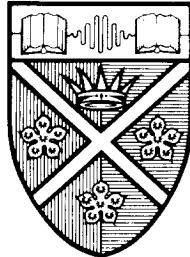


STRATHCLYDE PAPERS ON GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS



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by

*Roger Levy, Michael Keating,
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Glasgow Labour Councillors

Set in the context of the party's secular decline from the 1960s onwards, three successive general election defeats since 1979 seemed to confirm that Labour had become unelectable as a party of government. Among the principal factors adduced for Labour's decline was the ideological tenor of the party itself. As its social and electoral base shrank, so the party became increasingly dominated by a new breed of middle class activists. According to Hindess's (1971) well-known work on the Labour Party in Liverpool, as working class members abandoned the party in the 1960s so they were gradually replaced by middle class activists.

While Hindess is careful to avoid the suggestion that these activists were more 'radical' in any measurable sense than their working class counterparts, it is clear that they represented a different set of values, attitudes and issues. In this connection, Parkin's (1971) study argues that middle class radicalism is distinguished from working class radicalism by its expressive quality, while the latter is more instrumental in character. The implication was that middle class activists were indeed more radical on certain issues, even if they were less radical on traditional 'economic' ones, such as nationalisation and equality.

To some, the decline of Labour's traditional membership base and the influx of middle class activists represented the take-over of the party by vociferous and unrepresentative minorities. With the exit of the Social Democrats in 1981, the apparent hegemony of this coalition of assorted Marxists, feminists and other radicals was all but complete. Evidence of this process was to be found in the new political agenda fashioned by successive party conferences since the late 1970s. In adopting uncompromising stances on unilateral nuclear disarmament, the mandatory

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reselection of MPs, gay rights, trade union law and privatisation the party seemed to confirm both its disinterest in winning elections and the prominence of a new political agenda.

While this coalition has been collectively labelled by Gyford (1985) as the 'new urban left', it is according to Stoker (1988), 'not a homogeneous group...(but) rather a diverse group incorporating younger Labour councillors, community activists and radical professional local authority workers'¹. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the identification of a number of shared concerns of the group according to the same author. Arguably, it can also be defined in two further ways - its base in local rather than parliamentary politics and its common social background.

The local government base of the new urban left has been extensively commented on by Gyford (1985), Boddy and Fudge (1984) and Stoker (1988). Wainwright's (1987) recent account of the Labour Party goes so far as to suggest that there are two separate Labour Parties, with the 'radical' one heavily represented by left wing Labour local authorities and the 'alternative' participatory structures they have spawned. The latter, consisting of the proliferation of committee bureaucracies taking their cue from the plaudits and brick-bats of self-selecting participants, is the basis of the so-called 'rainbow' coalition strategy which has been identified with key figures in the new urban left². For much of the 1980s, conference radicalism was eclipsed by the activities of so-called 'looney-left' Labour controlled local authorities, with the case of Liverpool being only the most dramatic example. The succession of well-publicised if ultimately futile confrontations between Labour authorities and the government over spending, and various 'initiatives' on matters such as policing and minority

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rights represented, according to the left, part of the real Labour opposition to 'Thatcherism' ³.

On social background characteristics, survey evidence of Labour councillors from Gordon and Whiteley (1977, 1979) suggested that the typical left wing councillor was subjectively working class although most likely to be objectively middle class, was young, well-educated, active in a trade union and relatively well-paid. By contrast, typical right wing councillors were older, less well-educated and were likely to be subjectively middle class while being objectively working class. This seems to suggest a clear type of left wing, middle class councillor who identifies himself with the working class. Yet the authors also conclude that there is no evidence to support the view that middle class councillors are more radical than working class councillors.

This apparent dichotomy stems from the confusion of objective and subjective designations of class. As Gordon and Whiteley themselves say, 'a white collar professional who claims to be working class is adopting a specifically socialist interpretation of class...(and) it would not be surprising if (they) were more radical than the subjectively middle class' ⁴. This still stops short of actually saying that left wing middle class radicals are more radical than working class radicals, but it does identify a group of individuals who can be distinguished by both their radicalism and their class position.

Whiteley's hesitation on this point perhaps stems as much from the vested interests behind the apparent radicalism as from the methodological difficulties in measuring the relative intensity of it. His (1981) survey of

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Labour Party conference delegates showed that 'some 70 per cent of the survey were in white collar occupations...(and) 57 per cent were unambiguously middle class in their occupational status... with a high percentage of teachers and caring professionals'; most significantly, some 60 per cent of the respondents were employed in the public sector ⁵. Thus, left wing positions on public spending and the role of the state were not unexpected from such a group.

On the other hand, evidence presented by Whiteley (1981, 1983) and Heath and Evans (1988) does suggest that middle class radicals may in fact be more radical than working class radicals. Whiteley's own view is that this group of 'highly educated and articulate' activists had challenged the prevailing nostrums of the leadership; moreover, as middle class activists were 'unlikely to defer', they would actually effect change rather than just asking for it ⁶. Secondly, Whiteley (1983) concluded that the long term prospects for the Labour right were bleak because of the retirement and deselection of right wing MPs, and the selection in their stead of left wing candidates. This development has been co-terminus with the rise of left wing middle class activism in the Labour Party, and indeed has been one of its benchmarks.

While this may be judged as only indirectly supportive of middle class Labour 'super-radicalism', Heath and Evans (1988) provide more direct evidence. Their recent study of British political attitudes confirmed not only that the highly educated middle class Labour voter related to the 'new' issues of women's equality, gay rights, green politics and nuclear disarmament in a much more radical way than the working class Labour voter, but also related as radically, if not slightly more so, to the 'traditional' issues ⁷. However, as stated earlier, such radicalism may stem from self-

interest based on the public-private consumption cleavage in the models of political behaviour suggested by Dunleavy (1980 a, 1980 b) and others. If this is the case, then it is the definitions of radicalism which need to be revised rather than ideas about who is radical.

What is certainly not in doubt is that the group of left wing middle class Labour councillors and activists identified by Whiteley is far more 'radical' in terms of attitudes than the average Labour voter. Whiteley's (1981) survey of Labour conference delegates found enormous divergences between delegates and Labour voters on all the major issues, including preferred choice for party leader, with the former taking consistently left wing and the latter consistently right wing positions ⁸.

It is paradoxical that the equation of ideological extremism with certain Labour local authorities has done the party relatively little harm at local elections, yet anything but good at national elections. Taking into account the relatively low turnout at local elections and the indifference with which most voters view local government this is perhaps not as surprising as it appears to be. The implicit assumption does remain, however, that the attitudes and activities of Labour councillors may influence the image voters have of the party generally. This is very significant in the context of Labour's current revival. Since the policy review in 1989 and the renunciation of unilateralism in particular by Neil Kinnock, even senior figures in the government no longer consider Labour to be unelectable. If the party's renewed strength is at least partly attributable to the policy review, then it is of some importance to gauge the likely reaction to it by Labour activists. Moreover, if the new urban left thesis is accurate, then Labour councillors with this social profile can be expected to be leading the

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radical opposition to the review's proposals.

Unfortunately, there is no up-to-date nationwide survey of the ideological orientation of Labour councillors and activists to confirm or refute the latter hypothesis. Gordon and Whiteley's (1977) earlier survey pointed out that there was a dearth of information on this subject, and little has been done to remedy the situation since that study. The Widdicombe report (1986) does contain a survey of councillors attitudes, but these concern the more technical and esoteric issues of local government rather than political issues in general. Thus, the study of the ideological orientations of Labour councillors in Glasgow in 1986 and 1987 provides a small contribution to correcting the deficit identified by Gordon and Whiteley.

Social background and political activism of Glasgow Councillors

Glasgow is a particularly interesting case as it is one of the few areas which showed any increase in support for Labour in the 1980s, and does not have a particular reputation as a haven for new urban left-style radicalism. Thus, if they are more typical of an older style of Labour politics, it might be expected that Labour councillors in Glasgow would reflect attitudes more in tune with the leadership.

Our first survey ⁹ of the Glasgow cohort partially confirmed the picture of the 'traditional' Labour councillor. The survey group of 54 councillors was overwhelmingly male (89 per cent), had a relatively high average age (49.6 years), and showed a stability over time of traditional

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working-class representation. On the other hand, as we pointed out, there has also been a striking social transformation towards more middle class, white collar, public sector occupations compared to earlier surveys. In occupational terms, the largest single group in the sample worked in professional and managerial positions in the public sector, and this was the primary avenue for the upward mobility of the cohort from manual to non-manual occupations.

This grouping can be defined as middle class by means other than occupation, for example by reference to housing tenure and education. Of those public sector managers and professionals in the sample (31.5 per cent of the total, and the largest occupational sub-sample in the study), 68.4 per cent were owner occupiers and 100 per cent had attended either university or a college of further or higher education. By contrast, 41.2 per cent of those in the Registrar General's occupational categories 3N, 3M, 4 and 5 (31.5 per cent of the sample) were owner occupiers, and only 11.8 per cent had attended either university or a college of further or higher education.

Thus, social characteristics apparently typical of the new urban left elsewhere are also typical of a large number of Glasgow councillors. The survey also sought to measure some of the other characteristics which were thought to have a bearing on attitudes by Gordon and Whiteley, in particular trade union activism and early experience of politics. All of the respondents claimed trade union affiliation, with by far and away the largest group - 35.2 per cent of the sample - belonging to the T&GWU. The next largest groups came from the AUEW and the EIS (both 9.3 per cent) followed by NALGO, UCATT and the EEPTU (each 7.4 per cent). In terms of trade union activism rather than simple membership (a distinction

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found important by Gordon and Whiteley), 43.1 per cent of the sample claimed to have held local office and 16.7 per cent had held national office.

Despite the occupational profile of the cohort, it is striking that 74.1 per cent claimed affiliation to manual trade unions and only 25.9 per cent to non-manual trade unions. This may reflect past employment patterns, in particular of the 22.2 per cent of the sample who were either unemployed or retired. However, even if this group is taken out of the sample, the proportion of manual to non-manual trade unionists is still over 2 to 1 (69.2 per cent to 30.8 per cent). While this only confirms the social mobility of the remainder, there are clearly some inexplicable discrepancies, for example between the number of those claiming to be teachers and lecturers (10), and the number belonging to teacher/lecturer unions (6). This may be another manifestation of working class self-identification by upwardly mobile councillors. However, it is more likely that it reflects the pattern of affiliation deemed appropriate by councillors to secure delegate status to the general committees of constituency Labour Parties, and thus have an impact to decision making at that level.

The Gordon and Whiteley survey probed the formative political background of its cohort in a quite detailed way. In the current survey, respondents were asked why they had entered politics in the first place in order to get an idea of their initial orientations to politics. A total of 82 responses were given by 53 respondents (98.1 per cent of the sample). These responses can be broadly divided into three categories, two of which coincide with Parkin's expressive/instrumental distinction with the other being general family and other background influences. 30.6 per cent of the responses fell into the expressive category (typically ideological appeal and the desire to change society), 34 per cent into the instrumental category

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(desire to help people, improve conditions etc.), and the remainder (35.4 per cent) into the category of background influences (the family, trade union membership).

The Glasgow survey also explored current political activity of Labour councillors in terms of their membership of, or activity in party and non-party organisations outside the trade unions and the church. Given the emphasis on 'community politics' noted by chroniclers of the urban left, such affiliations might be co-terminus with particular attitude sets, and thus be significant in a general predictive sense. It might be expected therefore, that those on the left would tend to be more active than those who were not.

Perhaps surprisingly, there was a fairly even divide between those who were members of or active in such organisations (53.7 per cent of the sample), and those who were not (46.3 per cent). A bewildering array of organisations (26) were mentioned by those respondents who were active in this sense, with each activist averaging over two organisations per head. These ranged from Tribune, Labour Co-ordinating Committee and Militant, through CND and anti apartheid groups to tenants associations, community councils and sports and recreational clubs. The largest single affiliation was to CND (30 per cent of those active), with Tribune (20 per cent) and anti-apartheid (17.5 per cent) following. Four councillors claimed to be active Militant supporters.

In trying to assess the influence of background factors on the ideological orientation of the Glasgow sample, it was also decided to take into account religious factors, something which the Gordon and Whiteley survey did not do. There are two main reasons for doing this. In the first

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place, there is evidence from a number of sources suggesting a well-established inverse relationship between religiosity and left wing radicalism. Secondly, given the historic importance of the religious divide in the city, confessional status might also influence attitudes to certain issues which have assumed significance in the past. Having identified the confessional background of the councillors and gauged their degree of religious commitment (in terms of frequency of church attendance) in the first part of the survey, this part of the study shows the extent to which these variables had any affect on attitudes towards the issues, including those with a more confessional tinge (e.g. policies on Northern Ireland and state maintained confessional schooling).

Councillor Attitudes

Bearing these considerations in mind, the survey sought to elicit responses to a set of 21 Likert scaled statements on a variety of local and national issues in order to construct an ideological index of councillor attitudes. The technique used (i.e. principal coordinate analysis), was very similar to that deployed by Gordon and Whiteley, but a greater number and variety of questions were asked so as to reflect the current left-right debate in the party at the time and to tap attitudes towards local issues.

Many of the questions in fact covered similar ground to the Gordon and Whiteley study (e.g. on nationalisation, 'extra-parliamentary' activity, EEC withdrawal, prices and incomes policy, trade union power), while others dealt with specifically local issues (e.g. housing and education), or local aspects of more general issues (e.g. sovereignty within the party). The main additions were questions on nuclear disarmament, the miners'

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strike, Militant Tendency, Northern Ireland and devolution for Scotland. A full schedule is contained in Appendix A.

In addition to these questions, respondents were asked at the beginning of the attitude questionnaire to classify themselves in terms of their self-perceived and self-designated ideological position. No pre-set list was given, and five classifications emerged from the responses - firm left, left of centre, moderate, right and refusal to self-label.

The composite data for the whole sample are shown in Table 1. There was a high degree of consensus among respondents on ten issues. Using Gordon and Whiteley's criterion for consensus (i.e. 65 per cent or more agreement), there was consensus on indicators 3,7,10,12,13,14,16,19,20 and 21. It is significant that none of these indicators really coincide with comparable consensual indicators in the Gordon and Whiteley study. In the latter, consensus was achieved on the need for extensive nationalisation and for renationalisation without compensation, but this was not the case in the Glasgow study. On the other hand, there was consensus among Glasgow councillors on the need for an incomes policy, but not in the earlier study.

Reviewing the other comparable items, results are consonant with these differences. There is less call for British withdrawal from the EEC, more opposition to party sovereignty over elected representatives and slightly more inclination to condemn left wing extremism. On non-comparable items, there are majorities against an amnesty for those convicted during the miners' strike and for not increasing local authority rents beyond the rate of inflation, and a huge majority in favour of more private house building. Taken together, this suggests that the Glasgow

Table 1 Responses of Labour Councillors to Attitudinal Indicators (n=54). Percentages

Attitude Indicator	Strongly				Strongly Disagree
	Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	
1. A Labour government should renationalise all privatised industries	25.9	37.0	0.0	29.6	7.4
2. Full compensation should be given for renationalised industries	7.4	40.7	0.0	38.9	13.0
3. Labour should negotiate incomes policy with the unions	9.3	59.3	1.9	14.8	14.8
4. Amnesty etc. for all miners convicted during strike	18.5	25.9	0.0	44.4	11.1
5. Supporters of Militant should be expelled from Labour Party	18.5	38.9	1.9	27.8	13.0
6. Britain should withdraw from the EEC	13.0	29.6	1.9	46.3	9.3
7. Should be no nuclear weapons whatever on British soil	35.2	46.3	1.9	16.7	0.0
8. A Labour Government should withdraw troops immediately from N.Ireland	1.9	37.0	7.4	48.1	5.6
9. Labour Government should commit itself to a united Ireland	3.7	61.1	5.6	25.9	3.7
10. Catholic and non-denominational schools in Glasgow should be integrated	13.0	64.8	3.7	16.7	1.9
11. The Council should not increase rents by more than inflation	7.4	33.3	1.9	50.0	7.4
12. Private housebuilding in Glasgow should be encouraged	16.7	68.5	3.7	11.1	0.0
13. Subsidies to city rail services should be increased	7.4	66.7	13.0	9.3	3.7
14. Council should discriminate positively towards needy areas	14.8	55.6	3.7	25.9	0.0
15. Councillors should break the law to protect jobs and services	7.4	27.8	5.6	40.7	18.5
16. Glasgow DLO should be maintained and expanded	18.5	55.6	16.7	7.4	1.9
17. The District Council should get back powers lost to the Region	7.4	42.6	11.1	25.9	13.0
18. Final say on local policy should rest with Regional/District Labour Party	11.1	27.8	3.7	42.6	14.8
19. Kinnock is right to oppose the tactics of Liverpool council	24.1	53.7	1.9	16.7	3.7
20. Influence of the trade unions in the Labour Party too great	3.7	16.7	5.6	64.8	9.3
21. Scottish Assembly a priority for next Labour government	24.1	59.3	3.7	11.1	1.9

Ideological self-description	No label	Right	Moderate	Left/left of centre	Firm/Hard left
	11.1	3.7	22.2	48.1	14.8

cohort is relatively more right wing than the earlier cohort.

Having said that, there was still a substantial majority in favour of the re-nationalisation of industries privatised by the Conservatives and a slim majority against full compensation to the present owners of these industries. Similarly, the consensus on incomes policy was the weakest consensual indicator in the survey. The Glasgow sample is also overwhelmingly in favour of British nuclear disarmament and the expulsion of NATO nuclear weapons from Britain, substantially in favour of a united Ireland and overwhelmingly in favour of more rather than less trade union influence in the party. Moreover, many of the consensual indicators show that Glasgow councillors relate very strongly to traditional state socialist policies, such as support for more rail subsidies, increased spending in deprived areas and the expansion of local authority workforces.

When Gordon and Whiteley carried out a principal component analysis to see if their attitude indicators fitted into a coherent pattern, they found that attitudes were structured to 'a significant extent', with 35 per cent of the variance explained by the first principal component 10.

Our own analysis showed a similar degree of coherence in the Glasgow data. Similarities between councillors were measured by a simple matching criterion, in which a similar response (agree, no opinion, disagree) to a question scored 1 and a different response scored 0. These similarities were analysed by principal coordinate analysis. The first principal coordinate (PC1) derived using these techniques explained over 48 per cent of the total variance and, as in the study by Gordon and Whiteley, a large part of the councillors' responses is represented by this undimensional

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scale.

However, the point is whether PC1 represents an attitude set consonant with a left-right dimension. It is clear that this is the case for three reasons. First, the F statistics in Table 2 show the strength of relationship between PC1 and each of the attitude indicators. The indicators have been listed in order of their F values to show which indicators have had the most influence on PC1. This coordinate is strongly related to indicators 1, 2, 19, 4, 15, 18, 3 and 5. These indicators cover nationalisation and compensation, law breaking by councillors and miners, sovereignty within the party, the expulsion of Militant and Liverpool Council under Militant and incomes policy - all highly controversial left-right issues in the party and rather similar to the indicators found to be significant by Gordon and Whiteley 11.

Secondly, in order to test whether this component indeed represented a left-right dimension, three dummy sets of attitude responses were compiled representing a most left wing response (compiled from the programme of the Militant newspaper), a most right wing response (confirmed inadvertently by questioning a Conservative councillor!), and an 'official' Labour Party response based on the 1987 manifesto commitments. The scores for these dummy cases were calculated based on the scale of the original principal coordinates. As expected, their values for PC1 were at the extreme (see Figure 1).

Finally, the relationship between PC1 and background questions in the survey were examined by an analysis of variance. As can be seen from Table 3, by far the strongest relationship which emerged was between PC1

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Table 2

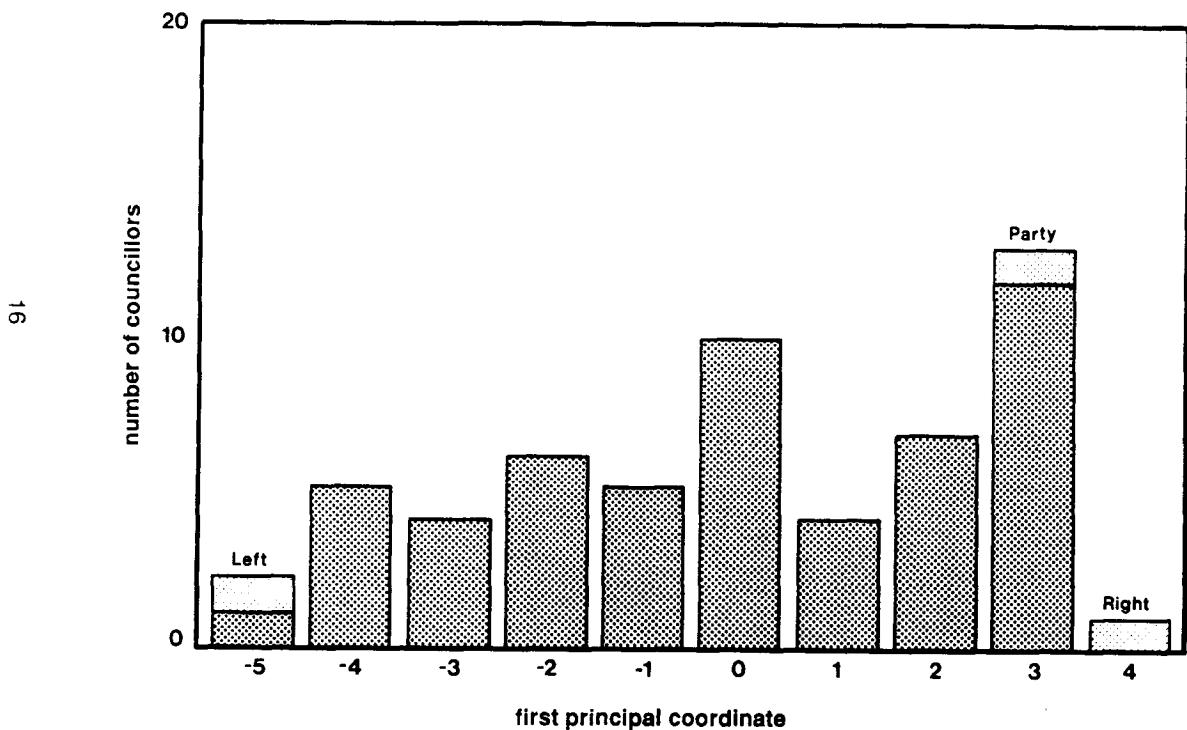
Relative Significance of Attitudinal Indicators for PC1

Indicator	F Statistic
1. Renationalise privatised industries	53.4
2. Full compensation	52.1
19. Kinnock oppose Liverpool	39.3
4. Amnesty for miners	36.9
15. Councillors break law	28.6
18. D/RLP have final say	28.2
3. Incomes policy	25.2
5. Expel Militant	23.4
6. EEC withdrawal	19.7
11. Rents policy	13.0
12. Private house-building	8.5
7. No nuclear weapons	5.4
8. Withdraw troops	4.9
16. Expand DLO	4.5
13. Rail subsidies	4.4
9. United Ireland	3.6
10. School integration	1.4
17. City retrieve powers	1.0
21. Scottish Assembly	0.9
20. TU influence too great	0.6
14. Positive discrimination	0.5

The 'F' statistic, or variance ratio statistic, represents the strength of the relationship between an indicator and the principal coordinate of analysis. The order of indicators signifies their relative contribution to the determination of the co-ordinate.

Figure 1

Left, Right and Party views reflected by the first principal coordinate



and ideological self-description. For purposes of analysis, three distinct groups emerged from the five original classifications, as the 'right', 'moderate' and 'no label' categories were in fact indistinguishable from one another. The firm left identifiers formed a very distinct group well to the left of the mainstream left group in terms of PC1.

However, it was not the case that the mainstream left group represented an ideological position close to official party policy. As figure 1 shows, some 90 per cent of the entire cohort displayed attitudes to the left of the dummy set for official policy, with most of the sample well to the left. Thus, the 'middle ground' in the survey was by no means comparable to the 'middle ground' represented by official party policy.

Principal influences on ideological orientation

In order to see whether Gordon and Whiteley's characterisation of the typical left wing Labour councillor applied to the Glasgow sample, analyses of variance were carried out for PC1 on each of the background variables. Unsurprisingly, the ideological self-description of the respondents was closely related to their value on the first principal coordinate which, as we argued earlier, served to confirm that PC1 did indeed tap the left-right dimension.

This in itself is not particularly helpful in trying to build up a picture of the typical left wing councillor as it is merely tautological: councillors who describe themselves as left wing display left wing attitudes. Thus, the other sources of variation among the background factors in the first part of

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the survey were tested.

Table 3 confirms a number of Gordon and Whiteley's observations. In the first place, the typical left wing councillor was liable to describe himself as working class irrespective of his actual status. Secondly, those middle class councillors who displayed status dissonance (i.e. were objectively middle class but subjectively working class) were significantly more left wing than the average. On the other hand, professional status *per se* did not result in a left wing orientation.

Nor was there any significant difference in orientation between those who were dependent on the state for their income or their housing and those who were not. Educational achievement had a slight, although not significant relationship with ideological moderation. Having said that, the group of respondents who are status-dissonant in the sense referred to above were also a highly educated group.

The Gordon and Whiteley study also found a significant relationship between age and ideological orientation, with younger councillors tending to be more left wing than their older colleagues. This finding was also confirmed by the Glasgow study. As can be seen from Table 3, the Glasgow sample was divided into 'young', 'middle', and 'old' groups (less than 35, 36-55, and 56 and over respectively) for the purposes of analysis, with the younger group emerging as significantly more left wing compared to the other two groups.

However, the most important background variables in the Glasgow study proved to be related to religiosity. While there was no relationship

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Table 3

Mean Value of First Principal Coordinate (PC1)

Background Variable			F Value	Significant at 5 per cent (*)
Ideological self identification				
Right	Left	Hard Left		
0.148 (n 20)	-0.009 (n 26)	-0.340 (n 8)	22.84	*
Church Attendance				
Some	None			
0.090 (n 31)	-0.121 (n 23)		13.32	*
Religious Affiliation				
Yes	No			
0.065 (n 38)	-0.155 (n 16)		12.09	*
Organisation Activity				
Yes	No			
-0.079 (n 29)	0.092 (n 25)		8.24	*
Status - objective/subjective				
Middle/ Middle	Working/ Working	Middle/ Working		
0.174 (n 11)	-0.047 (n 18)	-0.073 (n 13)	4.72	*
Class self-identification				
None	Middle	Upper Working	Working	
0.327 (n 1)	0.166 (n 9)	0.211 (n 2)	-0.053 (n 42)	4.03
Age				
Young	Middle	Old		
-0.212 (n 7)	0.020 (n 27)	0.047 (n 20)	3.74	*

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Table 3 continued

Change Society

Yes	No	
-0.106	0.027	2.98
(n 11)	(n 43)	

Trade Union Officer

None	Local	National	
0.082	-0.054	-0.034	2.09
(n 20)	(n 25)	(n 9)	

Professional

Yes	No	
0.040	-0.084	2.08
(n 24)	(n 10)	

House Tenure

LA Rented	Other Rented	Owner	
0.027	-0.150	0.001	0.97
(n 22)	(n 4)	(n 28)	

Social Mobility

Up	Down	Static	
0.030	-0.050	0.104	1.27
(n 24)	(n 15)	(n 3)	

Post school education

Yes	No	
0.032	-0.030	0.96
(n 36)	(n 18)	

State income

Yes	No	
-0.009	0.018	0.15
(n 36)	(n 18)	

Trade Union

Manual	Non-Manual	
-0.004	0.008	0.03
(n 37)	(n 17)	

between ideological orientation and religious affiliation (neither Protestants nor Roman Catholics were intrinsically more left or right wing than each other), there was a strong correlation between ideology and the strength of religious belief. Those who claimed a current religious affiliation of any kind, and especially those who attended church on any sort of basis, were significantly to the right of the agnostics and the atheists.

The second most important variable involved activism in organisations other than trade unions and churches. In line with expectations, analysis of variance revealed a significant relationship between activism of this type and a left wing orientation. What was striking however, was the simplicity of the relationship. Those who were not active in any organisation were likely to be more conservative than those who were active, irrespective of the number or type of organisations the latter were active in. There was very little variation within the activist group thus adding weight to the belief that 'community politics' activism is co-terminus with a left wing orientation.

On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between 'leftness' and trade union activism in the sense defined. While this seems to be at variance with Gordon and Whiteley's findings, given the 100 per cent union affiliation claimed by the Glasgow cohort, it may be the case that the general pervasive influence of trade unionism is so great that no variation within the sample can be explained by it. Moreover, the Glasgow survey has a rather restrictive definition of activism, as the questionnaire sought only to identify whether or not respondents had held office in the union, and did not ask for details of attendance at branch meetings etc. as

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the earlier survey did. Had it done so, then a stronger relationship may have emerged.

There was no significant relationship either between leftness and 'expressive' reasons for entering politics. Indeed, many respondents mentioned both expressive and instrumental reasons as simultaneously important for their political development. Thus, the view that both types of reasons may spawn radicalism of varying composition is not disproved by the data.

Moving away from the left-right dimension, some interesting cleavages appear on specific indicators. On the key local issue of housing, there is a fairly sharp divide on rents policy between tenants and home owners. While a majority (56 per cent) of the tenants supported the policy of rent increases being limited to the rate of inflation, a majority (67.9 per cent) of home owners opposed it. Given the direct financial interest of the first group in this policy, it is perhaps surprising that there was not a larger majority in favour. On the other hand, home owning councillors who could be surcharged for failing to put council tenants' rents up beyond the rate of inflation certainly showed more solidarity in this sense.

While the confessional divide was of no significance for left-right differences, it proved to be of continuing significance on the issue of Northern Ireland. Some 68.5 per cent of the cohort were either Protestant or Catholic identifiers, with most of those (73 per cent) being the latter. Among Catholic identifiers a majority (63 per cent) favoured a united Ireland, while only a minority (40 per cent) of Protestant identifiers favoured such a policy. On the question of the withdrawal of British

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troops from the province, Catholic identifiers who expressed an opinion were split absolutely evenly, while a majority (66.7 per cent) of Protestant identifiers were opposed to troop withdrawal.

There was greater consensus on the more local issue of school integration, although the majority (66.7 per cent) in favour of integration among Catholic identifiers has to be compared with the unanimous verdict of the Protestant identifiers.

Conclusions

In addition to showing continuities and contrasts with Gordon and Whiteley's earlier findings, the results of the Glasgow survey display some novelties of their own.

In the first category, there is clear evidence that councillor attitudes are structured around issues similar to those identified by the earlier study, and that this constitutes the left-right divide within the sample, with the firm left identifiers forming a quite distinct ideological grouping.

Secondly, taking into account the spread of attitudes on all the issues, the Glasgow sample appears to be more right wing on average than the earlier sample. However, most of the cohort was well to the left of 'official' party policy in 1987, and there was majority support for an array of issues associated with the left of the party. Thus, it is unlikely that there would be much enthusiasm for the party's current policy review among such a group. On the other hand, there appears to be quite strong support for Neil Kinnock's stand on Militant (although naturally this provoked

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strong opposition from the hard left and indeed some centre left identifiers), which suggests that mainstream Labour activists may be willing to change their attitudes in deference to the leadership.

As a caveat, it is well to bear Whiteley's earlier observations about Labour councillors in mind, as many of these characteristics also apply in the case of the Glasgow sample. The typical left wing councillor in the Glasgow survey also appears to be a relatively young working class identifier who is probably objectively middle class, relatively well educated and an activist in other organisations. This is not the kind of person who will defer at any price. Those most sympathetic to the current attempts to moderate Labour's position are most likely to be found among the older, non-activist, middle class and religious identifiers. Thus, it would appear from the evidence that the party leadership is in need of a helping hand from the Almighty in more ways than one.

As far as material indicators are concerned, the results confirm that it is well to treat the public-private consumption cleavage as a predictor of radicalism with some scepticism, although it is clearly influential on some immediate issues of self-interest such as rents policy.

The importance of religiosity as an influence on ideological orientation is the most striking finding of the whole survey, dwarfing the influence of all other factors measured in the survey which may reasonably have been expected to be influential. It can be inferred that the influence of the Church during upbringing has a lasting effect on political attitudes if religious belief can be sustained into adulthood. On the other hand, the relative left wing militancy of the atheists and agnostics suggest that such

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individuals may become susceptible to alternative dogmas as their lapse of faith occurs.

Finally, the continuing legacy of Glasgow's sectarian divide is still evident in attitudes to Northern Ireland among religious identifiers, although there is a remarkable degree of consensus on the schools issue. The latter is both instructive and cautionary for those who would draw conclusions from attitude surveys however: despite the consensus, no action has been taken or is likely to be taken by regional councillors to effect such a policy.

FOOTNOTES

1. G. Stoker, *The Politics of Local Government*, London, Macmillan, 1988, p. 193.
2. H. Wainwright, *Labour: A Tale of Two Parties*, London, Hogarth, 1987, p. 94, et seq.
3. See for example, D. Blunkett and K. Jackson, *Democracy in Crisis: The Town Halls Respond*, London, Hogarth, 1987.
4. I. Gordon and P. Whiteley, 'Social Class and Political Attitudes: The Case of Labour Councillors', *Political Studies* 27, 1979, p. 108.
5. P. Whiteley, 'Who are the Labour Activists?', *Political Quarterly*, 52, 1981, p. 162.
6. idib., p. 163.
7. A. Heath and G. Evans, 'Working Class Conservatives and Middle Class Socialists, in R. Jowell, S. Witherspoon and L. Brook (eds.), *British Social Attitudes: The 5th Report*, Social and Community Planning Research, Gower, Aldershot, 1988, pp. 53-62.
8. Whiteley (1981), Table 1, pp. 166-7.
9. M. Keating, R. Levy, J. Geekie and J. Brand, 'Labour Elites in Glasgow', Glasgow, *Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics*, 1989.
10. I. Gordon and P. Whiteley, 'The Political Ideology of Labour Councillors', *Policy and Politics*, 5, 1977, p. 9.
11. ibid., pp. 10-12.

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APPENDIX A

Would you describe yourself as on the right of the party, the left of the party or what?

Attitudes

Do you agree strongly, agree, disagree, disagree strongly...

1. A future Labour government should renationalise all industries privatised by the Conservatives.
2. There should be full compensation for renationalised industries.
3. Labour should negotiate an incomes policy with the trade unions.
4. A future Labour Government should give an amnesty and refund of fines to all miners convicted of offences during the miners' strike.
5. Supporters of the Militant Tendency should be expelled from the Labour Party.
6. Britain should withdraw from the EEC.
7. There should be no nuclear weapons whatever on British soil.
8. The next Labour Government should withdraw British troops immediately from Northern Ireland.
9. The next Labour Government should commit itself to a United Ireland.
10. Catholic and non-denominational schools in Glasgow should be integrated.
11. The council should under no circumstances increase rents by more than the rate of inflation.
12. Private house building in the city should be encouraged.
13. Subsidies to rail services in the city should be increased.

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14. There should be positive discrimination in council spending toward needy areas, with cuts if necessary in the better-off areas.
15. Councillors should be prepared, if necessary, to break the law to protect jobs and services.
16. Glasgow DLO should be maintained and expanded.
17. Glasgow City should get back powers lost to the Regions at the time of reorganisation.
18. The Regional/District Labour Party should have the final say on policy and councillors should be obliged to seek its permission to change council policy.
19. Neil Kinnock is right to oppose the tactics of Liverpool council.
20. The influence of the trade unions on the Labour Party is too great.
21. The next Labour Government should make the establishment of a Scottish Assembly a major priority.