of industrialisation, and increases in material standards of living for working people. The presence of "A Garland for May Day" located on a contemporary leaflet produced by the Trades Council identifies another spectre; it is a trace of the past which questions the present reimagined to apply to today.

The categorisation of "working people", "worker" or "working-class" was also a component to trade unionist identity which was reflected in all the collected material. It was felt that when the union goes to pursue these social rights they have a duty to represent the needs of the "class".

> "I see our political role, furthering the cause of the working-class really" (Steward 6).

> It's about the collective strength of a group of ordinary people getting together, to fight with that strength, debate, argue, and negotiate, so it gives us a semblance of power in the face of the all-powerful corporate employer (Steward 3).

"Ordinary" in this sense may refer to working people as they are considered to be ordinary against the extraordinary "all-powerful corporate employer". As the working-class are the largest class within capitalist society, we could interpret this group of people as common or multiple. With regards to the statement, "the all-powerful corporate employer" is viewed as extraordinary due to their favoured position in capitalist society making them "all-powerful". Within the fragment being "ordinary" or working-class is the privileged position as it conveys a narrative of the underdog defying all odds to achieve social justice for all. In this sense much of the collected data positioned trade unions and trade unionist identity against establishment figures such as the media, the government, politicians, academics, employers and employer organisations (Steward 3; Steward 4; Steward 5; Steward 6; Steward 8; Trades Council, 1985; Trades Council, 2010). Some of the discourses characterised the achievements of their institutions as "struggles" or "battles" (Trades Council,1985, Trades

Council, 2010) reinforcing the narrative of an underdog, the ordinary or the working-class, combatting these institutions, "the enemy" (Steward 8), to provide justice for all in the name of the class.

Despite the narrative of achieving equal rights for all, some participants described representation issues with regards to diversity.

[My union] is mainly women, who's the hierarchy of the union? Men! So I don't think women always get a fair crack of the whip in the trade unions any more than they do anywhere else (Steward 5).

. . . I'm probably the last person to judge because I'm one of those people who are involved in the trade union movement who's the old, male, pale, and stale situation. So how much do I know what the young people want out of the trade union? (Steward 3).

These statements not only suggest that there are issues regarding diversity within official positions of the union, but Steward 3's self-categorisation of "male, pale, and stale" echoes diversity challenges posed from feminists, New Labour, and changes brought about by post-Fordism's feminisation of the workforce (Flinders & Matthews & Eason, 2011). This displays participants' awareness of the diversity challenges that face the institutions as well as highlighting the increased importance of interconnected identities. Their further self-categorisation of adopting an "old" trade unionist position also suggests that this identity is under threat from such challenges – their discourse belongs to the past. This notion of an old position also echoes tensions between tradition and transformation located within other discourses. Returning to Walter Crane's "A Garland for May Day" located on the Trades Council's leaflet, it can be seen that the image and its source bare such tensions. The picture draws upon traditional English conceptions of May Day – the centring of the May Queen baring the white gown of purity, the may poll ribbon draped around a flowered wreath marking the fertility of spring – as well as the labour movements' tradition of marching and rallying in support of international workers' day. But the fact that this image is located on a

contemporary leaflet published in 2010 displays an intention to uphold these traditions and honour the Council's heritage. This is in spite of the leaflets content documenting the changes to trade unionism. Similarly the image also imposes a certain conception of Englishness but one that is associated with previous traditions.

Though subjects displayed an awareness of diversity issues, the meeting's agenda also exhibit's the four senior positions of the organisation being occupied by white men – President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary (Trades Council, 2015). This further highlights that diversity issues are concentrated locally as well as nationally.

Whilst there is recognition within the discourse of increased feminisation and female participation, some of the statements suggested a continued embedded masculinity within the organisations:

. . . a lot of the nurses up there, largely because they were women I think and they were bringing in a second wage to the home, they were not really militant, and they didn't really like trade unions and they didn't really join trade unions very much (Steward 8).

Here "militant" is understood as a binary gendered script. There is an assumption that being militant is a masculine performance inherent in trade unionism whereas not being militant is viewed as feminised and against the characteristics of the organisation. As a result of this, the implication is that many women in the workplace have made a decision to refuse to join or take part in the organisation. The reference to "the home" further implies gendered roles as the female character is portrayed as having responsibility for the home whilst for the male it is not obligatory. The female nurses could not be militant because they were tied to the responsibility of the home. The confinements of these gendered scripts were further articulated by one of the participants.

Sometimes married women have to prioritise their families, the house. And even though, these days, men in the main are more enlightened than they were in my young days, there's still an awful lot where, women from working backgrounds, shop workers and

people who work in engineering and stuff like that, erm. They still have to do the main jobs at home. And I, to be honest you've got to have an awful lot of energy to keep all the balls up in the air. And you've got to be really committed; you've got to be a trade unionist to be committed . . . So for a woman to be an active trade unionist she's got to do everything or have independent means to get some of those jobs done (Steward 5).

These statements tell us that whilst there is a dominant body of knowledge forcing trade unions' to reflect on issues of diversity, these understandings *coexist* with older interpretations where the male occupies a privileged position. This undermines a stated determination to make trade unions structures genuinely accessible to a significant portion of the workforce. Furthermore, another division exists between female workers regarding their work identities. Women from "working backgrounds", in this case considered to be shop workers and manual workers, are considered more restrained by gendered scripts than those from "professional" backgrounds.

I suppose some husbands are prepared to take a backseat and look after the house, the kids, things like that. But amongst people that I work with that wasn't the norm, that's more amongst people with professional jobs I think (Steward 5).

Hovering over the participant's usage of "professional jobs" it is implied that these are a set of jobs which do not fit the ideal trade union narrative. As such the institutions self-questioning is undermined by a discourse that allows for the reinforcement of gender inequality as women entering professional roles maybe be excluded from the trade union ideal. Amongst the discourses other work workplace identities were ranked against each other with regards to their commitment to the trade union narrative. Some groups of workplace identities are viewed as more respectable within the organisation than others.

R: Why do you think they were behind that?

S1: The health workers?

R: Yeah, if the members came along and helped out?

S1: Er, well it's, erm, I think it hardly needs explaining, in a way, because, you know? Most people sympathise with health workers and want them to have good conditions and provide a good service (Steward 1).

I was going to say there's no way shop workers would come out on strike. There's just no way. They're not that sort of people. They're the sort of people that would be scabs to another (Steward 5).

I think it's unfair to say middle-class people, but there's a lot of professional people on there. Teachers, you know, erm, managers. Yeah I do, I think we bring something different to it. [*Laughs*] We're manual workers of course. . . Sometimes I look round the room and, when they're talking, and I think, you know, do you live in the real fucking world or not? (Steward 6).

Within these fragments there is firstly an assumed common knowledge that some workers have more sympathy and support than others. The laugh performed by Steward 6 highlights the obviousness that manual workers are more grounded than those of "professional" occupations. Steward 1's statement that "it hardly needs explaining" similarly dictates that the privileged position of these identities is common knowledge. Secondly the final utterance tells us that identifying or being identified as middle-class is not a component of trade union identity. Naming colleagues middle-class is an unfair, insulting judgement as it falls beyond the remit for trade union identity and implies they do not belong. Yet the very mentioning of such class identities tells us they are recognised within the organisation and associated with professional work identities. It is also necessary at this point to hover over the word "scab". In this context "scab" is a term specifically adopted in labour movement discourse to refer to an individual's disloyalty to the organisation. Within the statement it is understood that workers' from a certain profession are less likely to uphold the values of the organisations' forming ranks of loyalty based on occupation.

Participants also spoke of other groups within the workplace that are excluded from the role of the trade unionist.

> I'm very much in favour of industrial trade unions. You've got one trade union for everybody in the place. Bar senior management of course and probably personnel managers shouldn't be involved (Steward 3).

> . . . when I started one of the big issues was the question of head teachers been in the union. Because they largely controlled the union and was really a dampening effect on the militancy. But that's changed now (Steward 7).

"Militancy" again provides the grounds for excluding certain workplace identities from taking part in the institutions further reinforcing it as a characteristic of the organisation.

The understanding that trade unions are a vehicle for advancing social rights is reflective of Marshall's (1950) definition of industrial citizenship within the literature. Though the institutions are recognised for their advancement of social rights there are some key areas where this understanding differs from Marshall's theory. Firstly Marshall saw industrial citizenship as a way to ameliorate class tensions within capitalist society. In the discourse this interpretation seems to have reinforced class tensions by combining Marshall's understanding with Marxist narratives of the proletariat versus the bourgeoisie – though in this case presented as the working-class versus the establishment – to improve the living standards of the social grouping. The discourse suggests that this has been an enduring narrative reflected in Walter Crane's 1895 illustration presented on a contemporary leaflet describing the Trades Council and its history. Similarly where Marshall limited his theory to the nation-state many participants' believed trade unions can be used to extend social rights internationally. This again is reflective of Marxist understandings of internationalism and as the image sates "the cause of labour is the hope of the world."

The narrative of trade unions acting as a vehicle to enhance the social rights of the working-class can be seen to have emerged through the inherited stories of a previous generation.

But it was something that I, that I really wanted to do because, as I say, it was part of my culture. I was brought up to look on trade unions as a good constructive thing. And my grandfather in particular was a great influence on my life (Steward 3).

The idea of an inherited history, and building identities around this inherited history, is further reflected on the meeting's agenda. The top of the page bears the Trades Council's name accompanied by its founding date suggesting a proud lineage. This understanding of history and how the identities came into being is further reflected in documentation.

History traditionally has been presented as a pageant of royal squabbles, usurpation and murderous wars. This was total history. But this history missed out the real people, the common people and their society (Trades Council, 1985).

But the narrative continues to hold credence through contemporary experiences within the workplace. It is within the workplace that this narrative is realised.

. . . he worked as a computer programmer after leaving university . . . he thought he was not being valued or paid properly and er. He asked for more money and he felt he wasn't been rewarded for loyalty or effort or whatever. And he got a short thrift on an individual basis from the management. That annoyed him and from then on he joined the union and became labour movement orientated (Steward 4).

These descriptions identify two points of arrival to which trade union identity can come into being. Firstly for some participants it can be seen as a point of arrival through the passing down of a narrative, in this sense trade unions' and their activities need to uphold certain traditions to acknowledge their heritage and purpose. The second point of arrival occurs in the workplace from personal grievances; individuals' therefore align themselves with the organisations' values based on these experiences.

Despite the dominant, enduring narrative of trade unions advancing social rights on behalf of the working-class, some participants did suggest that these interpretations may be distanced from some of their members.

> Over the Sunday trading we had a Saturday person who worked in a bank the rest of the week and she said "well I'm all for working Sundays, I'd love to work Sundays and Saturdays as well." I said "that's because you don't have to work in the shop all bloody week do you?" I mean there were women at B&Q weren't there? Stood up for B&Q to open Sundays (Steward 5).

Subjects did however fragment with regards to how their trade union pursues the extension of social rights. This mainly concerned tensions between political affiliations and identities. During the observation strain arose during a discussion of the miner's strike between those who viewed the Labour Party as a political affiliate to advance working-class social rights, and others who advocated other organisations as being more suited:

> What we're talking about, without a doubt, the full and absolute, I think, permanent establishment of a far wider range of smaller parties. And I think to align yourself [the trade union] with simply one, er, is like trying to fight with one hand behind your back (Steward 3).

One participant implied that support for the Labour Party was an encouraged activity, promoted by the organisation:

> "So I joined the Labour Party through being a [trade union] member. So I've got them to thank for that" (Steward 5).

Despite the tension between these two views some narratives suggested that there were political identities associated with trade unions that were viewed as opposed to the dominant narrative of advancing working-class social rights.

"... there's a local ... rep who's the chairman of the local Conservative Party. I'm not going to name names but I'm just saying: how could a Conservative be a trade union rep?" (Steward 3).

I mean I find it difficult when I'm talking to, to people who work in our industry that some people might vote, sort of, Tory. Working-class people voting Tory? I just can't see, and we have the arguments on a daily basis, not arguments, *discussions* on a daily basis of [*laughs*] why would they do that? (Steward 6).

Now he was an ex-trade unionist right? And apparently it took that he was, well he mentioned briefly to me that: "I was secretary of a union branch" ... the conversation opened that he was, he's been a labour movement activist but he was thinking about voting UKIP ... (Steward 4).

One participant noted other trade unionists' disdain when it came to adopting a political identity.

"But my branch once said to me, and I think this says it all, "we're not all like you, we're not political." That's in the trade union branch" (Steward 5).

From these statements we can identify four bodies of knowledge coexisting within the organisation. First is the dominant form of knowledge which identifies the Labour Party as the preferred political body to achieve their social rights agenda. Both Steward 5 and 3's statements imply that this is the preferred outlook of the organisation. Such motivations are reflective of the literature discussing the relationship between trade unions' and a social democratic party. Tension arises from the intervention of smaller left-leaning political parties such as the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC, 2015) or the Socialist Workers Party (Steward 1) who claim their organisations' better fit their agenda. Similarly there is knowledge that conservative ideologies, such as those put forward by the Conservative Party and the United Kingdom Independence Party, provide a better fit for these ideals.

Finally there is also an understanding that such outlets are removed from the functioning's of trade unionism and such union-party relationships are of no interest.

This chapter has analysed the collected data using a discursive methodology influenced by post-structural thought. The next chapter will provide a discussion of the collected material by drawing out evaluations and relating it to the literature.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter will now provide a discussion of the data by summarising its key findings and relating their implication to the literature. Broadly the data described four foundational factors that defined trade unions which were organised into themes. The first was their role to provide financial reward; the second was to defend pay and conditions already obtained; the third was to operate as a collective organisation; and the fourth was to pursue social rights on behalf of the working-class. Whilst these were presented as the main themes, analysis of the collected material revealed tensions within these four concerns.

Beginning with the classification of the activists, the collected material locates three discursive formations resulting from competing bodies of knowledge and power relationships. From this point forward these discursive formations will be referred to as performances to reflect other social identity research. The work by Klein, Spears, and Reicher (2007) describes social identities as performances as the roles and characteristics we adopt reflect the normalities of the organisations which are recognised by the in-group. It is this normalising gaze which is the result of knowledge and power relations giving the individual an understanding of the self to suit certain ends. Although the dominant apparatus of power within the organisation classifies individuals in regards to hierarchy – member, activist, official – these self-understandings transcend such roles. Similarly, it should be noted that the following performances are presented as ideal types for the sake of clarity. Due to the competing bodies of knowledge within trade unions individuals' may identify with two or three aspects of these ideals, however, one current of knowledge always remains dominant.

The first performance is the dominant self-understanding arising from the collected material: the militant. This perspective advocates militant action in the form of collective strikes and protests in order to combat the oppressive establishment. Through the use of this type of action they can fulfil the core functions of the organisation – enhancing financial reward, defending workplace conditions, improving social rights for the international working-class and redefine societal power. This understanding is closely related to an ideal type of trade unionism seen as inherited from a previous generation; this often allows them to view themselves as the true representatives of trade unionism and has an interest in upholding labour movement traditions. Since the 1970s this identity feels under threat within the organisation due to competing bodies of knowledge regarding capitalist development, flexible identities, government policy, and technological advancement. Their political identities tend to affiliate to smaller socialist organisations.

The second performance is a consumer role and this was described as being mostly, but not exclusively, adopted by the membership. This group were mainly concerned with receiving the benefits put forward by the organisation, reluctance to take part in the definitions of collectivism, a lack of identification with the traditions of trade unionism, and their political identities are flexible – not necessarily inclined to support the Labour Party or left-wing groups but may adopt conservative or indifferent attitudes. This consumer role can be said to be emulating transitions described in the literature as flexible consumption and transformed industrial practises.

The final performance is the negotiator which finds itself in the middle of these two competing identities. This group are reluctant to use militant action in order to achieve the trade union's key functions. Generally this group were described as dominant within the waged section of the organisation and favoured bureaucracy as a means to achieve outcomes. This group are also concerned with maintaining the organisation financially, promoting collectivism through participation in the organisational structures, and working within the limits of restrictions to achieve outcomes. Similarly they can be seen as in control

of the power apparatus ensuring regimented organisation. This position's political identity favoured maintaining the social democratic link between the trade union and the Labour Party.

A distinction should be drawn between two forms of power present within the organisation, namely, the system of power and knowledge and the power apparatus. The latter acts as a form of organisational discipline aiming to fulfil trade unions' overall ambition of imposing a perception of justice in society. This apparatus marks the loyal against the disloyal by distributing knowledge of values executed through regimented forms of organisation entangled in a language of unity, democracy, and fairness. It is this apparatus which the various domains of knowledge seek to obtain in order to lead its devotee's towards certain ends in the name of progress.

Overall the data shows that literature bodies' revolving around Hyman's (2001) model of market, class, and society form the dominant body of knowledge and power informing this power apparatus. The ambition of securing social rights for their members is reflective of Marshall's (1950) position in the literature; the Marxist rhetoric which shrouds Marshall's industrial citizenship mirrors positions of social class also advocated in previous research; their function to provide a financial reward for their members within the labour contract imitates industrial relations literature despite there being a challenge from new relations of production; and the dominant embrace of a social democratic nexus reflects the research of Upchurch, Taylor, and Mathers (2009). Similarly the notions of history are used to underpin these rationalities through the establishment of tradition and ritual. Within the texts, spectres of Marx and phantoms of trade union history continue to haunt the organisations cementing a narrative of the underdog defying all odds to achieve justice for all which subjects' internalise. Steward 5's repetition of the mantra "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay", or Steward 3's "unity is strength" highlights how these ghosts maintain the purposes of the organisation and are subsequently internalised. This would suggest that the metanarrative has not necessarily died within their institutions, but that there are ghosts from the past

which are constantly conjured and re-imagined to justify certain ends and cement a particular group's privilege in the organisation.

The collected material also shed further light on positions of knowledge and power within the organisation. Although from the data a dominant body of knowledge and power has been identified as flowing from the power apparatus, it should be noted that there are other bodies of knowledge resisting the dominant form. These relations must therefore be understood as being in a state of intensity though one body is stronger at this particular time. It will now be necessary to highlight these contentions of knowledge to observe the dominant position and its resistance.

The first concerns the understanding of a working-class identity. Some workplace identities are reinforced, considered more working-class and therefore implicitly privileged. Manual workers and health workers are acclaimed compared with teachers, managers, shop workers, and professionals. The latter work identities are viewed as fanatical or "scabs" (Steward 5) with regards to fulfilling the aims of the organisation, but there are also other workplace identities which fall beyond the limits of the organisational identity; this included senior management or senior workplace identities and middle-class identities.

Other power relationships within the organisations concern gender scripts. Owing to the development of subjectivity emulating from post-Fordism's diversification of the workforce, trade unions and their members have to tackle questions of difference within their organisations. Whilst there is a dominant discourse addressing the issue of diversity there implicitly coexists an older language of gender where the male dominates. This revolves around assumptions that being militant is a masculine performance and older expectations of caring for the home. These gendered scripts are further reinforced by the privilege of certain work identities within the discourse which may lead to the exclusion of women as they are not seen as inhabiting the ideal.

Similarly, there are also power relationships at play between different workplace identities amongst women. Women occupying "professional" workplace identities are seen as having a greater opportunity to play the militant trade unionist than those from low-skill working backgrounds. Despite the professional woman being cited as privileged it is actually the low-skilled working woman who has the most power. The low-skilled woman better fits the metanarrative of the working-class underdog overcoming the odds to provide justice for all seeing the professional subverted.

Age is also a factor which sees an older generation wield more power within the discourse than the younger. Younger people are viewed as not identifying with the metanarrative of the organisation therefore seeing them subverted. Some participants also described trade union identity as something that develops with time and work experiences (Steward 3; Steward 4; Steward 8). As a result young people are viewed as naïve and inexperienced. Yet the older generations' dominance is by no means stable; challenges posed by government policy and interconnecting identities sees them threatened by contemporary transformations and developments in knowledge highlighted in the literature.

We can also identify tensions regarding trade unions' political affiliations and how they seek to advance social rights. The dominant body of knowledge emulating from the power apparatus regards the Labour Party as the most suitable ally to pursue social rights. This again is reflective of research positions regarding the development of the social democratic nexus between union and party. This position is however in a state of tension with those who regard affiliation to smaller socialist organisations as being better suited to trade unions' aims. This in one instance is reflective of Marxist assumptions in the literature that trade unions need the guiding of a revolutionary party, particularly in the case of the Socialist Workers Party. Other political groups raised in the discourse, such as the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition, differ from the revolutionary perspective as they seek to replace the social democratic nexus with alternative values. Finally the position of political flexibility is

another body which challenges the dominant position and emulates the literature on flexible consumption and production.

The discourses also tell us that the institutions have not always been this way. During the 1970s major shifts occurred which transformed trade unions and their organisational identities. Where they used to advance workplace rights they are now in a position where they defend rights obtained by previous generations. Major political and economic shifts have also witnessed the fragmentation of their support base (mass industry) and the limitation of militant tactics previously used. For some unions this has led them to find a new home in the workplace such as training management in company policy, whilst for others they have been removed from the industrial relations framework. But these transformations have also created new identities within their organisation. These changes have mainly resulted in the formation of the negotiating character associated with the increasing layer of official roles in their organisations. This has then resulted in a transformation of the organisational governance through increased centralisation.

This chapter has identified definitional discourses and power relationships through the use of post-structuralism in order to analyse our data. The next chapter will conclude the research project by providing answers to our research questions, discuss the limitations of the project and make suggestions for future research and trade unions.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The chapter will now provide answers to the research questions and discuss how the project met the aims and objectives outlined in the introductory chapter. A further discussion on the reflections and limitations of the project will also be provided as well as outlining the thesis's implications for future research.

Research Questions

The study formulated a set of research questions developed from the literature review in order to observe the present positioning of the historical subject within trade union discourse. These questions included:

1.   What is a trade union from the subjectivity of activists?

2.   What does it mean to be a trade unionist from the subjectivity of activists?

3.   What are the power relationships within the organisation?

4.   How have these discourses emerged?

Each of these research questions will be answered in turn, but the overall conclusion drawn from the answers sees the subject in a state of tension between a dominant body of knowledge and power conveyed through the power apparatus, and competing bodies of knowledge and power attempting to resist it.

In regards to the first question "what is a trade union from the subjectivity of activists?" participants described four core functions which defined their institutions. Trade unions are, at first, organisations that provide a financial reward for those internal to the organisation. However, there is not a single expression of this reward. Predominantly this financial reward is provided through the labour contract where unions can improve the material living

standards of their members through negotiations with the owners of industry. This understanding is related to the Webbs' earliest descriptions of their organisations (Webb & Webb & Peddie, 1907). But its goal of achieving financial reward is not bound to the traditions of labour contract negotiations; they can also use the legal system to provide a financial outcome for their members. In this sense trade unions can be looked upon as a workplace insurance policy.

The discourses also describe trade unions having a role in defending the pay and working conditions that were previously achieved. But this notion of defence not only concerns their relationship with the workplace, it also concerns defending the ideals, purposes, and spiritualism of their organisations against a modern back drop of post-Fordist production, government policy, and globalisation.

Trade unions are also collective institutions but what defines this collectivism is similarly diverse. The institutions' collectivism can be defined by taking part in an organisation's voluntary structures, affiliating and supporting the decisions of the organisation, or predominantly taking part in strike action or protests.

Finally trade unions are also vehicles to improve the societal position of the working-class. This function echoes earlier analysis developed by T. H. Marshall (1950) regarding industrial citizenship but is described in Marxist rhetoric.

With regards to the second research question "what does it mean to be a trade unionist from the subjectivity of activists?" the discourses described different performances at play as opposed to there being one agreed identity. These characters are not defined by the official organisational positions within the institutions such as members, activist, and officials but transcend them.

The first role is that of the militant. This character advocates collective, political direct action in the form of strikes and protests for an appropriation of social justice. Through this method they believe it will adequately fulfil all of the core functions identified in the previous research

question – achieve financial reward, defend workplace conditions and improve social rights for the working-class. This identity also believes that it is the recipient of a true trade unionism inherited from a previous generation, however, is increasingly challenged by social and economic challenges. Politically they affiliated with smaller socialist organisations both revolutionary and reformist.

The second performance is that of the consumer which acts as a binary to the militant. The consumer is interested in purchasing the benefits and services supplied by the trade union – a fair day's work for a fair day's pay – but are apathetic towards the collective participation advocated by the other positions. They also take a resistant approach to stable political identification as their identities can be seen to be flexible reflecting positions in the literature review.

The final character in the organisation is that of the negotiator. This character is situated between the previous identities and uses bureaucracy and negotiation as a preferred means to achieving the core functions. This performance is also concerned with maintaining finances, promoting collectivism through participation in the structures, working within the limits of modern restrictions to produce outcomes, and runs the power apparatus. Their political identity seeks to maintain the social democratic nexus between the unions and the Labour Party. This provides the group with an arena to negotiate and achieve outcomes as well as pursue social rights for the working-class.

To answer the third question "what are the power relationships within the organisation?" again, several power relationships can be identified. The dominant body of knowledge and power is enforced through the power apparatus. The power apparatus functions as a body of organisational discipline ensuring a regimented form of organisation and distribution of knowledge of values. The knowledge put forward by this apparatus is informed by dominant positions in the literature including Marshall's (1950) advancement of social rights, Marxist class rhetoric, the social democratic nexus between union and political party, and the

negotiation of financial reward articulated in the industrial relations literature. Historical narrative is similarly called upon to maintain a continuity and purpose for the organisation which subjects internalise.

This dominant body of power is however challenged by various resistances which shall be identified in turn. The first regards working-class identity. Working-class identity is viewed as privileged within the organisations compared to middle-class identity. Though middle-class identities are recognised within the discourses they are usually categorised as professional working-class identities so they can be embraced within the organisation. This results in middle-class identity being excluded from their institutions.

Despite the privilege of working-class identity there are some workplace identities which are reinforced and favoured. Manual workers and health workers are illustrious compared with teachers, managers, shop workers, and professionals, but there are also work identities which fall beyond the limits of this working-class identity; this included senior management and senior workplace identities. These identities further see the domination of public sector workers over private sector workers as they are viewed as emerging from an ideal period of trade unionism. This issue has a further effect on gender as work roles which have benefited female participation in the workforce are viewed as being against the ideal trade unionist. This undermines a dominant discourse of reflection regarding diversity as it is entangled with an older discourse of gender.

Another power relationship identified in the data regards age. Here the older generation dominate the younger as they are viewed as amateur and unqualified. This older generation is, however, also challenged by contemporary changes affecting trade unions threatening their stability.

Tensions further rest between the binary oppositions of collectivism and individualism. Adherence to collective practises is the dominant form of knowledge but is increasingly challenged by individualist perspectives. These individualist interpretations not only regard

certain members' need for individual servicing and organisational relationships of flexible consumption as described in the literature review, but also the increased self-recognition of interconnecting identities such as work identities, age, and gender shared amongst activists. This tells us that whilst collectivism is a ruling construct its meaning is just as insecure as the interconnecting identities' search for their location in trade union power structures.

The final power relationship regards political affiliation. The dominant power apparatus promotes the social democratic nexus articulated in the literature while weaker positions favour the allegiance of smaller left-wing groupings (both revolutionary and revisionary) or flexible approaches to political affiliation.

In regards to our final research question "how have these discourses emerged?" we can say that the data described a transformation which has led to the arrival of the present discourses. Considerable social and economic shifts cited as occurring in the 1970s proved consequential for trade unions' organisational identities. The development of post-Fodist production, new patterns of consumption, globalisation, autonomous identity formations, and government policy has shaken the structures and assumptions the trade union rests on. Challenges from second wave feminists and New Labour diversity policy have also impacted their organisations forcing a reflection on the issue of diversity. The fragmentation of work has eroded their support base and posed a challenge to the identities the organisation possesses. This has seen them adopt a defensive positioning to resist this loss of identity, but has also seen the development of new roles for the institutions. Some unions now have a role in training management in company policy but other unions have been excluded from industrial relations frameworks. These challenges have also led to the formation of new identities, mainly the negotiating character, and transformations in organisational governance associated with the increased layer of official positions within trade unions.

Yet there is also a dislocation of time occurring within the present discourses and this is attributed the spectres' haunting the organisation. Spectres of Marx and revenants of trade

union history continue to haunt the organisations as well as the literature. In this sense the images, stories, and documentations of the past cited in the data establish the affirmation of the identity. This tells us that the discourses have not emerged from a chain of causality but are drawn from an uneven distribution of time alternating between the past and the present – their arrival cannot be isolated within a designated time period. It is these ghosts which have maintained the narrative and purpose of the organisation – the underdog fighting the establishment to provide justice for all – promised an end to history, and seen the organisations attempt to defend these conditions. The existence of this narrative challenges some postmodern predictions regarding the death of the metanarrative; however, due to the repetition of these spectres they are constantly differed within the organisation. As a result the characters identified above present three different interpretations of these hauntings.

Aims and Objectives

The project began with three initial aims and objectives which the investigation has achieved. These included:

1. To offer different insights into trade unionism than those offered by traditional approaches and contribute to the body of knowledge around the topic.
2. To expose multiple interpretations around issues of identity and power in order to understand how they affect modes of organisation and activism within contemporary trade unionism.
3. To engage with the issue of trade union decline by encouraging critical self-reflection amongst those active in the trade union movement as a means of reinvigorating these organisations.

In regards to the first objective, the employment of a post-structural theoretical framework has allowed for an alternative insight into trade unionism than that provided by the traditional theorising outlined in the literature review – namely Albert and Whetten (1985), the subsequent stands of organisational identity, and Hyman (2001), Hodder and Edwards

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(2015) models of trade union identity. This has been achieved by observing trade unions' within a nexus of knowledge and power relations which forces activists to internalise understandings of the self. The study has also located competing bodies of discourse as opposed to deriving a conclusion of truth by viewing the organisations in all their contradictions. This allows the project to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding the topic as it has witnessed how these discourses are both internalised by the subjects' and contribute exclusionary mechanisms in the wider field of knowledge resulting in their continued decline. Where previous literature bodies have focused on social structure and trade union structure as the source for reinvigoration, this study identifies the barriers for renewal in the tensions around discourse.

The study has also met the second objective by using Foucault methods to expose dominant power relations, their resistances, and multiplicities. As such it has allowed the paper to conclude that trade unions are in a state of tension between differing bodies of knowledge and power which in turn affect activism within the organisation through exclusion and transformation which subjects' have internalised.

The research has also engaged with the issue of trade union decline and encouraged self-reflection by observing exclusions within the language of trade unionism which the organisation will be encouraged to reflect on.

<u>Reflections and Recommendations</u>

This research exhibits limitations as it has only sought to observe trade unions from the subjective position of activists. Further study should aim to cover a broader range of participants; an example could be a case study of a workplace interviewing members, activists, and non-members within an organisation. This study could also compare interpretations with organisations located in the North and South of England or even study international trade unions. Similarly, the research was limited by its focus on a Trades Council as the object of study. The investigation does however carry the advantage of being

able to observe how these interpretations run across trade unions which would not have been revealed by choosing to study an individual organisation. Future study may also concern the external categorisation of trade unions; how trade unions present themselves to their members and wider society; and how they are received and interpreted by competing discourses in the wider world.

This thesis has destabilised the structured assumptions of trade unions by exposing their contradictory interpretations and unmasking the power relationships. Through the application of a post-structuralist method the research has revealed further issues surrounding the reasons for trade union decline and surfaced reasoning as to how this has happened – relations of knowledge and power. The power relationships apparent within the organisations highlight reasons why those who prioritise certain identities are reluctant to join trade unions and how the involvements of certain social categorisations are restricted. The research also concludes that trade unions have not failed to be impacted by interconnecting identities but that due to dominant interpretations of their organisations they have failed to move with wider transformations. This has implications for the structured assumptions developed around Richard Hyman's (2001) Eternal Triangle of market, class and society. Whilst Hyman's model does stand up as a framework for looking at the surface of trade union identity, a deeper observation sees the framework challenged by contemporary experiences of modernity, identity formation, and organisational interpretation – the structure is decaying from the inside.

In order for trade unions to improve upon their current situation it would be suggested that they seek to adjust their structures to employ a more flexible framework. This could be done through the application of new technology, an increased focus on individual workplaces, and allowing for a period of personal rediscovery to overcome present interpretations of their organisations. It is also suggested that the binaries identified within this thesis should be developed into new terms which embrace both concepts effectively creating a new language of trade unionism. Whilst the thesis has critiqued and destabilised the dominant

understandings of trade unionism – spectres of Marx and trade union history – it should be noted that there is only a dismissal of an interpretation of these sources currently present. This is why a period of rediscovery and reflection has been suggested in order to reform their organisations.

If there is to be a revitalisation of trade unionism it must be ensured that the other is allowed to speak – to conjure a quote attributed to Foucault we must "make windows where there were once walls" (cited in: White & Fook & Gardner, 2006; p. 26). In this sense, any form of change within trade unionism will require a personal transformation of the self. Through the employment of a flexible framework it will allow trade unions to recruit and embrace ever-changing interconnecting identities. An adaptable framework will also allow their organisations to constantly differ and refresh understandings of themselves and their history in order to maintain relevance for future generations. It is believed that if trade unions do not embrace this fluid form of organisation then the steady trend of decline will resume.

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*These references have been obscured to protect the anonymity of the organisation researched.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview format extract (Steward 2, 2015).

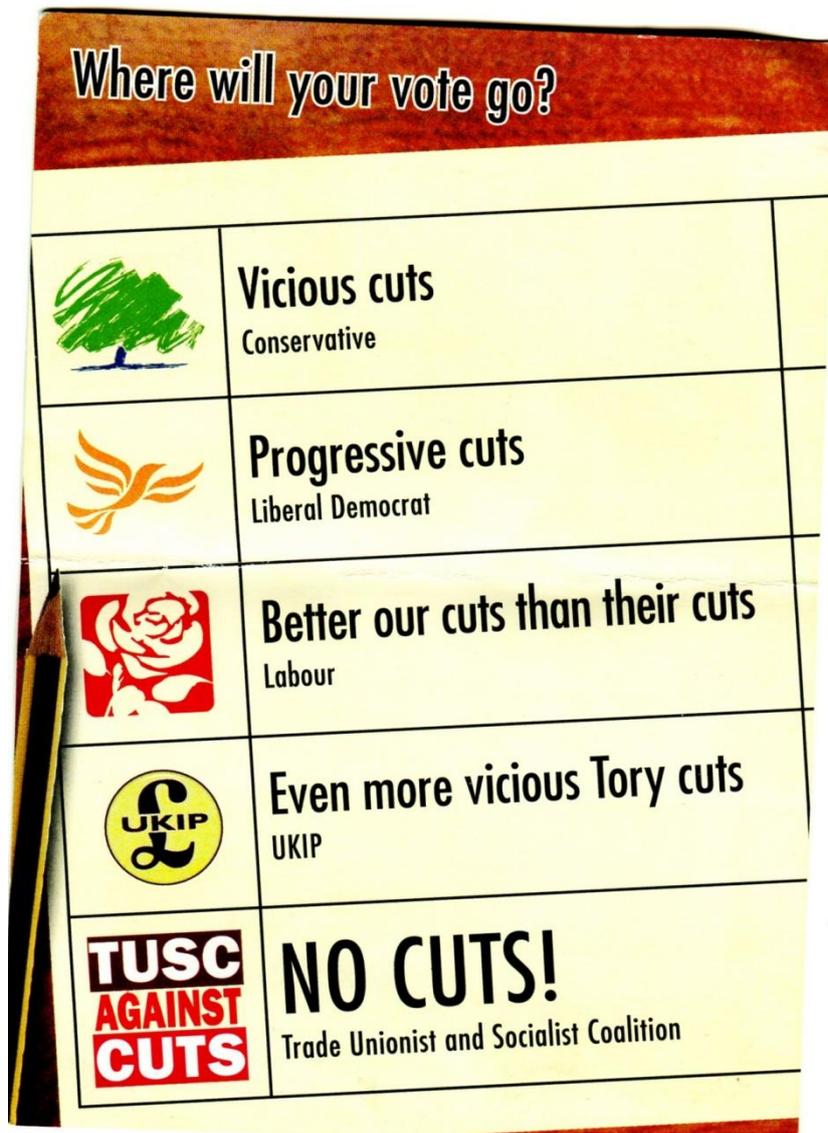|	
9	*R: Researcher*
10	*S2: Participant*
11	
12	R: Basically we'll just pretend it's not on...
13	S2: yeah, yeah.
14	R: Sometimes people get conscious of it. When did you first become involved with trade unions?
15	S2: Well basically, err, again, it set me up bringing, errm, err, you know, coming up, errm, from a
16	trade union family. Me father were very steeped in trade unions, he were like a shop steward at

Appendix 2

Walter Crane, 'A Garland for May Day 1895' (Trades Council, 2010).
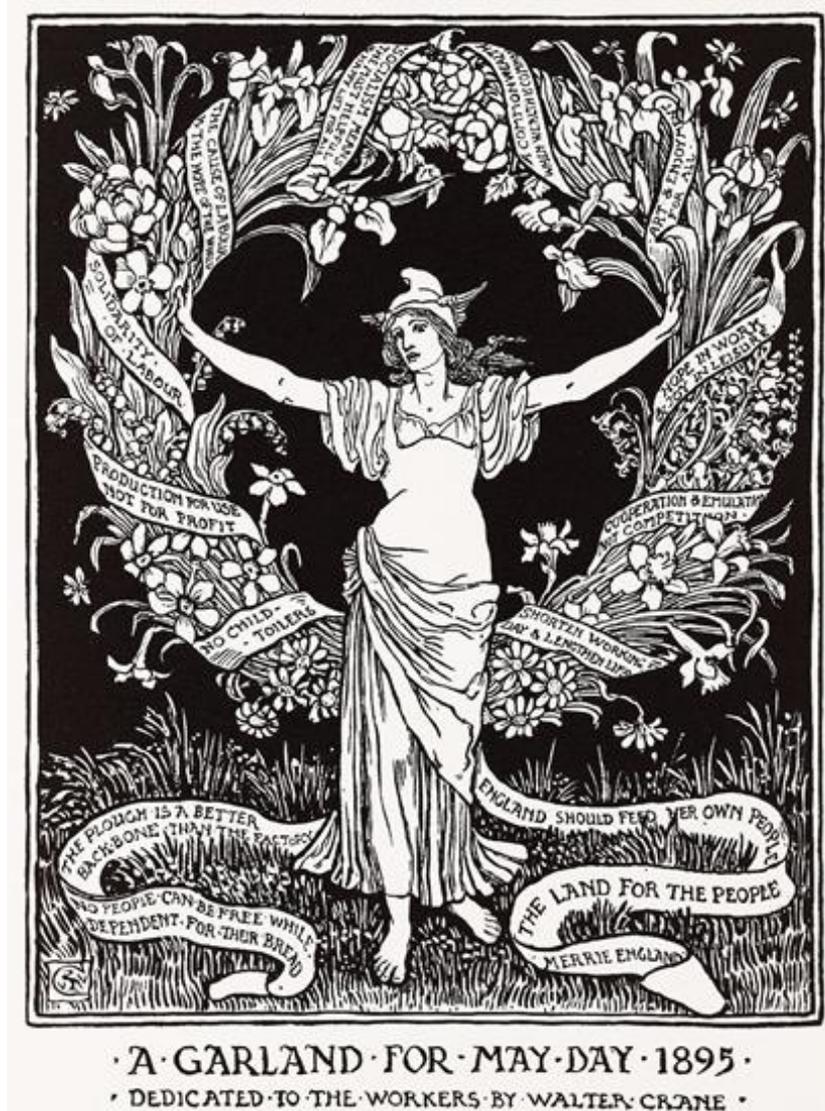
Appendix 3

TUSC "Where will your vote go?" (TUSC, 2015)

Appendix 4

Viva "In Latin America . . . Why not here?" (Viva, 2015)

In Latin America... **why not here?**

Proportion of GDP spent on education:

Cuba: 12.8% - UK: 6.2%

The coalition government have abolished Education Maintenance Allowance, cut funding to children's centres and increased university fees to £9,000 per year.

Total spent on nuclear weapons and their development in 2011:

Latin America: £0.00 - UK: £5.5 billion

£5.5 billion would pay every nurse in Britain an extra £1000 every year AND put £1000 extra money into every classroom in Britain every year for the next 26 years.

Annual spend on outsourcing:

Venezuela: £0.00 - UK: £88 billion

It is illegal in Venezuela to use subcontractors to deliver services. UK spending on outsourcing doubled in the last year, leading to lower wages and loss of pension rights.

Unemployment rate:

Ecuador: 4.5% - UK: 7.9%

There are currently 1.96 million people unemployed in the UK. The coalition government introduced the bedroom tax and is scrapping Disability Living Allowance.

Labour, Conservatives, Lib-Dems and UKIP are all planning to cut spending on health, education and welfare, despite the UK being the world's 6th richest country.