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**Elucidating an Ideology:  
A Freedenite Evaluation of Plaid Cymru's 'Thought-  
Practices'**

**Alan Sandry**

**Submitted to the University of Wales in fulfilment of  
the requirements for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Swansea University**

**2006**

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A million thanks for all of the love and support given by my parents, Ken and Betty, and those who share my abode, Thomas and, top of the tree, 'Jill *bach fi*'. Without them all of this would have proved impossible.

Also, a hearty *diolch yn fawr* to friends and family, too numerous to mention, who, often unwittingly, have distracted me away from 'thought-practices' for an hour or two.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Phil Williams AM, who, before his sudden death, engaged with me in some discourse about Plaid Cymru and ideology. Regrettably, Wales has too few great intellectuals and Phil's passing has robbed Welsh society of one of its foremost political philosophers.





## Summary

This thesis examines the contention that Plaid Cymru is a political party whose principles and objectives are representative of nationalist ideology. The thesis explores the fields of ideology and nationalism to establish what ideology and nationalism entail. This is important, as Michael Freeden, whose model is used in this thesis, has claimed that nationalism is not a *full* ideology in that it needs input from other ideologies.

The genealogy of Plaid Cymru is assessed to establish a picture of where the party's political perspectives derive from. The breaking up of Plaid Cymru into 'early' and 'modern' phases also enables an analysis of the party's evolution from 'cultural nationalist' party under Saunders Lewis to the contemporary 'decentralist socialist' party to be undertaken. Also noted throughout the thesis are areas in which individuals within the party have sought to shape its ideology.

The literature and pronouncements of Plaid Cymru are then explored to ascertain what set of actual political ideas are contained within. The model of ideology enunciated by Michael Freeden is used throughout the thesis to assess the ideational development and 'thought-practices' within Plaid Cymru. A Freedenite assessment of the major ideologies and primary ideological concepts that have appeared within Plaid Cymru's morphology since its inception in 1925 is made so that these can be examined and classified.

In dismissing the claim that Plaid Cymru is merely a nationalist party, the concluding chapter of the thesis then attempts to construct a fresh paradigm, on the lines of Freeden's model, so that Plaid Cymru's ideological make-up can be more clearly defined.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	p.1
Purpose of this thesis	p.1
Methodology	p.11
Literature Review	p.13
<b>Chapter 2: The Concept and Definitions of Ideology</b>	p.39
The Use of Ideology in this thesis: Why Choose Freedom?	p.53
Defining Nationalism: Perspectives of the Analysts	p.61
Freedom's Ideological Distinctions	p.75
Freedom's Core Concepts of Nationalism	p.86
<b>Chapter 3: The Genealogy of Welsh Nationalism' and the Ideological</b>	
<b>Development of 'Early' Plaid Cymru</b>	p.102
Ideologies and Political Developments Pre-1925	p.122
'Seeing the Nationalist Light': Saunders Lewis	p.133
Other 'Thought-Practices' in 'Early' Plaid Cymru	p.163
<b>Chapter 4: Ideologies associated with 'Modern' Plaid Cymru</b>	p.179
The Role of the Gwerin	p.184
Nationalism and Internationalism	p.195
Plaid Cymru and Self-Identification	p.207

Plaid Cymru and Post-Nationalism	p.210
Socialism	p.221
Plaid Cymru's Manifestos: Signs of Ideological Variations	p.232
The 'Depth' of Socialism within Plaid Cymru	p.247
Liberalism	p.251
The Concept of Liberty: Individual or Collective?	p.260
Feminism	p.263
Freedem and Feminism's Core Concepts	p.269
The Feminist Tradition within Plaid Cymru	p.275
<b>Chapter 5: Identifying and Analysing Concepts within Plaid Cymru's</b>	
<b>Ideology</b>	p.288
Religion	p.289
Pacifism / Non-violence	p.297
Decentralisation	p.313
Decentralist Socialism	p.326
Co-operativism	p.330
Anarcho-Syndicalism	p.334
Cymdeithasiaeth / Communityism	p.339
Language	p.351
Social Justice	p.360
Capitalism	p.365

<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b>	p.372
Hydro and the National Left	p.373
Constructing an Ideological Model for Plaid Cymru	p.382
Attaching Labels to Plaid Cymru	p.398
<b>Bibliography</b>	p.402

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### The Purpose of this Thesis

The purpose of this thesis will be to examine whether the rhetoric, statements, policies and general political philosophy of Plaid Cymru equates with the established conceptions of the ideology of nationalism. The automatic linking of 'nationalism and Plaid Cymru' is a conventional assumption that has been generally accepted by those investigating both nationalism in Wales and the political content and ideological structures of Plaid Cymru, a political party that is generally regarded as being the foremost advocates of 'Welsh nationalism'. However, whether Plaid Cymru's 'Welsh nationalism' is a *full*, a *distinct* or an *established* ideology<sup>1</sup>, or simply a disparate collection of principles and political ideas whose primary focus may, or may not, be 'the nation', and the advancement of 'national' causes, needs to be determined.

To enable it to do so, this thesis will invoke the model of what constitutes an ideology, as enunciated later in this chapter by Michael Freedon. If it is not clear that nationalism is the sole ideology that pervades Plaid Cymru's morphology, or if claims that it is are refuted, then the thesis will seek to determine whether it is possible to identify what specific 'set of ideas', or ideological concepts, constitute Plaid Cymru's ideology. Freedon's model will be operative from the start of this thesis but it will be conspicuous mostly in the chapters evaluating the party's genealogy, its ideology and its ideological concepts.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Freedon, '*Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*', in Political Studies, XLVI, 1998, p. 750.

Plaid Cymru was chosen as the party whose ideology required rigorous and detailed investigation because, despite the ever more prominent role that the party was playing in Welsh politics and further afield, there still appeared to be some customary misconceptions, and a lack of clarity, regarding the party's political aims, its overall objectives, and its general political philosophy. This is not to claim that this is a unique situation regarding Plaid Cymru alone, and it should not inadvertently lead to a besmirching of the party's organisational ability and its capacity to communicate the party's true essence to the general public. Equally, therefore, a parallel investigation could have been carried out in this thesis, and may be carried out by somebody in the future, on any given political party that is generally recognised as being a repository for a certain political ideology (i.e. the Labour Party and Socialism or the Conservative Party and Conservatism) but who may be sheltering a more diverse ideology beneath their facades. Thus, the framework and manner in which this thesis will investigate Plaid Cymru's ideology should be easily transferable, and it is hoped that other theses looking at comparable political parties may eventually emerge.

In a similar vein, although it is just Plaid Cymru who will be under the spotlight in this thesis, it must be recognised from the outset that the party do not operate in a political vacuum and, to this extent, Plaid Cymru is engaged in an ongoing dialectical process with other political parties; one in which it both pro-actively advocates policies knowing that other parties will counteract – favourably or not – while reactively formulating responses to any developments that arise from the political parties and pressure groups that surround it. Furthermore, Plaid Cymru also shares, or has shared, certain political convictions with other political parties (i.e. an environmentalist agenda with the Green Party, a decentralisation agenda with the Liberal and Liberal

Democratic parties, and a broadly welfarist agenda with the Labour Party); indeed, within the world of Welsh politics, and within the aforementioned dialectical process, Plaid Cymru's turbulent relationship with the Labour Party, in particular, is of interest. Whilst Carwyn Fowler has commented on how "Plaid Cymru and Welsh Labour share a broadly similar public policy platform"<sup>2</sup>, other commentators, such as Laura McAllister, have noted the "issue of a symbiosis between Labour and Plaid"<sup>3</sup>. This is observable at a level of voter identification and affiliation, transference of membership, and in some areas of ideology<sup>4</sup>. These aspects were most conspicuous, according to Peter Harries, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1966 when "Gwynfor Evans' by-election victory in the Carmarthenshire constituency.....was helped by redundant miners in the Gwendraeth and Amman Valleys switching their support from Labour"<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, and to add to the case for seeking close identification between the two parties, Evans had defeated the "strongly nationalist Labour candidate, Gwilym Prys Davies"<sup>6</sup>.

Whilst acknowledging that there are undoubtedly a number of areas of overlap and co-existence, some of whose ideological content and status will be explored at a later stage, this thesis does not intend to engage in any comparative debates in regard to the nature of individual political parties as it will seek to focus on the unique characteristics that are associated with, and are contributing factors towards, the ideology of one particular party, namely Plaid Cymru. Nevertheless, it must be recognised from the beginning that Plaid Cymru may share several ideological concepts

<sup>2</sup> Carwyn Fowler, 'Nationalism and the Labour Party in Wales', in *Llafur*, vol.8, no. 4, p.97.

<sup>3</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party*, 2001, p.140.

<sup>4</sup> see Denis Balsom, 'The First Welsh General Election', in J. Barry Jones and Denis Balsom (eds.), *The Road to the National Assembly for Wales*, 2000, pp. 211-228.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Harries, 'Cwmlllynfell Colliery: An Early Attempt to Form a Workers Co-operative', in *Llafur*, vol. 7, no 2, p.51

<sup>6</sup> Charlie Kimber, *Wales: Class Struggle and Socialism*, 1999, p.40.



or, moreover, actual ideologies with other political parties. These will be noted if, or where, they become evident.

If, hopefully, a clearer understanding of Plaid Cymru's ideology transpires from this thesis, then any attempts to further investigate the comparative nature of party politics in Wales - be it from a structural or ideological position - should be made easier as more detailed knowledge and analyses of individual party ideologies emerge. Furthermore, it is worth re-emphasising that the methodology and the Freedinite ideological model that will be employed in this thesis could be equally applied to the Labour Party in Wales, or indeed any other political party throughout the world. Thus, although it is Plaid Cymru that is being dissected, using Michael Freedon's ideological model, it should not be seen as being a cocooned or isolated study of party or theoretical paradigm alone.

What this thesis will contend is that for the last eighty years nationalism has been used as a motif - a 'flag of convenience', in other words - by Plaid Cymru and its observers alike, without any particularly extensive ideological underpinning, or any detailed understanding about the usage of nationalism within political vocabulary. Similarly, the possible consequences of associating the ideas of Plaid Cymru with the ideology of nationalism appear to have been put to one side. Hence, a thorough investigation of these matters needs to be embarked upon. To these ends, as, according to the Freedinite model to be used in this thesis, nationalism is not a *full* ideology, and as other ideologies and ideological concepts noticeably arise if any detailed reading of the party's political outlook is undertaken, then the ideological variations at work

within the party need to be analysed and assessed in order to uncover the precise ideological framework of the party, and its conceptual constitution.

To perform this task, therefore, this thesis will initially look at the structure of ideology, some definitions of nationalism, and the contention by Michael Freeden that nationalism is not a *full* political ideology. The thesis will then focus upon the genealogy of the political thought that fed into Plaid Cymru, along with its formative ideational development and the evolution of Plaid Cymru as a political party offering an ‘alternative’ ideological voice. After a study of the party’s ideological shape and its apparent *raison d’etre* is considered, the thesis will then concentrate upon ideologies and ideological concepts that have arisen within the party since its formation, and it will attempt to appraise them in fine detail. What this thesis seeks to uncover, therefore, is, as close as it is feasible to expect from a thesis length investigation, the exact nature of Plaid Cymru’s ideology, or to use Freeden’s terminology, its ‘thought-practices’.<sup>7</sup>

### **Justification for the Thesis**

The uniqueness of this thesis will be its challenge to what appears to be the perceived notion that, in the minds of many of those writers who have considered it up to this point in time, Welsh nationalism as a political ideology, positioned primarily though by no means exclusively in the political party known as Plaid Cymru, is somehow incontestable. Being incontestable, according to these party observers, Plaid Cymru’s ideological underpinning – nationalism as these writers invariably see it – is

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, 2003, p.21

generally assumed to be all-embracing enough for the purposes of studying this particular party to a sufficient degree. While the actual nature and shape of Plaid Cymru's nationalism is put, sporadically, under the spotlight, the question of how nationalism and ideology should be defined in this context has remained for the most part unchallenged. This thesis will contest the idea that both Plaid Cymru itself, and those who have written about the party, are correct in their use of 'nationalist ideology', and what customarily amounts to nationalist ideology alone, to describe the 'thought-practices' that exist within the party; even though the party has modelled itself as nationalist on many occasions, but by no means at every occasion, and Plaid Cymru is usually perceived by the public at large to be a nationalist political party. This latter point arises, arguably, because, in both a pragmatic and a simplistic sense, nationalism has been the most expedient description for proponents, opponents and political commentators to adopt.

What this thesis will contend is that since its formation in 1925 the membership of Plaid Cymru has adopted a plurality of political ideas and standpoints. Hence, it is erroneous to assume that the party denotes any one all-encompassing political position or that in its political pronouncements it reaffirms time and again one 'grand narrative'. The 'myth' in relation to Plaid Cymru over the last eighty years has been the tacit assumption that the party has championed its policies and principles, which have long been assumed to be the prime elements of a coherent philosophy and ideology, under what appeared to be the most appropriate label; namely that of nationalism. It will also be argued within this thesis that there are ideological complexities within the structure and fundamental principles of Plaid Cymru as an organisation, and the 'thought-practices' and agendas of individuals within that organisation, that cannot be

overridden by simply labelling these political ideas as ‘nationalist’ or ‘Welsh nationalism’, without due care and attention being paid to the definitions of nationalism and an analysis of what this apparent Welsh version of nationalism is, and how it fits into the arrangement of political ideologies. If it isn’t at all clear that what is represented here is nationalism – as it will be argued later that nationalism is a ‘set of ideas’ and not merely a political theory or a concept within an ideology – then questions arise as to how clear Plaid Cymru’s message can be if it is aligning itself as a nationalist political organisation.

As this thesis is not a standard work of political science, psephology, or political history – though all three may be summoned in the course of this analysis – any answers, and indeed further questions, arising out of the thesis may have to be addressed at another time. Consequently, the prime concern of this thesis is political ideology and the exegesis of the ideological make-up of Plaid Cymru. With this in mind, it must be stressed from the beginning that it is Plaid Cymru itself that is the focus for this thesis and not the wider implications that a study of the more extensive issues regarding nationalism in Wales, in its various guises, would encounter; though naturally a certain amount of political, social, historical and theoretical overlap is inevitable in a study of this size and nature.

To commence this thesis, therefore, Plaid Cymru’s genealogy has to be scrutinised. As Michael Freeden has observed, “the history of an ideological tradition, the conventions through which it is understood and perceived, and its spatial diversities, must also play a central role in attributing meaning to the ideology in

question”.<sup>8</sup> An analysis of Plaid Cymru’s genealogy will help to explain what this thesis will conceive to be either the party’s ideologically fractured or pluralistic nature.

Through this analysis it should become clearer whether this fracture is dysfunctional and debilitating, certainly as far as any attempt by the party to declare ideological uniformity is concerned, or whether this fracture merely represents a pluralistic body of opinion; epitomised by individual party members or, intermittently, factions who are seemingly content to operate within inexact ideological parameters. Subsequently, only through this scrutiny will it be possible to uncover whether it is possible to declare that Plaid Cymru’s ideology is an *established, distinct* or *full* ideology, or whether the nationalism that has been attributed to Plaid Cymru is merely ‘a flag of convenience’ that has been adopted by Plaid Cymru strategists in the hope of stimulating an electoral impetus or uniting an otherwise overly divisive coalition within its ranks. Alternatively, it could be the case that nationalism is a label attached to Plaid Cymru by its political opponents. All political parties operate a degree of political propaganda in order to tarnish their opponents. Hence, the distinction between propaganda and scientific or theoretical evaluation needs to be remembered whenever Plaid Cymru’s adversaries describe the party’s political make-up.

Whilst baring the above in mind, it is nevertheless fair to add that if the ‘flag of convenience’ argument is to have credence then it needs to be established whether any attempt by Plaid Cymru to use the emotive iconography that comes with talk of ‘the nation’ and ‘national sentiment’, to engender a heightened sense of awareness about ‘all things Welsh’, is a deliberate policy strategy or whether it has shown itself through

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.5.

individuals within the organisation who have pushed for a more overtly Welsh-centric basis to the party's social and political policies. Hence, in order to create a more transparent picture of where those within the party sit on these matters it is important to analyse the set of political beliefs, narrow or extensive, that are currently residing underneath the banner of Plaid Cymru, first and foremost, and, as an appendage, Welsh nationalism. It must be made clear, however that the set of political ideas that could be termed Welsh nationalism, or nationalism in a Welsh context, is very much secondary in this thesis to an analysis of the ideology of Plaid Cymru. Therefore, although they cannot be dismissed totally, other Welsh nationalist parties and organisations will not receive close scrutiny through the course of this thesis. However, their presence, and their possible influence on Plaid Cymru, may be acknowledged at points throughout.

It should also be noted at this stage that the thesis will not lay too much emphasis on trying to explain Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' as somehow an appendage of its natural development or maturing as a political party. From birth, all political parties develop at a different pace depending on a variety of factors such as initial membership numbers, financial potency, the level of political experience and expertise at its disposal, and the gamut of extraneous factors that have either led to the party's formation in the first instance or weigh heavily against its prospects for longevity. Whilst accepting that Plaid Cymru faced its own particular challenges on these fronts, this thesis does not wish to overplay the ways in which this process of maturing has shaped the party's ideology. This is because many of the aforementioned factors are essentially non-ideological and could be labelled strategic or managerial. Party structures, occasional internal reorganisation, and, in recent years, the process of 're-branding' and taking on board the demands of a multi-faceted 24 hour news media

who are hungry for political information have all enabled the party to strengthen its base and broaden its appeal as it attempts to present itself as a 'professional' political organisation. Nevertheless, a line must be drawn as to the influence of ideology on these practical matters. This thesis, therefore, will engage with the debate on the party's maturing as a political party – and change therein – but it will leave the above-mentioned factors to one side and do it on the level of ideological development alone.

Similarly, the issue of Plaid Cymru being a 'broad church' that sweeps up the nationalistic, patriotic, cultural preservationist, and non-Labour 'soft left' vote in Wales is far too simplistic a basis on which to launch an investigation of the party's political ideology. 'Broad church' theories can be applicable to any mainstream political party that has to encapsulate views that may not be overtly or excessively rigid in their doctrines – unlike, arguably, fascism – and who have to seek some form of general consensus on policy and actions as opposed to the near blind, totalitarian-style, acceptance that may be commonplace within fringe or peripheral movements. Labelling Plaid Cymru's morphology as 'broad church' may be fine if, on a fairly casual basis, it is accepted that there is a range of opinion within the party and that the party itself can be placed within the mainstream of politics. Nevertheless, the task of this thesis is to go beneath the surface of some of these general labels to uncover what ideologies and ideological concepts are identifiable. The 'broad church' description, in this instance, is of little use to this thesis as it may merely act as a smokescreen. Further comments on the 'broad church' approach are noted later in this chapter in the literature review.

## **Methodology**

When broaching the topic to be discussed, there is the question of how an analysis of a party platform is executed. A political science method, concentrating on an historical approach that looks at a party's development, and the key figures and events therein, could be undertaken, and indeed this method would lead us into the realm of political ideas as every political grouping has to have some ideological base that either shapes, or acts in accordance with, that grouping's maturation. This thesis, however, will adopt a methodology that takes literature on the study of political ideology, its classification and interpretation, primarily from Michael Freedon but also from others writing in this field, and it will apply it not solely to the study of an ideology in itself – i.e. the study of socialism or liberalism – but to a political party that has, to date, been labelled as nationalist; albeit, it must be recognised, with little or no investigation as to whether this label, with all the assumptions that the nationalist tag implies, is appropriate.

The research methods undertaken for this thesis will be the use of primary and secondary literature relating to ideology, and in particular Michael Freedon's writings on the subject, nationalism, Plaid Cymru, Welsh political history, and contemporary Welsh politics. Furthermore, the political literature, official documentation and public pronouncements of Plaid Cymru will be assessed. In addition, a selection of contemporary Plaid Cymru politicians, officials, and party members will be interviewed. When choosing people to interview it was felt that inviting a small sample from a broad cross section of party members would be the most suitable approach to adopt. The status of the interviewees was established through initially ascertaining the



person's position and responsibility within the party. Research was then conducted, prior to interview, to create a concise biographical picture of the interviewee – i.e. Elfyn Llwyd's career from ordinary member to leader of Plaid Cymru in the House of Commons was noted. At the start of the interviews the role of the interviewee within the party was briefly discussed before the main task of ideological discussion was undertaken. For the purposes of this thesis it was felt that, principally, only the ideological, and not the biographical, detail of the interviews required any degree of scrutiny.

Having decided to use interviews as part of this thesis' methodology, it was intended that a gender balance, a geographical balance, and some representation from ethnic minorities, would be represented through the interviewing process. Unfortunately, all three of the above conditions were not met. This was down to either unwillingness by certain people to be interviewed, a lack of response to requests for meetings, or, in two instances, last minute cancellations by the interviewees, and, despite lengthy negotiations, the subsequent failure on their part to agree to reschedule times for interviews to take place. Where featured, the interview data should, therefore, be read as constructive and insightful comments by individuals as opposed to any scientific or psephological analysis of Plaid Cymru's thought. This thesis has attempted to portray this and makes no claims for individual views being construed as the accepted wisdom of the party as a whole.

The questions asked of the people who were interviewed were conceived in order to focus attention on trying to extricate what precisely were their own political convictions, their views on what they understood Plaid Cymru's ideology to be, their

perceptions of the various ideological concepts that have arisen throughout the party's history, and their reasons for belonging to Plaid Cymru. From this, a more definite picture, though by no means an unchallenged or perfect picture, should emerge of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'.

By using the model for classifying and studying ideologies enunciated by Michael Freeden, an assessment of all the gathered data outlined above should be possible. With the Freedenite model as an exemplar, a normative model of Plaid Cymru's ideology will be constructed in the concluding chapter.

### **Literature Review: Distinct Perspectives on Plaid Cymru's ideology**

While nationalism in Wales – which is generally and all too readily depicted as being simply the nationalism of the political party known as Plaid Cymru – has been looked at in a theoretical sense in the past, most notably by Thomas Combs<sup>9</sup>, Alan Butt Philip<sup>10</sup>, Charlotte Davies<sup>11</sup>, Hywel Davies<sup>12</sup> and, in further detail and in a more contemporary light, by David Adamson<sup>13</sup>, and Laura McAllister<sup>14</sup>, none of these protagonists has challenged the idea that 'nationalism' and 'ideology', coalesced as they unquestionably have been by these scholars into 'nationalist ideology', may not be

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Combs, The Party of Wales, Plaid Cymru: Populist Nationalism in Contemporary British Politics (Ph.D. thesis: University of Connecticut, 1977).

<sup>10</sup> Alan Butt Philip, The Welsh Question (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> Charlotte Aull Davies, Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: The Ethnic Option and the Modern State (New York: Praeger, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945: A Call to Nationhood (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983)

<sup>13</sup> David Adamson, Class, Ideology and the Nation: A Theory of Welsh Nationalism (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Laura McAllister, Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party (Bridgend: Seren, 2001).

the most appropriate medium for inquiry when investigating Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. This literature review will assess some of the views of the aforementioned writers, as laid out in their most prominent works on this subject, in an attempt to find out where these commentators see this 'nationalist ideology' in relation to the party's morphology, and to ascertain what other ideological concepts and ideologies they have attributed to Plaid Cymru.

### **Thomas Combs: Plaid Cymru's 'Populist Nationalism'**

As to the nature of nationalism itself, Thomas Combs, writing in 1978, acknowledged that "while nationalism may have to do with a people's feeling towards obtaining political autonomy in keeping with the principle of self-determination, it is not a complete ideology. It does not furnish a complete theory of social change nor of political action".<sup>15</sup> The label Combs wanted to attach to Plaid Cymru was that of 'Populist Nationalism'; this being a nationalism that is driven in a 'bottom-up' manner through working class activity. Trying to further clarify his position, Combs maintained that in order to extend its domain of discourse, "a modifying adjective is necessary when the nationalism of a particular movement is discussed".<sup>16</sup> As his work was primarily on Plaid Cymru and not on nationalism in general, the desire on Combs' part to seek to extend the divisions into which Plaid Cymru's principles could fall, by adding this 'modifying adjective', could be interpreted as a sign that Combs felt that Plaid Cymru's ideology could not simply be labelled as nationalist.

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<sup>15</sup> Combs, p.26

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*; p.26

The case that this thesis will attempt to make – namely that Plaid Cymru’s ideology does not fit in to any singular, established ideological position, such as that of nationalism – could be reinforced by Combs’ opinion when he defined ‘populist nationalism’. In describing his theory about ‘populist nationalism’, Combs claimed that “philosophically it couples the Lockean principles of the individualism and rationalism of man to the Rousseauian precepts of a moral goodness residing in the collectivity of a community; it couples a passion for social justice with a zeal for national freedom”.<sup>17</sup> If the word ‘national’ was to be removed then this is a classic post-Enlightenment liberal statement that would find little opposition from critics across the political spectrum in most Western liberal democracies. If Plaid Cymru, or indeed any other political grouping, championed these principles then these sentiments would find a high degree of popular support. If Plaid Cymru can relate these values to the Welsh electorate then the attainment of political power would appear to be a distinct possibility.

There is, however, an element of vagueness in these pronouncements by Combs, which he further exemplified later in his thesis. Combs remarked how he saw Plaid Cymru’s primary strength exhibited in the way that it accomplished a dual role of presenting the macro-level case for social and political progress for the Welsh nation whilst combining this with a forwarding of the micro-level case for the development of the individual. Then, however, having laid out what he believed to be the party’s dualistic principles, Combs continued by emphasising the liberal aspects of Plaid Cymru’s thought over its collective ambitions. While there is a clear onus on all things

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*; p.27

'national' within Plaid Cymru's language, as he remarked, "the fact is never forgotten that the basic political and social entity of their political system is the individual".<sup>18</sup> It could be interpreted that Combs was laying too much stress on liberalism as an ideological basis for the party's policies. That is until another angle on the party's ideological make-up is considered. This is because, interestingly, this onus on the individual has also been forwarded by one of Plaid Cymru's foremost theoreticians, and its former President, Gwynfor Evans. Evans has contended that "Welsh nationalists aver that the fundamental reality in society is the human person."<sup>19</sup> So Combs is possibly correct to have highlighted the accent put on the individual within Welsh nationalist discourse. However, confusion reined further when Combs linked this liberal appeal to the individual with another political ideology that doesn't naturally accommodate the concerns of liberal individualism. Having made great play of the party's attachment to non-conformist religion, he then remarked that "Plaid Cymru's concern for individual spiritual development, as well as its concern for satisfying the material needs of human beings, distinguishes Plaid Cymru as a unique type of socialist party".<sup>20</sup> It is evident then that, when assessing Combs' analysis of Plaid Cymru's ideology and its political philosophy, there is a degree of confusion – coming from Combs if not from the party itself – as to how to define, in the most accurate way possible, Plaid Cymru's beliefs and ambitions.

### **Alan Butt Philip and Cultural Preservation**

Alan Butt Philip has maintained that Welsh national consciousness has been

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid*; pp.160-161.

<sup>19</sup> Gwynfor Evans, *Plaid Cymru and Wales* (Llandybie: Llyfrau'r Dryw, 1950), p.10

<sup>20</sup> Combs, p.163.

occasionally stirred by the imperialistic attitudes of the English capitalist and educational establishment who, he has argued, “deplored the survival of the Welsh language”.<sup>21</sup> Butt Philip has contended that a measure of radicalism emerged in Wales that sought to counter this perceived ‘attack from outsiders’. So, whilst this new oppositional politics sat at that time within a liberal and non-conformist context, the idea of ‘the nation’ and ‘nationalism’ invariably came into play as there was a mood of dissension towards the ‘Other’; the notion of opposition to ‘the Other’ being a vital component within nationalist thinking. There is an accompanying line of reasoning that could be introduced into Butt Philip’s argument about the presence of ‘the Other’, however, which is that within Wales, as in many other small nations or colonised territories, the notion of *ressentiment* is never far from the surface; *ressentiment* being a psychological feeling of suppression and envy that normally arises in locations where some form of extrinsic rule has been, or still is, operational.

One counter to *ressentiment* could be the continual use, as a political tool as well as a practical vernacular, of indigenous languages. It could be suggested that in Wales, as the Welsh language provided a clear boundary of distinction between the Welsh and the non-Welsh, this, not surprisingly, became the centrepiece of Plaid Cymru’s initial, overtly culturalist, programme. As Butt Philip noted of this initial programme – and this thesis would contend that this is remarkable for a party professing to be nationalist – it was not until 1932, seven years after its formation, that self-government found its way onto the party’s political platform.<sup>22</sup> So, in interpreting Butt Philip’s findings, it would be fair to comment that he regarded the ideological make-up of Plaid Cymru,

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<sup>21</sup> Butt Philip, p. 2

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*; p.14

certainly in its formative years, to be less populist nationalist or political nationalist and more akin to linguistic and religious preservationism.

Although other strands of opinion soon filtered into Plaid Cymru, it could be argued, and this thesis would be supportive of this view, that its inaugural political outlook does not appear at first glance to embrace the radical, socially transformative nature of Liberal or Labour politics at that time. As Butt Philip has asserted, in character it was “essentially intellectual and moral in outlook and socially conservative”.<sup>23</sup> This theme of conservatism, allied, as Butt Philip and others saw it, to religious observance and a rejection of far-reaching changes, particularly when it came to social and moral affairs, will be further discussed at a later point in this chapter. In addition, the debate about conservatism as an ideology within Plaid Cymru will resurface at times throughout the thesis.

### **Charlotte Davies: ‘The Threat of Anglicisation’**

Like Butt Philip, Charlotte Davies, in her 1989 monograph *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*<sup>24</sup>, that was based on her earlier Ph.D. thesis, *Ethnic Nationalism in Wales*<sup>25</sup>, accentuated the importance of religion within the development of Plaid Cymru in particular, and the Welsh nationalist movement in general. Davies noted the link between religion and language when she commented on how the industrial working classes challenged anglicization through their association with non-conformity. For Davies, “most anglicized landowners retained their Anglican Church

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid*; p.15

<sup>24</sup> Charlotte Davies, *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*

<sup>25</sup> Charlotte Davies, *Ethnic Nationalism in Wales*, (Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1978)

affiliation and since the nonconformist chapels were further differentiated from Anglicanism by their use of the Welsh language, nonconformity became closely associated with Welshness".<sup>26</sup> Whereas Butt Philip saw the English industrial and educational classes as figures for the Welsh to rebel against, Davies also highlighted 'the Other', but in this instance, as an example of a body that produced a discordant note among Welsh people of that period, it happened to be the Anglican Church. Taking both of the above points, it would be plausible to argue, and this thesis would supportive of this viewpoint, that the notion of retrenchment played a significant part in Welsh nationalist opinion in the time period covered by Butt Philip and Davies.

By accentuating Welsh traditions and norms as positive, a channel opens up into which notions such as fear of the unknown, or apprehension about outside influences, can ferment. Those advocating a 'Wales first' position, or those like the clergy who, on the whole, sought to maintain social and religious continuity, could be enticed into this position of retrenchment; albeit from different, and possibly contending, angles. Apart from providing for an 'us' and 'them' worldview, therefore, this opposition to the 'Other' is a clear example of the style adopted by Plaid Cymru that was to prove far more reactive than proactive. This reactive position came about because offering rhetoric that countered perceived or actual threats from an outside quarter – in these cases threats from both the Anglican Church and from the advancement of the form of industrialisation that would be associated with capitalist investment, and investors, from outside of the Principality – was a lot easier than attempting to formulate distinct and innovative political policies.

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<sup>26</sup> Davies, Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century p.11



So how did this opposition to 'English' ideas and practice manifest itself in nationalistic terms? Here, Davies' specific reading of Welsh nationalism is advanced as she saw a change in the early Twentieth Century as "Welsh national historians...created a history of and for the Welsh nation".<sup>27</sup> This is a political strategy in which history, both factual and mythical, is fostered in a certain way for a certain purpose. What Davies believed subsequently happened was that "this fundamental shift in the treatment of the history of Wales altered the ideological basis of Welsh nationalism; it played a central role in the early stages of nationalist elite recruitment".<sup>28</sup> Hence, according to Davies, there was an emphasis by those of a nationalist leaning on promoting and re-inventing the history of Wales. This accent on creating a sense of historical awareness succeeded to the extent that it played a crucial part in the emergence of both a 'nationalist culture' – albeit one that was predominantly confined to a sector of Welsh and London-based academia and the religious fields and, therefore, was hardly indicative of a nationwide upsurge – and the political philosophy of Plaid Cymru. Furthermore, Davies has noted how history, and in particular the mobilisation of historical memory, through all of its periods and guises, was used "to justify the nationalist position"<sup>29</sup>. Exemplifying this, one of the founders of the party and its first president, Saunders Lewis, argued that Plaid Cymru should look beyond the Nineteenth Century 'age of nationalism'. As an alternative, Welsh nationalism should take inspiration, Lewis believed, from "the early Middle

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*; p. 15

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*; p. 15

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*; p. 29

Ages, when respect for a diversity of cultures was combined with an acceptance of the international moral authority of the Christian Church”.<sup>30</sup>

### **Hywel Davies: Plaid Cymru’s ‘Conservative Traditionalism’**

Hywel Davies’ work, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945: A Call to Nationhood*<sup>31</sup>, as well as offering an examination of Plaid Cymru’s formative years, meticulously describes the events and circumstances leading up to the establishment of the party. Early on, therefore, Davies outlines the existence of Welsh nationalism in its disparate guises before 1925. What is noticeable upon reading Davies’ account is that by the end of World War One, and certainly by the early 1920’s, people in Wales with nationalist sentiments were looking for radical solutions to the myriad of problems that they had to encounter. This, on its own, is not an astonishing revelation as a mood of change was conspicuous as a post-war generation sought major improvements in their daily lives and often the conduits for achieving these improvements were radical political forces. As far as nationalist sentiment was concerned, however, Davies has observed that Ambrose Bebb and Saunders Lewis were proposing radical solutions, albeit separately at the time. For Davies, these were “two young academics at the front of abrasive nationalism”<sup>32</sup>. The surprising element of this is not that an abrasive nationalism was in existence, as nationalism in its various forms had become an integral, though admittedly marginal, part of the Welsh political landscape by the 1920’s, but that the radical form and direction that this abrasive nationalism was to take was through the championing of the “theme of conservative traditionalism”<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid*; p.30

<sup>31</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party*.

<sup>32</sup> Hywel Davies, *op.cit*; p.35

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

Arguably, this ‘conservative traditionalism’ could appear to be contradictory to any radical agenda, and it would certainly not appear to be indicative of the rapidly evolving socio-political climate of the time as far as politics in Wales and the UK were concerned; although cases of radical conservatism were emerging in parts of continental Europe at that point in time, partly as a reaction to the events of World War One. Furthermore, by bifurcating the two components of ‘conservative traditionalism’ it becomes clear that, when put against the perceived ideology of nationalism and the concept of radicalism, in their Welsh context rather than in a broader context, ideological conundrums could manifest themselves as some of the considerations may have run against the prevailing political thought and political practicalities at that time. Taken in its entirety, therefore, whilst not unworkable or necessarily invalid as a line of reasoning, this advocating of radical conservatism may have proven problematic for a political party whose ideological basis was, to say the least, indeterminate.

In addition, if Hywel Davies viewed Plaid Cymru as a nationalist party – which he did – with an agenda to achieve a transformation of Welsh society, then how does Ambrose Bebb’s desire to instigate this new Wales through a defence of “order, tradition, and heritage, authority and reason”<sup>34</sup> square with this radical intention. In his writing, Davies commendably noted Bebb’s positioning on this matter but he did not appear to examine the possible ideological contradictions contained within. Furthermore, Bebb’s pronouncement that he wished to see the Welsh nationalist

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid*; p.36

movement engaged in a campaign to “save Wales from its present conditions and to make it a Welsh Wales”<sup>35</sup>, cannot be equated, uncomplicatedly, to the disposition of conservatism, wherein there is attachment to minimal change and the preservation, in their current form, of social and political institutions. What this reveals, as will be highlighted later in this thesis, is that certain concepts within Plaid Cymru’s ideology, and certain ideologies when they are juxtaposed with Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’, can appear incongruous in their computation and usage.

In evaluation, this thesis would contend that whilst Hywel Davies provided a scholarly overview of the first twenty years of Plaid Cymru’s history, it may be fair to state that he did not probe Plaid Cymru’s ideational development to a very great degree. This may be attributed to the fact that Davies is recognised as a political historian as opposed to being an authority on theory and ideology. While acknowledging Davies’ considerable contribution to the account of the party’s maturity, it nevertheless remains the task of this thesis to endeavour to unravel the ideology of Plaid Cymru and to attempt to emphasise some of the contradictions in ideological content either attributed to the party or produced by the party since its inception.

The four writers covered up to this point in time – Combs, Butt Philip, Charlotte Davies, and Hywel Davies – have seen the political ideas of Plaid Cymru and Welsh nationalism as part and parcel of the historical development of Wales itself. In this sense, Plaid Cymru’s emergence is portrayed as a natural, evolutionary reaction to

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid*; p.37

events – the decline of the Welsh language, the threat to nonconformity, rapid industrialisation, etc. – that is rooted in the events of its age. But did this period of Welsh history necessarily entail the emergence of a nationalist party or the advancement of nationalism as a political stance? Was it a case of Wales just being representative of European political culture at that time – exemplified in the case of Wales’ fellow Celtic country Ireland – that appeared to spawn nationalist and patriotic political parties on a regular basis? Whatever the answer may be, and it is not strictly a condition of this thesis to find a definite or definitive answer to these historical conundrums, while Combs, Butt Philip, Charlotte Davies and Hywel Davies put forward some interesting historical perspectives, the aforementioned scholars offer few insights when trying to locate and identify the ideology or ideologies at work within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’. It is therefore apt to examine the work of two more recent scholars who have taken varying approaches to the subject under discussion.

### **David Adamson and ‘Class as a Prime Mover’**

Like Butt Philip, David Adamson also brought the growth of industrialisation in Nineteenth Century Wales into view. Adamson deemed this period – the transition from a feudal to a capitalist society – to be one of great social and economic complexity. While class differences and disputes between the landed gentry and the new capitalist owners were much in evidence, Adamson directed his attention upon the relationship between landlord and tenant, in what was still a predominantly rural landscape. What he has claimed is that, during this period, there was “an ever widening social chasm between landlord and tenant”<sup>36</sup>, and within this “the most visible

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<sup>36</sup> Adamson, p.104.

dimensions of this chasm were the differences of language and religion".<sup>37</sup> So it is insightful to note that there is evidence of a recurring theme of alignment along language and religious grounds. Where Adamson's thesis differed from the aforementioned scholars, however, is in the way that Adamson saw the class struggle feeding off these other aspects of Welshness. He remarked that "substantial numbers of the working class would have been in contact with the cultural practices and ideology of Nonconformity".<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, to increase the link between the working classes, 'their religion' and 'their nation', Adamson contended that "Nonconformism celebrated its Welshness, the language of worship was Welsh and the cultural practices of an imagined past were cultivated and extended".<sup>39</sup> Extracting an observation from all of this, it is simple to calculate how religion could act as a feeder for working class and nationalist sentiment to combine.

The problem was, however, that despite the fact that the working classes packed the congregations, Nonconformism had an uneasy relationship with these working classes, and with the notion of working class radicalism in particular. As Adamson noted, "Nonconformism was preoccupied by its temperance campaigns and the more fundamental objective of the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales".<sup>40</sup> These Nonconformist concerns were to find a more accommodating home among Liberals – no more so than when the Liberal, Henry Richard, won the parliamentary seat of Merthyr Tydfil in 1868 with a campaign based on "opposition to the Anglicized characteristics of the landed gentry"<sup>41</sup> – than they were to among the nascent trade

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid*; pp.104 -105

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*; p.116

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*; p.117

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*

union organisations, and later the Labour Party. Eventually, it was the central concerns that the Nonconformist ministers had preached about incessantly – religious dedication, temperance, non-violence, and moral probity – that found their way out of the Liberal Party in Wales and into the moral and political ethos that constituted the ideology of Plaid Cymru.

Looked at in the specific context of time and place, arguments may be put forward at this stage to show that, when compared to those of the Labour Party, Plaid Cymru's roots may stem from a more socially conservative but politically liberal position. This may prove a challenge to those who see similarities in the development and political philosophies of both parties. It may, if taken one step forward, militate against the aforementioned reasoning regarding the 'symbiotic' relationship between Plaid Cymru and Labour. Although Adamson's examples concentrate on a period prior to the formation of both parties, there may, nonetheless, be seeds of difference and discontent being sowed that would highlight difference in the decades ahead, and also provide some ideological bases to show the variations between Labour and Plaid Cymru. In addition, it may also help to explain some of the animosity evident whenever both parties engage in political debate. However, this is merely speculation and it is not the job of this thesis to investigate these angles any further.

### **Socialism and the 'National Popular'**

Returning to Adamson's assessment of historical and ideological developments, he has commented on how non-working class Nonconformists saw the rise of socialism within industrial Wales as "a foreign import, alien to the culture and values of Welsh

society”<sup>42</sup>. This rejection of the ideas of socialism by the more affluent members of the congregation would have inevitably led to a decline in the adherence of the more militant elements of the working class to the ways of the chapel. Nevertheless, by the end of the Nineteenth Century, Adamson has maintained, Nonconformity had “performed the role of an ideological cement in establishing a Welsh bourgeoisie as a Jacobin class in the Gramscian sense. They had created a ‘national popular will’.”<sup>43</sup> What Adamson claimed had happened was that Nonconformism had acted as a gelling agent to hold together different classes, although many among the working classes had seen their faith wane, and to create a bulwark against outside ideas; be those ideas emanating from socialist organisations or from the Church of England. What had occurred, in Adamson’s words, was the emergence of “a ruling class ideology based on Welsh Nonconformist radicalism. In that sense, the Welsh bourgeoisie were a progressive class, sweeping aside the landed gentry and its political domination and establishing a capitalist class society.”<sup>44</sup>

One of the potential problems with Adamson’s theory is that religion – even a supposedly radical strand of religion such as Nonconformity – is quite often portrayed by its detractors as being an essentially socially conservative ‘set of ideas’. This is because of the fact that most religious orders lay great claim to hierarchical structures and preach a sense of communal continuity; although, this thesis would maintain, this may be something of a Westernised perception as examples such as Liberation Theology exist which challenge these conservative assumptions. Nevertheless, even if

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*; p.120

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*



the Nonconformist religion did play a very substantial part in opinion-forming in late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century Wales, one question that needs to be asked is whether there really was enough structure and substance within this form of religion to have enabled a nationalist political party to formulate political policies from out of its midst?

For Adamson's theory to have any credence then, it could be argued that religion within Wales – in the form of the chapel and Nonconformity – would be one of the pillars of civil society that would be opinion forming and would help to secure the 'national-popular'. If that is so, then it could be proposed that the influence of religion should remain a vital part of nationalist thinking, and a major part of Plaid Cymru's make-up, to this very day. If nationalism, and the 'national-popular', was such a potent force in association with religion, and if both became embedded in the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru at an early stage, then surely this 'nationalism / religion' link, or at the very least remnants of it, should have endured. Even allowing for the fall off in church attendance throughout British society as a whole, it is evident that this symbiotic relationship between chapel and Welsh nationalism, if that indeed is what it was, has not proven to be unbreakable. Certainly, if this translates into Gwynfor Evans' prophetic announcement that if the "national life of Wales be destroyed... the loss will be felt not only by Welshmen; one of the springs which quicken civilisation,

democracy and Christendom will have dried up”<sup>45</sup>, then the future for Wales, Welsh nationalism, Plaid Cymru, and the affinity between chapel and nation looks incredibly bleak.

Where, it could be contended, nationalism fits in to all of this is in the fact that Nonconformity, certainly during its Nineteenth Century pinnacle, offered its adherents a vision of a devout, traditionalist, and still relatively unimpeded Wales. By eschewing extraneous ideas and practices it inspired generations to ‘think Welsh and act Welsh’. It is out of this parochial, essentialist cradle that the pioneers of Welsh nationalism, in the guise of Plaid Cymru, emerged. There was a lull, however, between the end of the Nineteenth Century and Plaid Cymru’s formation in 1925 that had seen the rise of the Labour Party with its socialist and internationalist message, the decline in religious adherence after the parenthesis of the 1904-5 religious revival, and the collapse of the Liberal Party as the standard bearers for radical and nonconformist politics. During all of this activity there were ideological fluctuations – vacuums even – that gave the founders of Plaid Cymru the opportunity to create space both for their individual ideological development, and for the collective ideational progression that contributed to the evolution of the new party.

What was evident to Adamson, however, was that by 1925, “nationalism as an ideological cement between an indigenous bourgeoisie and working class was redundant: nationalism was no longer articulated with class struggle.”<sup>46</sup> Where it is possible to debate with Adamson on this point, this thesis would contend, is that it is

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<sup>45</sup> Evans, p. 12

<sup>46</sup> Adamson, p. 123

by no means certain that the case had been made for this ‘ideological cement’, which somehow united proletariat and bourgeoisie in a nationalist hybridity, in the first place. It should also be affirmed, recalling that this was a period in which class differences and hierarchical social structures were accentuated on a daily basis, that this would have been a hybridity that would certainly have been at variance with the prevailing mood of the time. If a glance is cast at the formative nationalist thinkers in Wales – people like Saunders Lewis and the Reverend Lewis Valentine – they were not deemed to be members of the working class. Indeed, as one Plaid Cymru Assembly Member, Rhodri Glyn Thomas, has observed of this period, “we used to be a party of ministers and teachers and lecturers”.<sup>47</sup> If by 1925, as Adamson has maintained, there was this breakdown in nationalist momentum, for whatever reason, then it would appear inevitable that a fresh environment had to be created in which theories about the direction in which Wales and Welsh society were heading, and the very matter of Welsh nationalism itself, could be discussed. Whatever the history that ran before it, there appears no doubting the fact that the establishment of Plaid Cymru did at least offer a chance for a new political forum to be inaugurated; a forum through which some of those existing ideologies and ideological concepts could be deliberated upon.

### **Laura McAllister and the Emergence of Plaid Cymru**

Laura McAllister took up the development of nationalist ideas in this era when she focussed upon one of the founders of Plaid Cymru, Saunders Lewis. McAllister viewed Lewis as the key player in the formulation of Plaid Cymru’s initial political and philosophical outlook. She believed that it was “Lewis’s personal conviction that

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<sup>47</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, interview, 14.05.2001

nationalism was a separate, distinct political philosophy, not merely an appendage of another ideology, that gave impetus to the foundation of an independent party”.<sup>48</sup>

McAllister then continued by pinpointing a speech that Lewis gave to the Welsh School of Social Service in 1923. She noted that during the course of the speech “he argued that nationalism was a doctrine of conservation and preservation (echoing Edmund Burke) and could not be represented by either the individualism of the Liberal Party or the socialism of the Labour Party.”<sup>49</sup> What is noticeable from this, and other, exploratory political pronouncements by Lewis and the instigators of Plaid Cymru was the insistence that any identifiable political content, recognisable ideology, and creative ideas that sprang from the formation of the party should be deliberately played down. As Lewis had said back in 1923, “adopting a definite policy would tie us down before we start work.”<sup>50</sup> As it turned out, only a commitment to the Welsh language, and the indeterminate notion of ‘the championing of Welsh civilisation’, were proclaimed. Where Lewis was unflinching, however, was in his belief that nationalism, in union with religious and historical awareness, was the only hope for the continuation of the Welsh nation.

### **Plaid Cymru’s ‘Sub-State Nationalism’**

On the matter of dissecting nationalism into its component parts, McAllister saw Plaid Cymru as a group of ‘sub-state’, or ‘minority’, nationalists. ‘Sub-state’ nationalism is labelled as such because it seeks to secure or expand the cause of ‘the nation’ – which is a clearly demarcated territory – even though ‘the nation’ exists

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<sup>48</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.23

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*; pp.23-24

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*; p.24

within a larger state structure. McAllister's assessment of Plaid Cymru as 'sub-state', or 'minority', nationalists would appear appropriate if Paul James' definition of Wales as a 'sub-state' nation, or, as James put it, one of the "self-proclaimed 'nations'"<sup>51</sup> is considered. In James' definition, 'sub-state nations' vary from other types of nations. These other types, as James saw them are 'diaspora nations' – self-proclaimed but scattered nations that hold a calling for their people, like the Jewish homeland of Israel – and 'irredentist nations', where recognition of the nation extends beyond its state borders and therefore a sense of re-establishment enters the arena.<sup>52</sup> James' example of an irredentist nation is Somalia, "where at least a third of their population lives in neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti".<sup>53</sup>

Of the three types outlined by James, Wales cannot lay claim to classification as either a 'diaspora' or an 'irredentist' nation. Wales clearly falls into the first, the 'sub-state' variety, because, the relatively small Welsh settlements in Patagonia and Pennsylvania aside, it has no identifiable diaspora who would lay claim to Wales as their homeland. This can be put down to the historical reality that, unlike Scotland and Ireland in a British Isles context, there was never any major migratory flow out of Wales. Whether this was due to the fact that Wales never suffered from anything like the Highland clearances in Scotland or the Potato Famine in Ireland, or whether it is simply a lack of adventure on the part of the Welsh people, the evidence remains that, barring the people who left to work in the mines or schools of England, many of whom later returned, there has never been an exodus out of Wales. Had there been one in the

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<sup>51</sup> Paul James, Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community, (London, Sage, 1996), p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*; p. 14

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*.

18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries then the language, and to a lesser extent religious nonconformity, may have incurred a fatal blow due to the fall in participating numbers. This would have undoubtedly affected the appearance of nationalism as a body of thought in Wales at this time.

Furthermore, any diminution in the indigenous population would have had an influence in either delaying or hurrying along the emergence of Plaid Cymru, or some similar political party, or, likewise, in either moderating or intensifying its claims. Moreover, and despite a relatively turbulent history, nationalist voices within Wales have never made any irredentist claims on any land or peoples outside of Wales' territorial borders. Given these facts, it would therefore be logical to assume that any group purporting to represent Welsh nationalism would fall into the category of 'sub-state' or 'minority' nationalists as opposed to 'diasporic' or 'irredentist' ones. McAllister's classification of Welsh nationalism, in the guise of Plaid Cymru, as 'sub-state' or 'minority' nationalism would thus appear to be relatively accurate. However, as this thesis will explore, this all depends on whether the morphology of Plaid Cymru can indeed be registered as nationalist in its ideational make-up.

With reference to the all of the aforementioned scholars, the particular field of nationalism, and the more general arena of ideology, whilst being acknowledged in the sense that these writers regard Wales as an historical nation with 'national claims' and a 'national conscience', have never been rigorously contested; although, in regard to ideology, Laura McAllister did emphasise that the "idea of an 'ideological cluster' (a shared outlook or opinion on the best form of organisation) may prove to be the most

productive way of exploring Plaid Cymru's ideology".<sup>54</sup> While it is possible to appreciate the general estimation that McAllister was trying to convey, which is that there is no one line or unitary political message to be drawn from a perusal of the party's proclamations, ultimately this interpretation may be too indistinct to be used and accepted as a basis for uncovering Plaid Cymru's ideology. This is because, if the 'ideological cluster' line of reasoning is accepted – that is if the line adopted for analysis sets out to explore the 'shared outlook' rather than the real differences of opinion and ideological stances – then the conclusions arrived at in this thesis, or any other thesis conducted in this area, could be regarded as generalisations. However, the 'ideological cluster' theory may prove useful for grouping 'thought-practices' together. Hence, from this basis, the study of individual ideological concepts could then ensue.

### **McAllister, Groth and Ideological Clusters**

In making her claim about 'ideological clusters', McAllister was interpreting the work of Alexander Groth, whose opinion it was that not every person who defines themselves by a political label believes everything that that ideology represents.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, according to Groth, within any given ideology the concepts that people associate with tend to be certain key factors with which they can broadly agree. As a result, debates over the minutiae of detail that is evident within an ideology can become more contentious than discussion over general ideological concepts or themes. On this reading, through recognising the divisive nature of appraising the minutiae of

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<sup>54</sup> *ibid*; p.157

<sup>55</sup> Alexander Groth, Major Ideologies: An Interpretative Survey of Democracy, Socialism, and Nationalism (New York, John Wiley, 1971), p.3

detail within a set of ideas, it is understandable that ideologies – and Groth cites democracy, socialism and nationalism as examples<sup>56</sup> – are therefore more extensive than restrictive in their content and representation, and are thus likely to appeal to more people. This is down to the fact that, as Groth claimed, “human biases...cluster,” over a period of time and with respect to a variety of situations”.<sup>57</sup> This viewpoint clearly has its limitations, however, as the consequence of this movement of peoples into clusters could be taken as an indication that eventually those separate clusters, affected as they are by ‘human biases’, would eventually coalesce into one singular giant ideological cluster. This may be a viewpoint forwarded by advocates of totalitarianism, for whom the existence of alternative ideologies is anathema and those holding those opinions, and indeed the alternative ideologies themselves, require either eradication or subsuming into the totalitarian ideology. However, for the most part, and taking our understanding of the development of political ideologies up to this moment in time, there would appear to be little or no evidence, or reason to believe, that Conservatism and Socialism, for instance, would inevitably cluster over a period of time.

It would be fair to assume that circumstances could arise, a war against a fascist dictatorship for instance, where those holding a multiplicity of ideological viewpoints took a similar or even a united stance. In this instance, however, this would probably arise as a consequence of external action rather than through some internal political impulse or through any ideological dialectic. The Groth theory of ‘ideological clusters’, as adopted by McAllister, is one that shall not be dwelt upon in the ensuing

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid*

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*



chapters, as, for the purposes of this thesis, it would be fair to maintain that it is too speculative in its overall conception. Also, it is probably accurate to assume that it does not provide any valuable insights into the ideology or ideologies at work within Plaid Cymru.

Nevertheless, the idea of the ‘broad church’ thesis, as alluded to at the beginning of this thesis, is one that some scholars of Plaid Cymru, including McAllister, have tended to favour. If, as McAllister has observed, Plaid Cymru “could be said to have no natural terrain of its own, beyond the core issue of defending things Welsh”,<sup>58</sup> then the idea of ‘broad church’ ideological clusters is an elementary one to advance; though it is fair to say that it is also a relatively superficial one as it does not get to the heart of the specific ‘thought-practices’ operating within Plaid Cymru. However, and always taking into consideration the fact that Plaid Cymru is a political party whose ultimate goal is political representation and the enactment of its manifesto commitments, as opposed to just an extensive political movement intent on pressuring the government or institutions of the day, it must be acknowledged that the concept of a ‘broad church’ ideological cluster is one that can readily absorb the prevailing mood of the electorate. That may be an adequate tool to adopt if someone was, for instance, conducting a political science thesis on the mood of the electorate and how they perceive any given political party as an electoral force. For the purposes of this thesis, however, it is not considered to be a necessary or adequate line to pursue in order to uncover the ideology, ideologies or ideological concepts that initialised Plaid Cymru in

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<sup>58</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.182

the first instance, and for investigating those same factors that have subsequently provided its sustenance.

If a political party is ideologically unified, or if their leadership demand ideological uniformity, as would be the case with a totalitarian party, for instance, then the 'broad church' thesis evaporates. The problem arises when political parties that are clearly not ideologically concordant, or parties that are not perceived in a uniform manner, have to operate as an electoral force in a democratic society. Hence, they are open to scrutiny both from within, and outside of, their ranks. In these instances, and it could be reasonable to propose that Plaid Cymru falls into this category, the ideology or ideologies of the party, and the individuals who make up that party, then have to negotiate, possibly continually, ideological fissures. Along these lines, and accepting that people within the party have varying ideological perspectives and political angles from which they operate, what this thesis proposes to do is to try to dissect the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru to discover precisely what arrangement of political convictions are present within the party and, also, to seek to determine whether or not Plaid Cymru can be seen as the organ through which any singular tangible ideology – presumably, given its categorisation as a nationalist party, the ideology of nationalism – exists.

The intention of this thesis, therefore, is to open the entire area of Plaid Cymru's ideology up for investigation. Furthermore, this thesis would claim that, after an inspection within the relevant arena, there appears little doubt that there is a gap at this point in time in regard to scholarly knowledge concerning the fields of nationalism, ideology and the interplay of these two subjects with regard to the political policies

and the fundamental principles of Plaid Cymru. Moreover, another objective of this thesis is that it will not merely provide a detailed examination of these themes but it will also serve as a benchmark from which further study of this subject and, hopefully, broader discussions on other political parties and the ideologies that they are generally associated with can commence.

To continue the dissection of the themes addressed in this thesis it is important, in the following chapter, to commence an examination of what ideology entails and why Michael Freeden's model is deemed correct for this thesis. Thereafter, an analysis of what concepts comprise nationalism will be conducted. Throughout, Freeden's writings on ideologies will be presented and then critically analysed.

## **Chapter 2: The Concept and Definitions of Ideology**

Before any exploration of nationalism or Plaid Cymru can commence the concept of ideology, its definition and utilisation, requires examination, as the term ideology will be used throughout this thesis.

### **De Tracy's Interpretation of Ideology**

The first notable interpretation of the term 'ideology' was made by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1797. The term's translation from that time has been accepted as meaning 'the science of ideas'.<sup>59</sup> De Tracy belonged to a group of philosophers known as the Ideologues and he used the term to refer to their dream of "bringing about a revolution in the nature of man and society by applying the principles of Newtonian science to the study of the human mind".<sup>60</sup> De Tracy was thus rejecting pre-Enlightenment metaphysical conjecture in favour of the creation, and subsequent application, of a rational blueprint from which a progressive society could emerge. Despite his initial interest in the work of De Tracy and the Ideologues, it was the Emperor Napoleon who first vociferously disparaged this new form of contemplation, as he sided with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church that had provided the basis for socio-political life throughout the *ancien regime*. Interestingly, as some people who are generally sceptical of ideology have done ever since, Napoleon thus dismissed ideology by "equating it with doctrinaire and utopian ideas".<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Henry Matthew Drucker, *The Political Uses of Ideology* (London, Macmillan, 1974), p.3.

<sup>60</sup> Noel O'Sullivan, 'Preface', in Noel O'Sullivan (ed.) *The Structure of Modern Ideology* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1989), p. vii.

<sup>61</sup> David Manning, 'Introduction', in David Manning (ed.) *The Form of Ideology* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1980), p.2.

## Marx and Ideology

The derogatory dismissal of ideology by Napoleon found some support later in the nineteenth century as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels criticised ideology for taking a naive view of man and society that is “unrelated to the class relationships dictated by the prevailing mode of producing artefacts”.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, for these theorists, ideology distorted relationship between man and the circumstances that surround him. Marx’s analogy wherein ideology acts in much the same manner as the *camera obscura* is a case in point. For Marx, in his writings entitled *The German Ideology*, “if in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-processes as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process”<sup>63</sup>. Having evaluated Marx’s observations on the form of ideology, and its usage within the historical and materialist development of societies, David Manning has claimed that Marx and Engels perceived ideology as merely “a systematic attempt to demonstrate the rationality of the existing distribution of wealth and the social utility of the order in which the wealthy hold positions of power”.<sup>64</sup> So, a pejorative account of ideology emerged that connected ideology, in Marx’s eyes, to a biased political or hegemonic class position.

For Michael Freeden, this nineteenth century attack on the scientific use of ideology proposed by de Tracy has actually proved to be quite beneficial. This is because “the Marxist approach to ideology has sensitized us to crucial aspects of

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Karl Marx, ‘*The Premises of the Materialist Method*’, in David McLellan (ed), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford, OUP, 1988), p.164

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p.3

human thinking in societies and about societies, and to the sources, limitations, and imperfections of such thinking.”<sup>65</sup> What its legacy does, in effect, is that it keeps ideology firmly rooted and focused, as Marx’s evaluation never allows ideological thinking to evade the prevailing realities of the socio-economic and political world. Where this conception of ideology may be seen to fall down, however, is not necessarily in its criticism of metaphysical variations, or indeed in its tendency to all too readily dismiss bourgeois thinking and practice, but, in its attack on bias, it is actually acting as the instigator and facilitator of bias itself. As Freeden has remarked, “the Marxist conception of ideology has placed scholarly blinkers on the variegated nature of ideology by encouraging certain analytical directions and readings rather than others.”<sup>66</sup> So, by claiming that ideology is a product and manufacturer of the class divisions within society, and that it is an instrument through which the ruling class holds sway, Marx’s interpretation of ideology is actually offering people a very limited and distorted view of how ‘thought-practices’ and political actions operate within a varied and complex set of societies. Hence, despite its importance as one of three main strands of ideological conceptualising, as will be explained later in this chapter, and although an analysis of Plaid Cymru’s ideology would have been perfectly viable using Marx’s explanation, the inclination of this thesis is to situate the framework for study within the liberal Freedenite school.

### **Ideology: A Functionalist Approach**

What has become clear through mankind’s study of political thinking is that the discourse of ideology has certain functions. For instance, it is reasonable to state that

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<sup>65</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*; p. 15

the notion of the social group being the locus for ideology, and that group's ideological mission to distort and control, in the case of the bourgeoisie, clearly plays a vital part in, for example, Marx's conceptions of ideology and political discourse. However, a functionalist approach to ideology, as proffered by writers like John Plamenatz<sup>67</sup>, has offered a revision of this idea. This perspective holds that "what makes a set of beliefs 'ideological' is neither its truth or falsity, nor its 'limited' or 'distorted' character, but the fact that it may be seen as serving to hold a group together or to justify its activities and to promote its interests".<sup>68</sup> At first glance, this may appear to be a similar interpretation to Karl Marx's, as groups are held together, or controlled, by a set of ideas and ideals, and it is through these groups that these ideas are originally enacted, and then subsequently flourish. One of the problems that Noel O'Sullivan has noticed in this functionalist approach, however, is that it is "ethically indifferent; in other words, all ideologies are equally good provided that they hold a group together, justify its ideals, and promote its interests".<sup>69</sup>

The functionalist approach is no doubt useful if a study of the actual operation of an ideology, assuming its purpose as a gelling agent is accepted, is to be undertaken. However, functionalism's recourse to group classification and group activity is far too binding for use in this thesis as it eschews 'lone voices' and assumes that political behaviour is perpetually conducted by people in clusters. If ideologies are to be considered as 'thought-practices' – in a setting where individuals are at liberty to indulge in these 'thought-practices', and where the exercise of ideology is not confined

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<sup>67</sup> Noel O'Sullivan, *The Politics of Ideology*, in Noel O'Sullivan (ed.), *The Structure of Modern Ideology*, p. 200.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*

to practices that are discriminatory along class (Marxist) or group (functionalist) lines – then placing ideology in a setting in which it has to conform to, and duplicate, group practice and structures does not allow for the fostering of individual ‘thought-practices’.

### **The Relativist View of Ideology**

Karl Mannheim goes some way with Marx on the notion that the ethical system in operation in any country at any chosen moment in time is simply a mirror of the views and values of the controlling group. Where Mannheim differed from Marx’s take on ideology, however, is in the way that Mannheim perceived ideology in relativist terms. In a stance that has been echoed through postmodernism, Mannheim went as far as to say that “an absolute standard is unobtainable”<sup>70</sup> and that “the very concepts of good and of right are purely ideological”.<sup>71</sup> What Mannheim did observe at work, nonetheless, is a world in which a particular group’s ideology is intrinsically nurtured from within their socio-cultural environment. On this reckoning, “whatever the variety of nature of ideas held among a social group may be, that group will have a definite ideology causally determined by its social circumstances”.<sup>72</sup> Within this strand of theorising there is a sense in which the rational individual is extremely limited in their operational scope as the external determinants weigh too heavily on individual, or even limited group, rationalisation. Mannheim’s concept of ideology therefore appears to be a very deterministic model of ideology in action and one that would severely limit the chances of a political party or movement influencing the direction that a society or

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<sup>70</sup> Luther Binkley, Conflict of Ideals: Changing Values in Western Society (New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969), p.4

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*



polity could take; indeed, this deterministic viewpoint could be interpreted as providing the basis for a negative disengagement between individual, or group, and the Mannheimian ‘determinant forces’ within society. Consequently, with its fatalistic message, this perspective could prove a barrier to political activism.

### **Seliger and ‘Inclusive’ Ideology**

Ideology, as presented in the instances cited above, is restrictive in the sense that it is limiting in its vista; either through its enactment as a class instrument in the writings of Marx or by its association with deterministic assumptions in the work of Mannheim. Martin Seliger, on the other hand, offered what Ian Adams has labelled an “inclusive account of ideology”.<sup>73</sup> Seliger viewed ideology as having two dimensions. These, according to Seliger, were “the ‘fundamental dimension’, ... where moral prescription is the central element; and the ‘operative dimension’, which is ideology in action and where technical prescription holds centre-stage”.<sup>74</sup> Seliger was thus offering an account of ideology that embraced both its function and its content. For Seliger, and also for David Manning, “there is no question of identifying a specific ideological project, since every political position is intrinsically ideological”.<sup>75</sup> There is clearly a visible difference between this interpretation and the explanations of Marx and Mannheim.

What Seliger was attempting to create was a ‘total’ conception of ideology that was not liable to crack underneath the weight of its own political ambitions. In some

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<sup>73</sup> Ian Adams, The Logic of Political Belief (Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Noel O’Sullivan, ‘*The Politics of Ideology*’, in Noel O’Sullivan (ed.), The Structure of Modern Ideology, p. ix.

respects, therefore, Seliger could be seen as having undertaken a project to forge a conception of ideology – as a specific application of political thought and action – that could be relatively comprehensive and coherent, and where that ideology could, if required, be labelled as a specific type of -ism. As Seliger would contend, each and every person uses the raw material of ideology whenever we think politically.

Nevertheless, when ideology functions within its ‘operative dimension’, a political party – for the purposes of this thesis that party being Plaid Cymru – may still prove to be an ideological jumble. It is possible, therefore, for a political party to contain elements or concepts of, for example, liberalism, socialism, and conservatism within its patterns of thinking – its ‘thought-practices’ – whilst still lacking a unified source or, in the public’s perception, an ideological identification.

### **Freedden and ‘Thought-Practices’**

Borrowing, to a certain extent, from Seliger’s attempt to eliminate, or at least minimalise, bias from his study of ideologies, the intention of this thesis is not to imbue ideology with any restrictive or non-essential baggage. To exemplify this, and to adopt Michael Freedden’s reasoning on this matter, this thesis will use the term ideology to denote actual ongoing “political thought-practices”.<sup>76</sup> This is the conceiving and application of political ideas which, rather than being the preserve of a selective few, is instead “a communal activity taking place in social space and recurring over time”.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, ideologies act as instigators for human activity within society. This dynamic occurs because ideologies are “the arrangements of political thought that

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<sup>76</sup> Michael Freedden, ‘*Practising Ideology and Ideological Practices*’, in *Political Studies*, vol. 48, 2000, p.304.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*

illuminate the central ideas, overt assumptions and unstated biases that in turn drive political conduct".<sup>78</sup>

To undertake a study of an ideology, therefore, it is important that an analysis takes place in order to be able to categorise and dissect the ways in which this communal activity occurs, and to observe how these arrangements of political thought are structured. In addition, any analysis must focus upon how those involved in this communal activity not only "intentionally practice the art of political thinking"<sup>79</sup> but also "unintentionally express the social patterns which that kind of thinking has developed".<sup>80</sup> On this reading, therefore, thought engenders practice whether the practitioners realise it or not. Hence, the individual's thought and practice does have an effect, however small, on the direction of social events. Nevertheless, there are also shades of Mannheim's thinking entering the arena when it is recognised that the structures within society that are represented by changing social patterns – Mannheim's 'causal determinants' – cannot be dismissed out of hand. Consequently, and for the purposes of this thesis, any assessment of ideology using individual cases alone would turn out to be impractical, given the knowledge that a political party that incorporates a mass of people, albeit with individual ideas, is under scrutiny.

Following on from this, therefore, it would appear practical to conclude that the categorisation of ideologies is vital for the purpose of study, and for the advancement of our understanding of how we have arrived at a juncture wherein political ideologies

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<sup>78</sup> Michael Freedon, 'What is special about ideologies?', in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2001, p.6.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*

are identifiable as distinctive and symbolic blocs of policy and thought. Without categorisation – without, that is, the placing of these sets of political ideas into blocs or clusters – then each and every distinctive form of thought, of each and every human being, could be labelled as an ‘ideology-in-itself’, and would have to be categorised as such given that there is a contention that ideologies are ‘thought-practices’ that anybody can partake of. For practical purposes, however, it is easier for political analysts to contend with tens of ideologies, as blocs of thought, as opposed to talking about the six billion ideologies on earth.

The question that follows on from this, then again, is whether individuals respond to ideological concepts, ideologies, or ideological blocs, that are already operational, or whether individuals contribute *effectively* to the process of ideological formation. The answer, going on the evidence that has already been assembled, must be both. This is because there is continuous interplay between individuals and the ideologies, or ideological concepts, which they endorse. If this did not occur then stagnation would be instant, as there would be no mechanism for driving forward ideas within the group configuration. Though this may strike the observer as obvious within democratic societies and institutions, there must nevertheless be a high level of interplay between individuals and particular ‘ideological blocs’, even within ‘closed’ societies or totalitarian parties. Therefore, even taking into consideration the worst case scenarios, there must be still be some channels, albeit perhaps exceptionally limited, through which people can react to, and influence, social and political events and decision-making.

There is also the question of the legitimacy that each and every social and political authority requires in order for it to be effective; legitimacy being used here in a democratic rather than a non-democratic sense, whereby it can be attained through involvement in the due political process and political discourse in general as opposed to legitimacy to authority coming about through fear of persecution. Thus, the individual has far more ability to affect outcomes than is normally imagined; although the space available in which to display this ideological independence is more likely to be restricted in non-democratic societies. The individual is also in the fortunate position that they are not tied to any singular ideological position. Whilst not failing to acknowledge methods such as brainwashing, and political or educational inculcation, most individuals do have room to manoeuvre and rationalise, and the individual can change his or her opinions at a moment's notice because, importantly, most societies do not have structures that bind that individual and restrict their freedom to rationalise as individuals. This unprecedented degree of choice and 'free will' does not exist, to the same degree at least, for the institution or political organisation. This is because there are laws, constitutions, conventions and practices that severely limit their operation. There is also a utilitarian rule of thumb for these bodies that privileges the opinions of the majority over the minority. Therefore, while the individual can act in an unencumbered manner, those aligning themselves to political organisations are more ideologically restrained.

This unencumbered torrent of 'thought-practices', however, is an ideal scenario. The reality is quite different. What really occurs is not ideological 'free thinking' but rationalising that is limited by factors such as a person's socio-economic climate. As Michael Freeden has remarked, other restraining factors such as "cultural, temporal,

spatial and logical constraints”<sup>81</sup> also come into play. Likewise, many individuals are restrained by the exertions of history. This is noticeable, for instance, in black political thought, wherein the practice of slavery plays a key psychological part in the thought-practices of those advocating black political and cultural advancement. Nationalist discourse, similarly, is constrained to a certain degree; it is shaping discourse in a certain way. To exemplify this, it is evident in nationalist discourse that the setting of the nation, and its historical development, is a major component. So, similarly, is geographical positioning, with the factor of ‘the Other’, often a neighbour or some colonial force, featuring highly in its discourse and reckoning.

If we translate the conception of the aforementioned individual ‘free thinkers’ into a Welsh nationalistic setting, then it would seem unfeasible that there could be genuine freedom of thought and practice. This is because Welsh nationalist thought is influenced by, and, moreover, is beholden to, a perceived historical grievance. This ensures that it is attempting to operate whilst under both the constraints of the past – its historical grievance - and the constraints from adopting the concept of ‘the Other’ – its nationalist justification. Thus, Plaid Cymru, presuming that its position does not vary too much from this nationalist rendition of grievance, would seemingly be constrained in certain ways. It would appear from this deduction, therefore, that the individuals within Plaid Cymru cannot claim to be truly rational and unhindered in their thought.

When a more detailed assessment of Plaid Cymru is made later in this thesis these

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<sup>81</sup> Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 14.

issues will have a bearing on that party's ideological structure and the part played by individuals within that organisation. While looking at this interplay between individuals and their 'ideological bloc', in this case the ideological bloc being the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru, it will be important to determine what constraints, if any, are put on individuals, and on the party itself, by referring to themselves as 'Welsh nationalists', or through aligning themselves with the body of opinion known as nationalism. So, in all of this, the question of 'self-image' and 'self-expression' need to be considered. Moreover, when the thesis later examines whether nationalism is a *full* ideology, or some other manifestation of opinion, the practical ramifications of that outcome will have to be scrutinised in order to evaluate how that pertains to Plaid Cymru and the individuals that comprise it.

Although it is not the job of this particular thesis to examine this, it would also be apposite at some time in the future for someone to investigate why Plaid Cymru, or any political party for that matter, considers that it needs a specific ideology to cover its political opinions. If it is felt that identification with a particular ideology is not the most appropriate way in which the set of beliefs held by those party members can best be summed up, then one question that those other theses could ask is should the parties in the future seek to formulate, and register, themselves along the lines of organisations that incorporate a coalition of interests rather than one strand of opinion, as, arguably, they do at present under the label of nationalism, socialism or whatever.

## The Pejorative View of Ideology

Because this thesis will be dealing with a political party, Plaid Cymru, whose *raison d'être* is the attainment of a sufficient level of governmental power to enable it to administer its political programme, then any purely abstract and hypothetical interpretation and analysis of ideology would not have sufficient bearing on the aims of this investigation. The view of ideology as an abstraction that is somehow disengaged from the everyday social and political world is the pejorative or 'negative' view of ideology that has been forwarded by conservatives like Ken Minogue.<sup>82</sup> The contention that ideologues speculate about events which are entirely disengaged from the real world would appear to be defeating the objective of translating, or at least applying, political thought and discourse into realistic propositions that may subsequently transpire through political action. This is because political thought, in whatever form it manifests itself, has as its objective an ideal scenario, or at the very least a propitious outcome, that is rooted in the concrete political world. Notably, this thought does not inevitably have to involve a transformative programme of political action as even a desire to maintain the *status quo*, regardless of its conservative and anti-ideological connotations, is still an ideological vision of an ideal scenario or a propitious outcome.

Somewhat surprisingly, the conservative interpretation of ideology has certain similarities – albeit rather marginal ones – with Marx's view of ideology. This is because contained within each interpretation there is the idea that ideology somehow operates in a separate domain from everyday politics. Hence, in a conservative reading

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<sup>82</sup> Freedon, Practising Ideology and Ideological Practices, p. 303.



of ideology, ideologies may be portrayed as “metaphysical digressions”,<sup>83</sup> although, as was noted above, this is still in itself an ideological position, while a Marxist could argue that ideologies are “a distorting or illusory epiphenomenon”<sup>84</sup> that make interventions into concrete political actions. The most practical way of approaching and studying ideology, therefore, and the one that will be adopted in this thesis, is to regard ideology as both theory and practice – theory as the formulation of ideas, practice as the application of those ideas – in a “mutual relationship of interdependence”.<sup>85</sup>

While it is important to remember that each ideology has its own ‘relationship of interdependence’ with other ideologies and political concepts, it must also be acknowledged that each ideology has its own distinct features. Also, each ideology acts in an independent manner at certain times in order to achieve its aims, as nationalism does in the case of ‘national self-determination’, or to further its objectives, as socialism does in the case of the redistribution of wealth within socialist societies. Ideologies, therefore, have a complexity about them, and they are certainly not the monolithic entities that they are sometimes portrayed as being. The idea, for instance, that the ideology of Soviet-style Communism was monolithic, as portrayed by American conservatives in the Cold War era, best exemplifies the negative representation of ideologies as immovable, intransigent, and leviathan-like structures.

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*; p.302

## **The Use of Ideology in this Thesis: Why Choose Freeden?**

The concept of ideology that will be favoured in this thesis – that proffered by Michael Freeden – refutes this depiction of ideologies as entrenched and inflexible entities. This refutation seeks to explain how ideology is evolutionary, in the sense that ideologies are ‘thought-practices’ that are forever in motion. To this extent, there is a healthy unpredictability about their dynamic that prevents them from stalling or becoming vapid. This mode of progression within ideologies also ensures that there isn’t a limitation to their interpretation or application, and this allows restricted scope for those who seek to oppose ideology, albeit from an ideological viewpoint, to point out any negative connotations inherent within. All in all, therefore, the fluidity within ideologies has the effect of allowing a constant re-assessment to occur. However, rather than turning the ideology into an amorphous mass through this fluidic process, the opposite transpires as an equilibrium is maintained. This happens because the fundamental elements of the ideology – its core concepts – stay put while marginal elements of the ideology are re-appraised and, on occasions, reshuffled. This process, in its entirety, ensures that ideologies never settle into what could be deemed to be a monolithic state.

This thesis would contend that, in broad conceptual terms, there are three streams of ideological thought: the Marxist, the liberal, and the anti-dogma, or conservative, stream. Michael Freeden has cultivated his theory firmly within the liberal conception. When initial thought was given to the structure of this thesis, it was decided that a Freedenite analysis would be of particular interest as it represents a developing school of thought within the study of ideologies. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly as

far as this thesis is concerned, the liberal nature of Freeden's method allows for both variety and originality in application. It was therefore decided that the thesis would construct its central arguments through the use of this model. By adopting what may be termed a non-restrictive method of studying ideologies, Freeden has noted that "the student of ideology needs to be equipped with more than one methodological tool in order to elicit optimal information from ideologies and project on to them a more refined understanding".<sup>86</sup> Hence, it is the contention of this thesis, that, while observance is paid to other ideological streams and while this thesis does not wish to unduly disparage in any way those who choose to follow those other lines of reasoning, this thesis would contend that there is a certain malleability within the Freedenite school that enables a more lucid and in-depth examination of individual ideologies to occur.

Furthermore, this thesis would maintain that adhering to Freeden's construal is preferable as his model of the ideological concepts – concepts that may be pooled to constitute an ideology – is also of great benefit when analysing ideologies as 'sets of ideas'. This is because there are, encompassed within each ideology, ideological concepts that operate at varying levels of importance and ideational substance. These varying levels – Freeden's 'tripartite conceptual system' – will be explained in more detail later in this chapter. It is interesting to note at this stage, however, how the functions performed by Freeden's 'tripartite conceptual system' – the classification of concepts as either 'core', 'peripheral' or 'adjacent' with regard to the depth of their relationships to the ideology being observed – could be seen in similar terms to

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<sup>86</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.67.

Thomas Hobbes' remarks, in *Leviathan*<sup>87</sup>, on the state and its components parts, such as the Commonwealth, resembling a living organism. The analogy could follow that Freeden's 'core concepts' are akin to Hobbes' notion of the backbone or spine, in that they are essential to the survival of the corpus or ideology. 'Peripheral concepts', meanwhile, could be said to have similar functions to our fingers or toes. They play crucial roles and they form an important part of our body. Unlike the loss of the backbone, however, we could, survive without them. 'Adjacent concepts', on the other hand, are akin to our hair or skin colouring. They add to our, or an ideology's, overall make-up and present a particular angle or flavour. Ultimately, however, they merely compliment the core elements but are not crucial for our or, for the purposes of this thesis, an ideology's, survival.

Through the use of Freeden's model in this thesis, the depth and extent to which these ideological concepts operate within the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru can be assessed. These concepts will be rigorously examined later in this thesis and the views of individuals within the party as to their endorsement or rejection of these concepts will be highlighted, as one-to-one interviews with these individuals are conducted and the matter of Plaid Cymru's morphology is discussed. Overall, therefore, having taken everything into account, and having initially contemplated the investigative capabilities of other ideological strands, such as Marxism, it was calculated that, for the purposes of this thesis, Michael Freeden's consideration of ideology would be the most analytically useful.

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<sup>87</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, Penguin, 1993)

## Assessing Ideologies: What do they give us?

Since Daniel Bell declared in the 1950's that the world was now witnessing an end to ideology<sup>88</sup> – an argument that had certain parallels in the 'end of history' thesis advanced by Francis Fukuyama in the late 1980's, when Fukuyama heralded the triumph of free-market liberalism and indicated that this form of politics and economics was somehow distinct from ideology<sup>89</sup> – discourse and conjecture on the understanding of ideology, rather than abating, has actually increased. In the years following World War Two, during which there was an understandably high degree of scepticism towards any group or individual who espoused any political proposals that offered up conceptions of a perfect society, it is conceivable how, although it runs contrary to the Freedenite definition of ideology, Bell felt moved to proclaim ideology's demise. This is because it was evident that the advancing of political statements depicted as overtly 'ideological' came to be viewed as alarming in a world that was still agitated after experiencing fascism's grand designs, an unprecedented era of carnage and the inescapable reality of the Holocaust. It was around this time that most liberal social and political thinking became classed as 'non-ideological' or 'anti-ideological', as it was now the case that ideology was being portrayed as a menacing and divisive political instrument. Throughout this period, in the words of Michael Freeden, ideology "functioned as an exclusionary term".<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Drucker, *The Political Uses of Ideology*, p.38.

<sup>89</sup> Andrew Vincent, *Ideology and the community of politics*, in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1999, p.404

<sup>90</sup> Michael Freeden, *Editorial: Stormy relationships: ideologies and politics* in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1998, p. 8.

For the student of ideology, it may have been easier if Bell's declaration had been accurate because, as Andrew Vincent has indicated, in recent years scrutinising the province of ideologies has come to be accepted as a "significant, if deeply problematic, sphere of study".<sup>91</sup> These difficulties could be partly due to the assertion that within society as a whole, and in particular amongst those of the general public who could be described as being removed from the field of political activism, an "ideolophobia" is in existence.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, and more alarmingly when the scope for academic study and understanding is considered, Andrew Vincent highlights the negative responses to ideology inherent within "the components of political science, history and philosophy".<sup>93</sup> If an examination takes place of any aspect of political science or political philosophy in which the term ideology is evident, and it is difficult to imagine any area from which, in some form or other, ideology, being 'political thought-practices' as this thesis is portraying it, is excluded, then an understanding of the concept and its place within the world of politics is essential to any investigation.

### **Ideology and Political Philosophy: What is the Difference?**

Having assessed ideology as such, it is now essential to differentiate between ideology and political philosophy. Although there are kindred elements and structures within both political philosophy and ideology, the difference, according to Jonathan Wolff, is that "political philosophy is a *normative* discipline, meaning that it tries to establish norms (rules or ideal standards)".<sup>94</sup> So while the political philosopher

<sup>91</sup> Andrew Vincent, *Ideology and the community of politics*, p.403.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideologies as communal resources* in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 4, no.3, 1999, p.411.

<sup>93</sup> Vincent, *op. cit.*; p.403

<sup>94</sup> Jonathan Wolff, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Oxford; OUP, 1996), p.2

investigates what is on offer in any belief-system or concept, an ideologue has a firm set of beliefs, which he or she imposes on, or takes from, those self-same belief-systems or concepts. Political philosophy, therefore, is not a set of convictions. It is a process through which independent analysis can take place in order to attempt to uncover the reasons and convictions attendant in any issue. Ideologues, on the other hand, have ideas about certain issues. They have, in their own minds, a clear idea of how best to solve an issue or instigate a change in society through the implementation of a certain doctrine. Political philosophers can, and do, advance ideas about, for instance, the nature of society. But the task of ideology is then to 'decontest' those ideas.

Making a distinction not only between ideologies and political philosophies as such, but also in the methodology employed to study either field, Michael Freeden notes how "ideologies can fruitfully be approached as a major genre of political thought rather than...as poor relations of political philosophies".<sup>95</sup> In Freeden's view, and it is one with which this thesis will concur, the studying of ideologies should not entail any propensity towards any specific ideological attachment; meaning that it should be as objective as is humanly possible. If the analysis is imbued with a political predisposition, or if it is accepted that ideology is an instrument through which one distinct political persuasion holds sway, it is almost certainly going to affect the outcome of the analysis. Hence, it is the intention of this thesis to avoid one-dimensional arguments.

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<sup>95</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp.13-14

In Freeden's words, the purpose of the analysis of ideology should be "to explain, to interpret, to decode, and to categorise".<sup>96</sup> Hence, the task of judging an ideology's content, in terms of its appropriateness or inappropriateness as a basis for political action or opinion, should be left to others. This thesis will use Freeden's interpretation of ideology as 'thought-practices' in the non-discriminatory way that, it would be fair to conclude, Freeden intended it to be adopted. As 'thought' and 'practice' are two separate notions it could be contended that there will be discrepancies within the argument if the hybrid term 'thought-practices' is instituted. However, this thesis will assume that there is not a disjunction between 'thought' and 'practice' as it would be fair to anticipate that a symbiotic relationship would establish itself, with 'thought' inducing 'practice' and 'practice' indicating to others what the consequence of an individual's, or a group's, thought is, or could lead to. This symbiotic relationship, for Freeden, permits "constant intercourse between political conceptualization and the real world to which it relates and from which it springs".<sup>97</sup> Hence, there has to be the 'practice' element to ideology, as it cannot detach itself from the operational aspects of the political arena. In this respect, and reminding ourselves of the differences between the two aspects of political investigation, political philosophy can take a more distant view of events. Ultimately, therefore, the purpose of this thesis, and the reasons for using Freeden's methodology, is to uncover the ideology operating within Plaid Cymru rather than to give credit to, or discredit, the actual political opinions contained therein.

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid*; p.6

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*; p.39



## Nationalism as a 'Thought-Practice'

While it is important to recognise, for the purposes of the thesis, that there are both universal and particularistic aspects to nationalism in general, and each and every individual case of nationalism to be precise, it is an assessment of the depth and linkage between nationalism and ideology that is of primary concern. First and foremost, it is imperative to establish whether or not nationalism is in fact an ideology. To do this the thesis will initially present some contemporary views of 'nationalism as ideology' before moving on to the more detailed and specific argument advanced by Michael Freeden as to how the entities of nationalism and ideology should be considered and how any assessment needs to contemplate the configuration of an ideology. If nationalism is found to be a *full* ideology, using Freeden's reasoning, then it should have a recognisable structure and a consistent core of beliefs. Or, if it is found to be less than a *full* ideology, is it the case that nationalist sentiment and practice can still promote itself as political opinion, albeit in what may be an ideologically erratic manner, or, as is more likely to be the case, in a manner wherein it has blended with other 'thought-practices'. An example of the latter point may come about, for instance, if a study is made of 'third world nationalism', or 'developing world nationalism', of the type advanced by Frantz Fanon<sup>98</sup> and the New Left in the 1960s. Here it becomes evident that, at its core, this form of nationalism witnessed a fusion of nationalism and Marxism. Similarly, as has been mentioned previously, and as will be shown later in this thesis, Welsh nationalism started off as an expression of cultural sentiment. It then borrowed from ideologies such as liberalism and socialism. Into this environment Plaid Cymru was born. This, it may be possible to proffer, goes some way to explain how it

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<sup>98</sup> Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, (New York, Grove Press, 1963)

has no instantly recognisably coherent ideology at its nucleus. Given these examples, the question could be asked as to why most scholars still think that there is a coherent and identifiable ideology called nationalism, and why, in particular, those writers who have assessed Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices', insist on seeing nationalism as the overriding ideology.

### **Defining Nationalism: The Perspective of the Analysts**

#### **James Kellas and Nationalism as 'a form of behaviour'**

Like many writers on nationalism, Alan Butt Philip is one inquisitor who wanted to leave the idea that nationalism is an ideology unchallenged; although he did emphasise what, in his view, were nationalism's chameleon-like qualities. As he affirmed, nationalism "has a remarkable fly-paper quality which guarantees its continuation as a major influence in world affairs".<sup>99</sup> Rosalind Mitchison echoed Butt Philip's findings. For Mitchison, "it is the protean strength of nationalism ... that it can take many forms".<sup>100</sup> James Kellas reiterated this view of nationalism as an ever-changing phenomenon. Kellas maintained that "nationalist ideology can be left-wing, right-wing, constructive of new states or destructive of existing states".<sup>101</sup> Although Kellas was correct in stating that nationalism has arisen in various places at various times in different guises he, like most other writers on nationalism, used ideology to define nationalism's construction and persona. In Kellas' estimation nationalism is "both an ideology and a form of behaviour".<sup>102</sup> Engaging with Kellas' argument in this instance,

<sup>99</sup> Alan Butt Philip, 'European Nationalisms in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in Rosalind Mitchison (ed.) *The Roots of Nationalism*, (Edinburgh; John Donald, 1980), p.4.

<sup>100</sup> Rosalind Mitchison, 'Some Conclusions?' in Rosalind Mitchison (ed.) *The Roots of Nationalism*, p.159.

<sup>101</sup> James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*. (London: Macmillan, 1991), p.33.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*; p. 20.

this thesis would contend that while ‘nationalism as ideology’ is plausible as a system of thought, nationalism as ‘a form of behaviour’ must be a practice. What is interesting is to consider from what source do the people, like Kellas, who regard nationalism as ‘a form of behaviour’ obtain their principles, if not from the belief-system that is nationalism. A form of political behaviour, or practice, without any natural attachment to a theoretical root appears a bizarre concept.

When he goes on to consider nationalism in what he perceives to be its guise as an ideology, Kellas maintains that it is *the nation* that is the key element that marks out nationalism from other ideologies. For Kellas, “this idea and this agenda makes nationalism a special kind of ideology and behaviour, though it is closely related to ethnocentrism”.<sup>103</sup> In his indeterminate definitions of ideology, Kellas does not say why he links nationalism to ethnocentrism any more than linking fascism or communitarianism to ethnocentrism. He merely makes the undetermined claim that ethnocentrism and nationalism are “in the same broad area of human activity”.<sup>104</sup> Kellas perseveres with the notion that ideas and ideology are indistinguishable until he finally concludes that “nationalism never became a great system of ideas, as did liberalism or Marxism”.<sup>105</sup> As this thesis will seek to expand upon later, while it may not have the comprehensive content of either liberalism or Marxism, which may mean that it is not a full ideology, in the Freeddenite sense, nationalism is still very much a system of ideas. Indeed, “a system of ideas, norms and values, an image of the world and society”, is precisely how the sociologist Eugen Lemberg characterised nationalism.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid*

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*; p.29

<sup>106</sup> Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London, Arnold, 1994), p.4

Consequently, contained within the first thirty pages of Kellas' book, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*,<sup>107</sup> it is possible to observe the misconception that many respected scholars of nationalism make; namely that there is an unwritten law that nationalism is a political ideology that does not require any level of scrutinising in order to establish whether it is in fact an ideology. This is because for many scholars the concept of ideology is unproblematised. Using a chameleon as an analogy does at least identify the changing nature of nationalism but there appears to be a general complacency in the view that nationalist and ethnocentric ideas will somehow effortlessly coalesce – having undergone a minimum of internal dialectic – into a comprehensive set of ideals that may, or may not, be worthy of the tag 'ideology'.

### **Anthony Smith and the 'Filling out' of Nationalism**

Adopting a different approach, Anthony Smith is someone who did recognise the difficulty in placing too much emphasis on nationalism as a coherent, stand-alone political ideology. Smith laid great claim on nationalism having to combine with, and borrow from, as he conceived of it, "other kinds of movements and ideologies from liberalism to communism and racism".<sup>108</sup> Stressing the particularity of nationalism, given historical, geographical and socio-political circumstances, Smith believed that every nationalism needs to be "filled out by other idea systems"<sup>109</sup> as without these "nationalism's core doctrine provides no more than a basic framework for social and political order in the world".<sup>110</sup> Or, to be more precise, that *particular* world under

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid*; pp.1-30.

<sup>108</sup> A.D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. (London: Polity, 1995), p. 150

<sup>109</sup> *ibid*

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*

those *particular* circumstances, and at that *particular* point in time. Smith readily accepted that nationalism could both reflect and exploit these specific circumstances as it “combines a high degree of flexible abstraction with a unique ability to tap fundamental popular needs and aspirations”.<sup>111</sup> But what it cannot do, and what it does not pretend to offer, as Smith acknowledged, is to present to any given set of people “a comprehensive and consistent account of history and society”.<sup>112</sup> What nationalism regularly does do, often to its detriment, is to offer a mythologised account of history that gives preference to the indigenous culture and tends to conjure up chimerical notions about a return to a distant past when ‘its nation’ was, supposedly, a rural idyll. To this extent, modern figurations such as urban and multicultural life are sidelined or maligned.

But is this construction of history in the discourse of nationalism contingent or is it an essential aspect of nationalist rhetoric? This nationalist discourse may indeed provide the material on which ‘the nation’ is founded. An example of this is how the *Lega Nord* in Italy have used the language of nationalism to animate historical grievances and to conjure up a national entity, Padania, which, while purportedly representative of a perceptible geographical area, prefers in reality to foster a series of half truths about that area’s economic and cultural superiority over other parts of Italy; proving that the concept of elitism often finds a welcome home within nationalist discourse and ideology. While it is feasible that within the language of nationalism history could be viewed as a contingent or a subordinate factor, it could be argued that history, or at least the version of history that each individual nationalism wishes to

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<sup>111</sup> *ibid*

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*

endorse or nurture, rather than entering the arena as a contingent or subordinate factor is in fact a key element in that discourse as nationalism offers a challenge to the *status quo* of any given society. As nationalists maintain that faults have occurred within society, be they stemming from external sources or through a lack of 'national awareness' on behalf of the indigenous population, then nationalism attacks the present scenarios with a language that longs for an alternative that either finds its source in the past or, as is the case in the example of Padania, in some notion of group elitism. This can be viewed as a reaction both against the developments of modernity, wherein the world has become more complex and interdependent at the expense of homogeneity and conventionalism, and that period of history, often modernity as it witnessed an upsurge in nation-state formation, that brought about this present-day repression, or internal apathy, in the first instance.

While the historical aspects of society and social growth can be exaggerated to favour a chosen sector, nationalist commentary on contemporary society tends to be very limited and has to rely on chauvinistic semi-factual accounts of more favourable social conditions sometime in the past. For nationalists, therefore, discussions about history and society offer distinctive opportunities in which to promote the nationalist message. In reality, however, nationalist rhetoric will always favour the former – bygone reflection - over the latter – contemporary social authenticity.

### **Hobsbawm and 'Generalisations'**

Eric Hobsbawm has maintained that nationalists deliberately link a high level of abstraction with an avowedly populist position. This allows a pragmatic basis to exist,

out of which nationalism can develop. As Hobsbawm remarked of nationalism, “its very vagueness and lack of programmatic content gives it a potentially universal support within its own community”.<sup>113</sup> While Hobsbawm was commenting in this instance on nationalism’s potential appeal across the spectrum of a society, rather than simply pointing out a channel from which a political party could possibly draw support, it may be feasible to apply his general observation to Plaid Cymru. Through doing this, it should be possible to examine whether the ideological elusiveness, and occasional ambiguities, that manifest at times in the party’s political programme, could actually provide Plaid Cymru with the opportunity to reach out to the broad mass of the Welsh electorate in a way that other, more definitive and ideologically undeviating, parties cannot. If this is feasible, then the questions that naturally arise are ‘why hasn’t it been done and, if it has been done, then why hasn’t it received universal support?’ Though fascinating, it is not, however, the task of this thesis to answer these particular questions.

Hobsbawm believes that nationalism needs the language of ‘generalisations’ because once specifics are introduced the generality of ‘the nation’ or ‘the community’ is opened up for scrutiny<sup>114</sup>; though, on reflection, this thesis would argue that this use of generalisations could be applicable at some time in their existence to most political ideologies. The language of generalisations could be feasible, in a limited way, if ‘civic nationalism’, with its less strictly defined message, was being considered. However, any talk of generalisations fades when ethnic nationalists are taken into consideration.

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<sup>113</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1992, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), p. 176

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*; p.177

This is because ethnic nationalists have very definite notions of which collection of people comprise ‘the community’ and ‘the nation’, and what the duties of those people to those bodies are. On the other hand, it could be contended that within any non-individual set of ‘thought-practices’, due to differences of opinion and the complexities of life that are experienced within every society, there can never realistically be a coherent unity of purpose, or synthesis of ideals, whenever the minutiae of policy detail is put forward for consideration. It is interesting, therefore, to note that Hobsbawm refrained from using the phrase ‘nationalist ideology’. There are, scattered throughout his work *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*<sup>115</sup>, expressions such as ‘the principle of nationalism’, ‘national patriotism’, and ‘popular identification’ but Hobsbawm chose not to automatically integrate ‘nationalism’ with ‘ideology’ in the casual way that most commentators on nationalism tend to do.

If, as Hobsbawm maintained, the employment of ‘generalisations’ appears to be a prerequisite for nationalists, certainly of the ‘civic’ variety, and, in Anthony Smith’s words, nationalism “does not furnish a complete theory of social change or political action”<sup>116</sup>, then just how comprehensive a doctrine is nationalism? In addressing this question, the important word to focus upon, in the context that Smith uses it, is ‘complete’. Hence, if nationalism is to be used as a political base, but analysts and theoreticians are also aware that it may not be a comprehensive enough ideology to initiate major structural and societal change – particularly when domestic social and public policies are under consideration – then, as Smith has correctly identified,

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid*

<sup>116</sup> A.D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1971), p.21



“supporting theories”<sup>117</sup> are required. This would lend credence to the argument that, for reasons of its own sustenance, nationalism requires concepts that it can appropriate from other political ideologies.

### **The nationalist narrative of de-legitimisation**

It is important to establish that in its line of argument nationalism seeks to de-legitimise events. It does this, for instance, in its challenge to both perceived, and generally accepted, historical events. Various narratives are employed in which to pursue this process of de-legitimisation. For example, a narrative of economic, cultural or linguistic decline, supposed or real, can allude to a certain date or event, usually linked with a battle or a decisive political decision, which nationalists may proffer as evidence of a downturn in that society's fortunes. Similarly, nationalists also seek to construct a definition of what, for them, constitutes an authentic community. Although nationalists cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the fact, within the world of political theory and political philosophy at least, authenticity is a contestable concept. It is contestable as it is seemingly impossible to answer the question 'when was the authentic epoch'? Without a convincing answer to this question it would appear that nationalism is in a bit of a quandary. This is because if any nationalism does not have an authentic epoch to use as a paradigm, then any talk of reinvigorating an authentic community, based as it would be on a description of a community supposedly in existence at the time of this 'authentic epoch', would appear to be superficial and open to criticism from all quarters.

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<sup>117</sup> *ibid*

## **Kamenka and the 'inward turn'**

Conversely to Anthony Smith, Eugene Kamenka did believe that nationalism could adopt a more transformative domestic political role; although, it may be possible to contend, this depends upon its particular context. If Kamenka believed that nationalism needed to expand its focus then this would seemingly add weight to Freedman's argument, which shall be expanded upon later, that what nationalism has to offer is a 'thin-centred' notion of ideology rather than an extensive, comprehensive ideology. This transformative state could come about, according to Kamenka, if nationalism turned its attention "inward to the organisation and basis of the polity as opposed to mere national consciousness or even nationalistic xenophobia".<sup>118</sup> There could be inherent dangers in this form of thinking, however, that Kamenka may not have foreseen. An 'inward turn', rather than focusing upon structural and social policy issues affecting any society, could actually hasten the arrival of what Kamenka termed 'nationalist xenophobia'. This is because an 'inward turn' would highlight domestic matters at the expense of international matters. With added weight given to all matters deemed to be 'national', national identity would be pinpointed within the political arena and, this thesis would argue, this could, over time, lead to the development of anti-pluralism within the polity. This 'inward turn' that Kamenka suggested would indeed compel nationalism to embrace a wider spectrum of concerns; to be comprehensive in its scope even, which would then give it credence as a more extensive ideology than people like Anthony Smith believed it to be. However, its arrival as a comprehensive or *full* ideology may be at the expense of a more liberal nationalism; a more liberal style of nationalism that may not be as sharply defined as

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<sup>118</sup> Eugene Kamenka, Nationalism (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 14.

this new comprehensive ethnic nationalism but one that is, at least, internationalist in outlook. Also, to extend its scope further, and to bolster its claim to be a *full* ideology in the Freedenite sense, there is a slight prospect, however imprecise, that this new pattern of ‘inward’ nationalism could seek to supplant all other forms of pluralist domestic politics.

Looking at the literature covering this topic, a split appears to be emerging as to the actual role that nationalism should play within contemporary societies. One channel of thought, that would probably be agreed upon by ethnic nationalists, is that nationalism is more easily identifiable with psychological or emotional responses, like an appeal to a ‘national consciousness’ or a demonstration of xenophobia, than it is with a notion like egalitarianism or a social policy concept such as welfarism. However, dismissing any idea of an ‘inward turn’ that could more readily accommodate these types of sentiments, Michael Billig has maintained that “nationalism is not an inward-looking ideology, like the pre-modern ethnocentric outlook. It is an international ideology with its own discourse of hegemony”<sup>119</sup>. While Billig believed that nationalism is at the heart of the nation-state – acting as an ‘ideological consciousness’<sup>120</sup> – he also insisted that it was not there as a vehicle for societal change but as “an invisible but constant force”.<sup>121</sup> So, far from expanding its horizons to embrace a comprehensive range of concerns that would help it become a Freedenite *full* ideology, nationalism, in Billig’s interpretation, is an innate

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<sup>119</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 10

<sup>120</sup> *ibid*

<sup>121</sup> *ibid*; p. 16

psychological force that performs more of an omniscient and emotional role than an everyday administrative one.

### **Nationalism as an 'Outward Force'**

When looking at nationalism as an 'outward force', there would appear to be two variations on this theme. One is the expansionist nationalism evident within countries – and, this thesis would contend, it would be feasible to include the United States, a country not generally associated with nationalism, within this classification – wherein imperialism has been a central objective over the years. While nationalism and imperialism do not necessarily conflate, certain strands of nationalism can provide some of the components of imperialist language; namely the distrust of universalism in favour of the prioritisation of the 'Patrie'. This is where expansionist nationalism can justify itself, as a superiority complex arises whereby 'lesser' nations are seen as fair game for those with colonial intent.

The other less belligerent variety of nationalism as an 'outward force' is the nationalism of a party such as the Scottish National Party (SNP). To distance themselves from those who label them merely separatist, the SNP adopted the slogan 'Scotland in Europe'. Here, the nationalism of the SNP is evident with its call for national independence for Scotland. However, this is not to be achieved at the expense of alienating other countries or, in this particular instance, a trans-national politico-economic body such as the European Union. To some extents, therefore, supporters of Scottish nationalism, as embodied in this instance by the SNP, are asked to adopt 'dual identification'. Hence, this, in effect, is a case in which a nationalist organisation is

attempting to bargain instrumentally for a more prominent role within an organisation that, by its very nature, seeks to play down, rather than proclaim, national differences. There is no doubt that 'inward' nationalists would not countenance any bargaining along the lines that the SNP are advocating.

When speculation turns to the actual essence of nationalism, the question could be raised as to how 'political' nationalism really is. If nationalism, for example, is something that is regarded as being an entity, or a set of ideas, that operates above and beyond what is generally regarded to be the field of politics, then it could be considered to be more of a 'cultural' force than anything else. Alan Finlayson, acknowledging Benedict Anderson's work in this area, believed that "the theoretical significance of Anderson's *Imagined Communities* is its shift from a model-based, paradigmatic approach to a modular one that recognizes nationalism as a diffuse phenomenon (more like religion or kinship than political ideology) and above all as a cultural phenomenon".<sup>122</sup> By extracting some of the political intent out of nationalism, an understanding of how nationalistic sentiment can be expressed outside of the political arena, in the fields of art or sport for example, may become clearer. If it is possible to concur with Stuart Hall's observation that "a nation is not only a political entity but something which produces meanings, a system of cultural representation"<sup>123</sup>, then expressions of cultural nationalism – wherein the culture specific to a given nation

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<sup>122</sup> Alan Finlayson, 'Ideology, Discourse and Nationalism', in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1998, p.107

<sup>123</sup> *ibid*; p. 108

is granted *positive valorization* – adopt meanings that can be held alongside, but are not necessarily related to, or compatible with, the aims and objectives of political nationalism.

Where political nationalism can, and does, play its part in the advancement of national and indigenous cultures, however, is through engaging “the power of the state to protect aspects that are judged to be important”.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, political nationalism can assist, through government funding of the arts and education for example, in providing a positive environment in which national cultures can be given preferential treatment and a high profile; although it must be stressed that this is not just confined to nationalist agencies as governments or political organisations of all political persuasions make the effort to promote domestic culture. However, nationalists may seek to do it more than others, and seek to do it, in a more direct ideological way, as an integral part of nation-building as opposed to merely an appendage to display or advertise indigenous talent.

Similarly, through political nationalism, a mutual relationship can often develop where politics and culture intermingle to create ‘systems of meaning’ that are identifiable with a particular nation. Eventually, culture or language can arise to become key determinants in the structure of a particular political form of nationalism. What this shows, therefore, is that nationalism is not merely a set of ideas promoting the nation as a political concept alone, as, crucially, it also embraces cultural as well as linguistic concerns. This cultural and linguistic impact will have to be addressed later in

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<sup>124</sup> David Miller, *On Nationality*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995) p.87

the thesis when the issue of Welsh nationalism, and Plaid Cymru's assumed endorsement of it, is examined.

### **Nationalism and Ideology: Correlation and Contradiction**

It is the opinion of this thesis that historians and political analysts who have studied nationalism have invariably sought to use ideology as a catch-all term to sum up all the elements of what may be described as nationalist, or 'nationalistic', thought and practice. In contrast, Michael Freeden's article '*Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?*'<sup>125</sup> offers a critical examination of the conceptual structure of both nationalism and ideology. Freeden's consideration on ideology was not "the pejorative Marxist usage of ideology as distorted consciousness, reflecting exploitative and alienating power relationships that can be overcome in a socialist society".<sup>126</sup> Rather, Freeden has focussed upon what could be termed a more descriptive, as opposed to prescriptive, account of ideologies. This is because Freeden has viewed ideologies as "thought-patterns of individuals and groups in a society that relate to the way they comprehend and shape their political worlds".<sup>127</sup> Freeden's analytical preference, therefore, could be described as being 'bottom up' as opposed to 'top down' or 'imposed', as it is inclusive, open-ended and seeks to incorporate all individuals and organisations, whether politically active or not, in a form of dialectic that involves channels of discourse and avenues for personal and combined practice.

<sup>125</sup> Freeden, '*Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?*' pp. 748-765.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid*; p. 749

<sup>127</sup> *ibid*

## Freeden's Ideological Distinctions

When Freeden progressed to explore whether nationalism is a *distinct* ideology, he stated that if nationalism was to be perceived, in the first instance, as “an *established* ideology within a loose framework of family resemblances it will have to manifest a shared set of conceptual features over time and space”.<sup>128</sup> If, after that, nationalism was to be assigned to a category that was to be found further into the nucleus of the species of ideology, by registering itself as a *distinct* ideology, “the core of nationalism, and the conceptual patterns it adopts, will have to be unique to itself alone”.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, and most important of all in terms of the subject-matter for this thesis, when talking about nationalism, Freeden commented that, “in order to be a *full* ideology it will need to provide a reasonably broad, if not comprehensive, range of answers to the political questions that societies generate”.<sup>130</sup> As this thesis will explore the ideological depth of Plaid Cymru’s nationalism, and Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ in general, in whatever form they may take, then it is envisaged that Freeden’s classifications, given the aforementioned inclusive and non-exclusionary nature of his theoretical model, should provide the best basis from which to explore this particular course of inquiry.

While Freeden delineates ideology along a spectrum that could be described as ascending from ‘soft’ to ‘hard’ conceptions, with increasing levels of commitment to comprehensiveness, further explanation of these various depths at which an ideology may be present need to be recorded. First, an *established* ideology is one in which core

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<sup>128</sup> *ibid*

<sup>129</sup> *ibid*; p. 750

<sup>130</sup> *ibid*



concepts are observable. These interplay with, and are affected by, peripheral concepts and adjacent ideologies. While a core concept is “one that is both central to, and constitutive of, a particular ideology and therefore of the ideological community to which it gives inspiration and identity”<sup>131</sup> – for example ‘liberty’ is a core concept in liberalism – a peripheral concept has two substructures that interface with the core. Freeden has defined the first of these peripheral concepts as the *margin*.<sup>132</sup> Concepts can drift from the core to the *margin* and back again. On this point, Freeden has cited “natural rights gravitating from a core to a marginal position in liberal morphology whereas violence gravitated from a marginal to a core position in the development of fascism”.<sup>133</sup> These marginal concepts can have a detrimental effect on the efficacy and progression of an ideology; for example, the adherence to a moralistic Christianity – a concept on the *margin* – almost certainly impaired the neo-liberal ideology of the ‘New Right’ in the early 1990s.

The other kind of periphery is referred to as the *perimeter*.<sup>134</sup> The *perimeter* components of an ideology are often “specific ideas or policy-proposals rather than fully fledged concepts”.<sup>135</sup> For example, proposals for the decriminalisation of cannabis, as part of a general philosophical stance on drug usage, could be bracketed as a *perimeter* component of an ideology, if, by way of illustration, that ideology was liberalism. While these *perimeter* components are not essential to the survival of an ideology, they do provide ideologies with a “layering of meaning”.<sup>136</sup> In other words,

<sup>131</sup> Terence Ball, ‘From ‘core’ to ‘sore’ concepts: ideological innovation and conceptual change’, in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1999, p. 392.

<sup>132</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 78.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*; p.80

<sup>136</sup> *ibid*

they can add substance to an ideology but they are not likely to be cancerous or outmoded in the sense that some concepts on the *margin* may be. Reverting back to the case of an *established* ideology, therefore, it is evident that it can be influenced by, and could possibly even be reliant upon, the movement and shaping of other concepts or ideologies. Hence, it can be said to be at the more malleable end of the spectrum of ideologies.

### Identifying 'Adjacent Concepts'

Also evident within ideologies are *adjacent* concepts. According to Freeden, "the existence of concepts adjacent to the ideological core is essential to the formation of an ideology".<sup>137</sup> Within these adjacent concepts there is a division between *logical adjacency* and *cultural adjacency*.<sup>138</sup> Freeden has noted that, if a notion of non-constraint is an ineliminable component of the notion of liberty, then logically adjacent concepts to non-constraint would include "autonomy, self-determination, self-development, and power".<sup>139</sup> These notions are what Freeden has referred to as "necessary options and permutations which are invariably brought into play by any concretization of non-constraint".<sup>140</sup> So, logically adjacent concepts are variations that help to make a concept less indefinite. If the logically adjacent concept of 'self-development' is removed from the above list, it does not fatally weaken the concept of non-constraint. Its inclusion, however, offers another option and a chance to enhance the concept of non-constraint by enabling a degree of latitude in which 'self-development' may be appropriated and incorporated.

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<sup>137</sup> *ibid*; p. 78

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*; p. 68

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*

Although *logical adjacency* increases choices on one level, sometimes those choices have to be set against social constraints. In this instance, Freedden has argued, any decisions taken by groups or individuals will be “socially mediated through the notion of cultural adjacency, which imposes further constraints on the morphology of political concepts”.<sup>141</sup> Freedden has pointed out that there are two types of *cultural adjacency*. The first operates within the existing framework of logical adjacency, so that a decision may be made to favour one aspect of logical adjacency over another as this is the most apt preference given existing cultural, or even individual human, practices of any chosen society. In this instance, there is, therefore, an ‘internal restraint’ on choice.

The second type of cultural adjacency can be said to be a mechanism through which ‘external restraint’ plays a part. This occurs, as Freedden observed, when “ostensibly paradoxical logical features may be culturally pressed into one concept”<sup>142</sup>. For example, the belief in the right to life for all human beings, whatever the circumstances that certain individuals may find themselves in, could be considered a logically adjacent concept within liberalism. In this setting, a belief in the sanctity of human life could tie in with the notion of ‘non-constraint’. However, if operating within a polity that has capital punishment on its statute book, then the ‘external restraint’ upon the logically adjacent conception of ‘the right to life’ would not be allowed to flourish. This could occur in a society that has, for all intents and purposes,

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<sup>141</sup> *ibid*; p. 69

<sup>142</sup> *ibid*; p.71

a liberal polity that has the freedom of the individual as a core concept of its political ideology.

Moving on from an assessment of what comprises an *established* ideology, a *distinct* ideology is a specific body of concepts that has its uniquely identifiable structure, techniques and dynamics. For an ideology to be *distinct*, it has to ‘go-alone’ on certain issues. It has the channels to do this as it develops independently. However, there has to be a distinctive pattern to its development and in this sense it decontests concepts in a way unique to itself. Within *distinct* ideologies there is also a sense of genealogy – a sense of its own origins – that *established* ideologies do not necessarily contain. A *prima facie* analysis of what comprises a *distinct* ideology could, therefore, view this type of ideology as stronger than the type of ideology labelled as *established*.

Criticisms of *distinct* ideologies are made, nevertheless. For a Marxist like Georg Lukacs, to take an example, the genealogy required for a *distinct* ideology to unfold would, inevitably, be wrapped in bourgeois historical practice. If, as Lukacs has argued, “intellectual genesis must be identical in principle with historical genesis”<sup>143</sup>, it is a logical step to equate hardened ideological structures – which a *distinct* ideology would need to be a part of – with being producers of ‘false consciousness’. While accepting that that is a Marxist judgement on the ‘bourgeois’

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<sup>143</sup> Georg Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness (London, Merlin Press, 1990), p.155

influence and practice of ideologies, the criticism that a *distinct* ideology can be construed as being an enclosed and narrow ideology, in the way that it can decontest concepts using its own formula and genealogical precedents, is without doubt, a valid one.

### **Ascertaining the nature of a *Full* Ideology**

If criticism can be made of a *distinct* ideology, then the case against excessive adherence to an ideology becomes ever more acute if a *full* ideology is examined. This is because a *full* ideology offers a far greater range of concepts and solutions. To anyone professing an ‘anti-ideology’ position, therefore, a *full* ideology can present itself as a frightening prospect. But it is only the content on offer that really threatens, as a *full* ideology is merely a vessel containing a comprehensive set of views. The *full* aspect is specified by the range and breadth of the actual ‘thought-practices’. Its content is simply a series of propositions, not a directive, and there are exigencies in any liberal democratic system that narrows the scope for that ideology’s practice; for example, in liberal democracies the government does not tell individuals who to marry or how to spend their money. There is a public / private divide that is not touched upon, aside from in certain exceptional circumstances, even by those who advocate *full* ideologies. In the liberal democracies, therefore, there is little fear of a *full* ideology – such as liberalism or socialism – adopting totalitarian tendencies. One thing that does occur in these liberal democracies, however, is that political parties have to present to the general public their ideas for governing the state. Hence, they need to submit a

comprehensive doctrine of their aims and intentions. However, the question arises – and this is one that this examination will touch upon at a later stage, although exegeses of political manifestos are not strictly a condition of this thesis – as to whether that comprehensive doctrine sheds light on whether that particular political party’s ‘thought-practices’ satisfy the conditions for being referred to as an ideology, *full* or otherwise.

Sectors that a *full* ideology may comprehensively embrace – sectors, conceivably, that may not be covered under the other variants of ideology – could be areas such as the economy or the notion of citizenship. With regard to an issue such as the economy, a *full* ideology would look to provide a thorough set of justifications for economic policies that would be conducted under the remit of that ideology. For instance, the reorganisation of the economy and the redistribution of wealth generated within that economy are concepts within the morphology of socialism. Being a *full* ideology, socialism’s tentacles reach into every aspect of social and political life and socialist policy tends to be universal in its application. Conversely, feminism, for example, which cannot be granted the same *full* ideology label, is restricted as an ideology because, as Freeden has observed, it is “often indifferent or even silent when it deals with some political concepts – justice, democracy, rights, political obligation, to name a few – to which many women and men, not solely liberals, attach importance”.<sup>144</sup>

The idea of an active citizenship, and citizenship rights, is another way in which a *full* ideology, in particular liberalism, may be evident. Citizenship can be seen to be an

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<sup>144</sup> Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.525

increasingly important component within contemporary liberalism. Active citizenship, in its purest sense, would involve every citizen making decisions and working within a community structure in order to achieve some goal, or to implement an agreed set of standards. While citizenship as a sense of civic duty can be juxtaposed with the belief in, and practice of, education in liberal societies – as citizenship is invariably endorsed through educational establishments – in an anarchist society, for example, citizenship would have more moral substance to it than the rational explanation for it offering ‘a conception of the good’, as presented by liberalism. This is due to the fact that the idea of the freethinking autonomous individual, represented through libertarianism, is even more central to anarchist ideology than it is to liberal ideology. This is because, as a rule, liberalism advances the state as a mechanism for keeping individuals under a certain restraint, in a rational and legalistic sense, while anarchism relies on individual moral judgement. However, both liberalism and anarchism have strands of opinion within them that would take issue with this assessment. So, even within *full* ideologies, there is still a variance of opinion as to what are considered to be core concepts.

Although ideologies are professedly unencumbered, enabling them, in theory, to attempt to construct a resolute and ideologically compatible opinion to each political conundrum that arises – and thus, supposedly, leaving no room for political vacuums – the fact remains that if one body of opinion can be so capacious in its analysis, it could be construed as having an intensely totalitarian ring about it. Freedden cited an example of liberalism – a *full* ideology – feeding off one of its core concepts of ‘liberty through self-development’ to take it on a journey through peripheral and adjacent concerns,

such as the right to welfare and education for all<sup>145</sup>. This appears to be something of a conceptual error on Freeden's part. It is the understanding of this thesis that a *full* ideology cannot infringe upon each specific conceptual bloc as it so wishes. If it does so, then surely it reverts to being merely an *established* ideology. Given Freeden's descriptions of the various levels of ideology, a *distinct* ideology would be more potent than a *full* ideology. It would be less comprehensive in outlook but it would be less prone to influences from perimeter and adjacent concerns.

### **Evaluating Nationalism's Morphology**

If nationalism is to be registered, to whatever degree, as an ideology, Freeden maintained that it must display "one of two structures"<sup>146</sup>; that is it must have either a full or a thin-centred morphology. A full morphology, while containing "a general plan of public policy that a specific society requires"<sup>147</sup>, must also embody "particular interpretations and configurations of all the major political concepts"<sup>148</sup>. This is the comprehensive agenda most observably represented by the aforementioned *full* ideology. Alternatively, Freeden put forward the notion of a thin centred morphology, which he believed would incorporate "a restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts"<sup>149</sup>. Freeden continued by citing the absence of welfare policies from nationalist pronouncements as an indication that nationalism should be regarded as a body of thought more in tune with his description of a thin-centred morphology than a full morphology. As he claimed, "a thin-centred ideology is...limited in ideational

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<sup>145</sup> Freeden, 'Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology', p.750

<sup>146</sup> *ibid*

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*

<sup>148</sup> *ibid*

<sup>149</sup> *ibid*



ambitions and scope”.<sup>150</sup> In Freedén’s view, therefore, thin-centred ideology does not specifically address what counts as a political issue. So by offering a ‘thin’ conception it suggests ideological content without necessarily being a coherent or comprehensive ideology.

While there may appear to be a certain unfairness in describing nationalism’s objective to press for national self-determination, and the placing of the nation at the centre of political life, as ideationally circumscribed, it is nevertheless accurate to describe nationalism’s paucity of ideas in the field of domestic politics and public policy as limited in scope. Freedén saw this “structural inability to offer complex ranges of argument”<sup>151</sup> evident in what he termed “narrow nationalism”.<sup>152</sup>

Consequently, “the many chains of ideas one would normally expect to find stretching from the general and abstract to the concrete and practical, from the core to the periphery, as well as in the reverse direction, are simply absent”.<sup>153</sup> One could argue that by using the term ‘narrow nationalism’ Freedén was eliminating civic and liberal nationalisms from his field of inquiry. But then, ultimately, it could be asked whether nationalism really has a goal beyond the procuring of ‘national self-determination’?

It could be stated by nationalists in their defence that the civic and liberal strands of nationalism do at least attempt to fashion a society using a more comprehensive plan of action than that used by other narrower and more extreme forms of nationalisms; forms who content themselves with offering a compressed focus for opinion against

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<sup>150</sup> *ibid*

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*

<sup>153</sup> *ibid*

whosoever, in their eyes, represents 'the Other'. Freedden's rejoinder to this was that nationalism, and he judges civic and liberal forms of nationalism as indications of its chameleon-like nature rather than an indication that this provides proof of weightier and more extensive ideological manifestations, "fails to meet the criteria of a comprehensive ideology".<sup>154</sup> This was because, in Freedden's judgement, nationalism's "conceptual structure is incapable of providing on its own a solution to questions of social justice, distribution of resources, and conflict-management which mainstream ideologies address".<sup>155</sup> Strands of nationalism are thus trapped. It is open to debate as to whether they can or cannot open up to a more comprehensive all-embracing agenda as long as they maintain the core concepts that register them as nationalist. One who believes they cannot is Lord Acton. He noted that, because of their limitations, nationalisms "cannot serve as a basis for the reconstruction of civil society...but they may influence it with advantage".<sup>156</sup> The advantage for nationalism in a circumstance such as this would be in the fact that having gained the position from which it is able to 'influence with advantage', the civil society that Acton cited would be reconstructed using concepts borrowed from other ideologies. What would be in place, however, would be the framework of a polity that had nationalism, with its core concepts of prioritising the nation and the nationality represented thereof, as an omniscient presence. This returns us somewhat to Anthony Smith's earlier argument. Having reached its goal of 'national self-determination', a set of policies from either left or right of the political spectrum could then be pursued.

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<sup>154</sup> *ibid*, p.751

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*

<sup>156</sup> *ibid*

Problems arise if, or when, nationalism is used as the sole vehicle to embrace and express the full range of policy matters. Any form of civic or liberal nationalism, for instance, having been strongly influenced by the ‘thought-practices’ of liberalism, could never take on a comprehensive mantle as long as it adheres to the core concepts of nationalism. Nationalism – and indeed nationalisms as they should be more accurately referred to – has to, therefore, oscillate between what Freedon called “the second and third possibilities”<sup>157</sup>; namely “between being a distinct thin-centred ideology and being a component of other, already existing, ideologies”.<sup>158</sup> While Freedon admitted that complexity existed within the various instances of nationalist thought and practice, he saw core concepts as “necessary for identifying any given instance as *belonging* to the family of nationalisms”.<sup>159</sup> It is important, therefore, to consider what Freedon believed nationalism’s core concepts to be.

### **Freedon’s Core Concepts of Nationalism**

First, Freedon identified the prioritisation of the group element, the *nation*, as “the key constituting and identifying framework for human beings and their practices”.<sup>160</sup> This element – the nation, heralded as it is as both the bedrock of power and the source for inspiration – cannot be modified. Without the structures and ideas, both concrete and abstract, which constitute the already existent nation, or the conception of ‘the nation’ that is to be attained through nationalist thought and practice, nationalism would be a redundant ideology. However, it is important to acknowledge

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<sup>157</sup> *ibid*

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*; p.752

<sup>160</sup> *ibid*

that this nation, when conceived and then assembled, is not duty bound to reflect, in its socio-political make-up, any one group of concerns.

The view of nationalists, and nationalist thought as a whole, is that what is of primary importance is the fact that a communal body exists that is recognisable as ‘the nation’; ‘the nation’, for nationalists, being composed of a group of people who share, according to Karl Deutsch, “a heritage of common meanings and memories”,<sup>161</sup> and who have a sense of geographical demarcation and historical alignment along ethnic, cultural, linguistic or political grounds. On the other hand, theorists like Alan Finlayson have argued that the social values that prevail within nationalist discourse – the discourse of community, communal values, etc. – are a construct of political discourse. Following on from this, Finlayson maintained that the nation is “the product of meaning systems and a meaning system in itself, a principle of internal cohesion”<sup>162</sup>. The differences between these two positions is in the way that many nationalist commentators portray communities as given or set, as if almost preordained, while the view of Finlayson was that ‘the nation’ encompasses elements that have evolved through social interaction and the discourse of individuals for whom any notion of ‘the nation’ would have been a purely abstract notion.

Returning to the ‘concrete’ reality by acknowledging that the nation, as the space in which a specific mode of politics operates, does exist, the debates as to whether the nation is to comprise of a polity that is essentially liberal or illiberal, pluralistic or homogeneous is one for the various strands of nationalist thought to undertake. What

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<sup>161</sup> Alter, Nationalism, p.6.

<sup>162</sup> Finlayson, Ideology, Discourse and Nationalism, p.107

will be relevant for this thesis, however, will be to observe how the ‘thought-practices’ of Plaid Cymru take into account the possibilities offered up through these various strands of opinion.

Having thought up and constructed ‘the nation’, nationalists assign to their nation a “*positive valorization*”.<sup>163</sup> It is here that the edges between a reasonable and non-discriminatory level of patriotism and pride in the achievements of one’s homeland or place or birth comes into contact with xenophobic behaviour and fear of external forces. While Freedden was correct to emphasise *positive valorization*, as this indeed is an essential element within nationalism, any endorsement of the supposed fortitude of the nation as being intrinsically positive in its function is contentious. Here, splits again occur between nationalists representing the ‘civic’ and ‘narrow’ parameters of nationalist thought. While those on the civic parameter may take an egalitarian or non-hierarchical viewpoint of the valorisation of one’s own nation – mindful that the international political system operates principally along nation-state lines and recognising that, in theory at least, the claims and aspirations of each nation in international terms is equally valid – those favouring a narrower nationalism may find this egalitarian and non-hierarchical position far less appealing and, consequently, they would vigorously endorse the *positive valorization* aspect as a core concept within nationalism. Therefore, as is evident within this second core concept, nationalism is forever inducing its own internal debates that require consideration and clarification.

The third core concept, as defined by Freedden, supervenes, and is engendered by,

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<sup>163</sup> Freedden, Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?, p.754

the first two core concepts. It is the “desire to give politico-institutional expression to the first two core concepts”.<sup>164</sup> This is essential because nationalism cannot operate solely as a hypothesis. While an abstract conception of an ideal society is a perfectly valid theoretical tool for advocates of nationalism to employ, ultimately, however, a process must exist in order to translate nationalist thoughts into nationalist political practices. The third concept, therefore, shores up nationalist ideas and grounds them in actual political practices and pragmatic aspirations. This is fundamental because in the final reckoning “*all* types of nationalism seek institutional recognition”.<sup>165</sup>

The fourth Freedinite core concept within nationalism is that “*space* and *time* are considered to be crucial determinants of social identity”.<sup>166</sup> What is evidenced here is that these ‘crucial determinants’ act as signifiers. This is important because nationalism has a distinctive story to tell for a particular place. To try to show how ‘crucial determinants’ act in each specific case the following example may prove insightful. It is sensible not to cite an example of a man born in Wales as the issue of bilingualism – fluency in both the Welsh and English languages – is far more likely to come into contention than it is in the example proffered. Also, the Welsh language as a determinant for Welsh nationalism, and as a concept within Plaid Cymru’s ideology, will be considered in some detail at a later stage.

A white man born in Leeds, for example, considers himself English, and is seen as such by others, because he is the holder of certain characteristics that are identifiable in

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<sup>164</sup> *ibid*; p.752

<sup>165</sup> *ibid*; p.754

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*; p.752

space and time. These are, specifically, the fact that he is white – the pigmentation most commonly associated with English people – the fact that he is resident within the geographical space known as England, and the fact that he has almost certainly spent the vast majority of his time within that geographical space and considers it to be his ‘home’. Having been educated in England, with English as his primary if not sole language, he will also have been immersed in the culture of that country and he will have been informed of his country’s history at school, through the media, and by his elders. Finding its way into this learning curve there will undoubtedly have been myths and stories about the glories of ‘his nation’s’ past. All of this nurturing does not necessarily make that man a nationalist, but he has all of the components in place through which he could, if he so wished, make claims to be highly representative of the English nation, and possibly to be committed to the idea of an ultimate national destiny.<sup>167</sup> To turn these claims into nationalist ‘ideological’ claims, however, he would need to exhibit the fifth core concept that Freeden has identified.

This fifth core concept is a “sense of belonging and membership in which *sentiment* and *emotion* play an important role”.<sup>168</sup> Some difficulties can arise from this component, however, as *sentiment*, for instance, is a constituent part of each and every shade of political thought. We are not a community of abstract, dispassionate human beings and, indeed, no political doctrine is purely rational. Likewise, when addressing the issue of ‘membership’, there has to be a clear view of who is a member of whatever community or ethnic group, whose decision it is to say who belongs and who is

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<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*; p.754

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*; p.752

refused membership, and what are the members who belong to the community to make of those who don't.

As to the claims for this concept overall, then our aforementioned man from Leeds is an interesting case in point. He could display all of the characteristics required of someone purporting to be an 'English nationalist' but, at the same time, he may be uncaring or unemotional about the nation in which he resides and to which, nationalists would insist, he belongs. So *sentiment* and *emotion* are vital to the equation in order to provoke a nationalistic fervour that is identifiable both on an intensely personal level and as an everyday source of motivation and encouragement for the individual and the community as a whole. In this sense, emotion and belonging can be reified by nationalists in order for these dispositions to be utilised as instruments of policy.

Similarly, sentiment is a vital cog in the machinery of nationalism because, as Freeden remarked, "nationalism is a rare instance of enlightenment-generated rational political thought that acknowledges the political importance of emotion when pointed in certain directions".<sup>169</sup> Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, all theories rely on emotion but nationalism, in this instance, actually acknowledges it. As for the charge of rationalism, while this is not true of all nationalisms as the rational aspect is more peculiar to civic than ethnic nationalisms – ethnic nationalisms being remnants of the counter-Enlightenment – this onus on sentiment and emotion induces a commitment to 'the nation' – viewed, as it is, in concrete terms by adherents of nationalism – which is calculably greater than any feeling of loyalty to abstract notions such as civil society, or

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<sup>169</sup> *ibid*; p. 754



indeed any sense of universalism that would dampen any fear of ‘the Other’. Summing up this emotionally charged sense of political obligation, Heinrich von Treitschke commented that “in all my life I have never once thought of my moral obligations towards [civil] society, but I think constantly of my countrymen, whom I seek to honour as much as I can”.<sup>170</sup>

Freeden has readily admitted that these core concepts are not set in stone, and neither are they “sufficient to account for the *complexity* of all forms and instances of nationalism”.<sup>171</sup> What the core concepts manage to do, however, is to provide a yardstick from which any given set of ideas purporting to be, or already classified as, ‘nationalist’ can be scrutinised in order to ascertain whether or not they do actually qualify for entry into the “family of nationalisms”.<sup>172</sup> Also, Freedden did not claim that those core concepts are invariant. The core concepts of nationalism are open to various readings and interpretations depending on how they adapt to social and historical change and how they interact with adjacent and peripheral concepts. Despite the acknowledgement that this adds to the “richness...and irreconcilable diversities”,<sup>173</sup> found within varieties of nationalism, Freedden pointed out that “the core concepts of nationalism cannot rival the possibilities available to the mainstream ideologies such as conservatism, liberalism or socialism – all of which have core conceptual structures which permit a far fuller range of responses to socio-political factors”.<sup>174</sup> These socio-political factors are crucial players as far as Freedden is concerned because it is they

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<sup>170</sup> *ibid*; p.761

<sup>171</sup> *ibid*; p.752

<sup>172</sup> *ibid*

<sup>173</sup> *ibid*

<sup>174</sup> *ibid*

that forge the “extraneous proximities”<sup>175</sup> which decide whether or not the nationalist core constitutes a thin-centred ideology or whether it is “assimilated into existing ideological factors”.<sup>176</sup> It would appear, therefore, that nationalism’s core concepts are open to influence from the vagaries of contingent factors to a far greater degree than the core concepts of other ‘ideological families’.

Nationalism’s exposure to adjacent and peripheral concepts, and other contingent factors, that force it to re-evaluate or react accordingly, can be examined more closely. Liberty is one useful example. If liberty is applied in the emancipatory sense of ‘liberty from colonial domination’ then the nationalist can use it with full justification because the Freedomite core concept that is ‘the nation’ is the body being liberated. If liberty is being applied in a civil or domestic sense then again this is relatively uncontroversial if, in nationalist parlance, the identifiable members of that nation – its native population – are allowed the liberty to live their lives as nationals and, if they so wish, nationalists in a contractarian-style agreement with both their fellow nationals and ‘their nation’.

Where problems may arise, nevertheless, is if, for example, liberty, in the form of freedom of movement and expression, is executed in a manner that may be detrimental to non-nationals or non-nationalists. One example of this could be the institutionalised discrimination of ethnic minorities or refugees. Liberty can also cause difficulties for nationalists if advocated in a universal or supranational sense. An instance of this application of liberty could be a legal decision that may be determined by a higher body than a national government or judiciary (i.e. the European Court of Justice). Despite

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<sup>175</sup> *ibid*

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*

the inevitable protests from those who maintain that there should not be any higher authority than the nation-state, or those nationalists for whom any external interference is tantamount to a denial of nationhood, and is thus an infringement on their rights as citizens of 'their nation', then as long as the nation-state is a signatory to any international or supranational agreements, that legal decision will be binding upon the nation, and all those within its borders.

All of the above examples of liberty in practice are feasible or factual scenarios. However, the last two examples are specific examples wherein liberty can have 'negative' connotations for anyone professing to be a nationalist. Nationalism, as a body of ideas, is therefore put under pressure when an adjacent concept like liberty is adapted in various ways. Adherents to nationalism may well have to counteract the last two 'negative' conceptions of liberty – negative in the eyes of the nationalist that is – by either standing firm in the face of rulings that have an external source or, more realistically, accepting that they must soften their nationalist stances to incorporate these eventualities. When these issues arise, other concepts such as internationalism, democracy, human rights, and egalitarianism enter the forum. Advocates of nationalism are then left with three choices. These are that nationalists can either adapt their position to absorb these other concepts or, alternatively, they can engage them in dialectic, or they can maintain an intransigent position that immediately compresses the expanse of ideas and concepts that are available for nationalism to utilise. When this choice arises, nationalism seeks expression in what are known as its 'host-vessels'.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid*; p.759.

## The notion of 'Host-Vessels'

'Host-vessels' are other ideologies that accommodate, and to varying degrees absorb, nationalist 'thought-practices'. However, these 'host-vessels' maintain their own identities because their core concepts and objectives differ from the core concepts and objectives evident within nationalist or other contending ideologies. Could it be argued then that nationalism has limits in both an ideational and a practical sense? For instance, if a certain brand of nationalism is advancing liberationist or secessionist claims, then it has a definite objective. However, as Freeden has contended, "once the goals of nationalism are attained it has, like a realized utopia, nowhere to go".<sup>178</sup> This, however, supposes that nationalism is a political goal that is embedded in a particular form of socio-cultural 'thought-practice' at a certain point in time. If this political goal were achieved, then, bereft of ideas to propel it forward, nationalism would attain "longer life only when contained in larger vessels"<sup>179</sup>.

If Freeden's thesis is true then how does nationalism show itself within its host-vessels? Freeden has remarked on how nationalist concepts can be found within liberal ideologies. Liberalism, with its conception of liberty and respect for each and every individual, and liberal multiculturalists, with their onus on group rights and representation, provoke nationalism and nationalists into considering a reassessment of the concepts of nationhood and identity. As homogeneity is on the wane, the existence of states in which multiple identities are a reality presents nationalists with a series of dilemmas. Do these nationalists incorporate liberal and multicultural positions into their belief systems, while concurrently maintaining that 'the nation' remains the

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid*

<sup>179</sup> *ibid*

paramount centre from which identity and inspiration can be attained? So, if there is a compromise, or a synthesis of nationalist and liberal opinion, championing an additional national identity and a sense of solidarity is feasible for minority ethnic groups who “want to feel at home in the society to which they or their forbears have moved”.<sup>180</sup> However, this does not have to entail a surrendering of minority claims or identities. It is possible for ethnic minorities within any heterogeneous society to adopt this commonality and sense of national purpose while simultaneously “preserving formative elements of their separate identities”.<sup>181</sup> This acceptance can be termed ‘inclusivist’ and it is a stance that is adopted by those of a liberal or civic nationalist disposition. Alternatively, other host vessels can be summoned up that may not be as accommodating to non-nationalist voices.

### **Conservatism, Nationalism and Historical Continuity**

It could be contended, and this thesis would concur, that conservatism strikes an immediate chord with nationalists in the sense that both make appeals to the past in the hope of finding justification for the present, more prominent in conservatism’s case, and a path for the future, more apt in the examples of nationalisms that are attempting to construct a prototype nation rather than those that are merely consolidating the existing one. Whatever model is highlighted, however, the invocation of an “organicist conception of community”<sup>182</sup>, a conception that accentuates historical continuity, can often be found in both conservative and nationalist discourse. Occasionally both discourses draw near; a case in point being Edmund Burke’s *‘Reflections on the*

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<sup>180</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, p. 138.

<sup>181</sup> Freedon, *‘Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology’*, p. 761.

<sup>182</sup> *ibid*; p. 762

*Revolution in France*’, which, as Alan Finlayson has commented, as well as being “an advancement of the conservative view of evolutionary politics, is also a strikingly nationalist document”.<sup>183</sup> While this ‘organicist conception of community’ is undoubtedly a core concept for conservatives, for nationalists it is perceived as being more of an adjacent concept. In this sense, nationalists may find the ‘organicist conception of community’ useful but they may also be inclined to put it to one side if, through geographical or political realignment, they are attempting to develop a national identity and a sense of nationhood that is in its nascent stages. Likewise, liberal nationalists, for example, could play down the theme of historical continuity if they wished to incorporate recent ethnic additions or minority cultures into their scheme of nation building. While they can use socio-historical and geographical grounds for their nationalist bases, and conservative reasoning for the preservation of established communities, they can adopt liberal concepts when it comes to manufacturing political structures that take heed of cultural and demographic realities. In this example, therefore, a certain type of liberal, inclusive nationalism has moulded a fresh ideological position out of its involvement with its host-vessels of liberalism and conservatism.

If an ‘inclusivist’ position is to be discarded by nationalists, then another ‘host-vessel’, fascism could be instituted. Freedon has noted that “alone among the major ideological families, fascism recognizes the nation as a core concept”.<sup>184</sup> But it is not merely confined to a simple recognition of ‘the nation’ as the focal point for social and

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<sup>183</sup> Finlayson, *Ideology, Discourse and Nationalism*, p. 105.

<sup>184</sup> Freedon, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p. 763.

political expression, such as may be attributed to a nationalist reading, because fascism “attaches the concept of the nation to an extreme valorization of one’s own nation”.<sup>185</sup>

This ‘extreme valorization’ is far more pronounced and activist than the ‘positive valorization’ that was earlier specified as being a core concept of nationalism.

Furthermore, Freeden maintained that this ‘extreme valorization’ “necessitates the concept, as well as practice, of violence as a manifestation of political will and power”.<sup>186</sup> What needs to be assessed when nationalism and fascism are held up for comparison, or if a specific type of nationalism is dubbed fascist, is the extent to which valorisation of one’s nation is ‘positive’ or ‘extreme’. The use of violence as a political instrument to consolidate the valorisation is one measure, but that may be just a gauge of xenophobic or radical nationalist activity as opposed to an indisputable representation of fascist ideology.

While Freeden preferred to leave socialism outside of his list of ‘host-vessels’, this thesis will include it as the concept of ‘community’, while not being a core concept of nationalism, does indeed link socialism and nationalism. Furthermore, the socialist state, in practice if not so much in theory, is a nation-state and is thus defined, and defended, as such. Although it must be noted that any ideological conjunction of socialism and nationalism is tenable in a conceptual sense, two instances, of somewhat incoherent practice, that can be cited are those of Ceaucescu’s ‘socialist nationalism’ in Romania and Stalin’s ‘nationalistic socialism’, or ‘socialism in one country’, in the Soviet Union. The socialist belief in common ownership places the community as the guardian and executor of economic control. This is invariably managed at a state level

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<sup>185</sup> *ibid*

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*

and thus places economic and social goods, however regionalised or compartmentalised, onto a national platform. The nation is therefore the highest form of community; though given a socialist interpretation it may be viewed in a more material, instrumentalist sense rather than a symbolic and emotional one. Nevertheless, the notion of ‘community’ which features prominently in socialist ideology – its components and its importance to the cultivation of national characteristics – will also be a key factor when the ‘thought-practices’ of Plaid Cymru are discussed later in the thesis.

What arises, therefore, from this and other examples is a conclusion that while nationalism has its ‘host-vessels’, and while there is interplay and a certain dialectical engagement between the various ideologies, nationalism deserves to be regarded at the very least as a cogent body of opinion – if not as a *full* ideology – as its ideas and principles extend across, and are influential across, the political spectrum. The structure of this distinctive body of opinion is most visible when the nation is centred. Peter Alter noted this when he commented on how nationalism assigns a superior and more universal significance to the nation than “other bodies of joint social action such as class, religious community or the family”.<sup>187</sup> Forging a sense of national consciousness that is mediated by education and party organisation is another essential component of nationalism’s structure. Once tapped into, national consciousness can then act in both an inclusive and exclusive sense. It can reinforce bias and a sense of tradition and continuity among the national group, or it can act as a barrier to local or universal appeals that could entice people to look elsewhere for a sense of reassurance

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<sup>187</sup> Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, p. 11.



and political solidarity. This also applies when nationalism seeks to keep out ideologies, such as communism or anarchism, whose core components issue a challenge to nationalism's prioritisation of 'the nation' above class organisation or individual liberty.

When considering the extent of Plaid Cymru's nationalism, and whether that nationalism can be labelled as an *established*, a *distinct* or a *full* ideology, it will be important to record the manner in which Plaid Cymru views 'the nation' and how it seeks to prioritise the ethnic group known as 'the Welsh' over and above other ethnic bodies, if that is indeed what the party intends to do. The extent to which issues such as the language, and the socio-cultural recognition of 'Welshness', take centre-stage in the ideational development of the party will also come into play as a tool for analysing the depth of Plaid Cymru's commitment to a nationalist agenda.

In the ensuing chapter this thesis will focus upon the genealogy of the party and its morphology in its formative years and throughout what this thesis will term its 'early' period. In this, and subsequent chapters, the political pronouncements and ideological stances taken by the party, and its individual members, will be assessed in order to gauge if there is continuity of opinion, or, alternatively, to assess whether there are ruptures and disruptions in the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru. To do this, the thesis will focus upon key theoreticians, people within the party leadership and some of the party's community activists and in order to estimate any emerging patterns or variation in thought and practice; though it must be noted from the outset that these are individual reflections and may not be indicative of party thought as a whole. Further into the thesis some of the concepts and ideologies associated with the party

since its inception will be examined. Throughout the thesis Michael Freeden's model on the construction and nature of ideological concepts, and his writing on ideology and political thought in general, will be constantly referred to.



## **Chapter 3**

### **The Genealogy of 'Welsh Nationalism' and the Ideological**

#### **Development of 'Early' Plaid Cymru**

##### **Introduction**

Having set the scene for this thesis' investigation into the ideology of Plaid Cymru, using Michael Freeden's ideological model, and having undertaken a literature review in order to identify some of the key writings in the field of Plaid Cymru, nationalism and ideology, this chapter will, initially, look at the genealogy and development of nationalist thought in Wales. This genealogical survey is important as it is nationalism that is the ideology that Plaid Cymru is, rightly or wrongly, primarily associated with. Therefore, tracing nationalist thought in Wales should prove more productive for this investigation into Plaid Cymru's morphology than, for instance, a study of environmentalism or social democracy in Wales. Hence, although both environmentalism and social democracy may be found to have had some impact on Plaid Cymru's ideology, it would be unrealistic, and surplus to the aims of this thesis, to trace the genealogy of every ideology present within Wales. To these ends, therefore, this chapter will examine how certain social and political events of the last 800 years have acted as catalysts out of which nationalists took inspiration and how these historical events aided the development of ideological concepts within nationalism, such as 'myth-making', language prioritisation and conservation, and the 'positive valorisation of the nation'. Furthermore, the formation of Plaid Cymru in 1925 will be analysed to discover if there was an ideological vacuum that made the

founding, and introduction onto the Welsh political scene, of a nationalist political party an apposite action.

When considering Plaid Cymru's determining political philosophy, the party's key theoretician in its formative years, and one of its great intellectual figures, Saunders Lewis, will be closely scrutinised using Freedon's ideological classifications in order to understand what Lewis' exact ideological standpoint was, and how his views helped to configure the party's ideology. This is not to say, however, that Lewis was the only person to influence and arrange Plaid Cymru's thought in the early years of its existence. Hence, other leading figures in Plaid Cymru at that time will also feature in order to see how their approach either complimented or contradicted the views of Saunders Lewis. Nevertheless, it is the contention of this thesis that Lewis remains a key figure in many respects and therefore his name and his viewpoints will predominate in this discussion.

The ideological legacy from this period, and the ideological road on which the party has travelled since, will be a major consideration when applying Freedon's model to Plaid Cymru's ideological concepts in the ensuing chapters. However, any assessment of ideology after the stewardship of Saunders Lewis cannot take place unless an examination of the party's initial political ideology takes place. This will set the scene for a far more detailed dissection of the ideologies associated with the party and the core and peripheral concepts that amalgamate to form Plaid Cymru's ideology that will occur in chapters 4 and 5.

## **Origins and genealogy of nationalist thought in Wales**

Before an assessment can be made in this chapter as to the ideological stances of leading party figures – the policy making elite that becomes representative of the party's persona – within Plaid Cymru, the genealogy of nationalism, and nationalist thought, needs to be ascertained. It would be difficult, without this assessment, to establish the socio-economic and cultural worlds from which the individuals who helped to shape Plaid Cymru's ideology evolved their political ideas. To commence, therefore, it is valuable to consider the work of the aforementioned Thomas Combs on the development of nationalism in Wales; not least because Combs saw the development of nationalism occurring in phases. If this is so, then ideological breaks must have taken place over the course of time. This is insightful as far as this thesis is concerned as it not only provides a series of epochs in which assessment can take place, but also because it pre-emptly one of the lines of argument developing in this thesis, namely that the ideology of Plaid Cymru, arguably 'Welsh nationalism' in its most conspicuous political guise, has also evolved in phases; specifically 'early' and 'modern' with, arguably, a 'contemporary' or 'late modern' phase in which the party currently resides. Although it could be argued that these phases are merely part of a maturing process or simplistic evolution, this thesis will maintain that different personalities operating at specific times and having to react to unique sets of circumstances create new ideological directions or 'breaks', from which new policies and 'thought-practices' emerge. Combs' writings on the genealogy of nationalist thought in Wales, therefore, may prove insightful on several fronts. As this thesis is employing the model established by Michael Freeden, Combs' findings will be subject to Freedenite analysis and interpretation.

## Combs' 'Pre-Political Phase'

Thomas Coombs identified four stages of development for nationalism in Wales.

These were “the pre-political phase; the Liberal Party phase; the Labour Party phase; and the contemporary phase associated with the electoral success of Plaid Cymru”<sup>1</sup>.

While each feeds into contemporary nationalist thought and practice, and each can claim to be progenitors of contemporary Welsh nationalism, it is reasonable to maintain that it is the ‘pre-political phase’ that is the vital one. This is because it is this phase that was the ‘myth-maker’; the historical epoch that offered space in which nationalists could transpose their stories about ‘a golden era’ or alternatively, a period of domination by an outside force. Both these ‘myths’ seek to reinforce, or offer reasons for, the adherence to the idea of ‘ourselves’ in contention to the, not to be trusted, ‘Other’. This interpretation is vitally important to notions of nationalism worldwide. Hence, it is not a feature of any Welsh model alone.

The 1536 Act of Union is a symbolic date in this ‘pre-political phase’ as it laid provision for a schism in Welsh society along linguistic lines. While the Welsh economic elite adopted English as the language of law and business, the overwhelming majority of Welsh people continued to operate through the medium of the Welsh language. What was created, therefore, in 1536 was a sense of ‘linguistic opposition’; opposition to the rule of law, primarily, as speaking Welsh in government circles, or any other official environment, was perceived to be in breach of legal norms. This estrangement between the languages, and what each represented in the eyes of the

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<sup>1</sup> Combs, The Party of Wales, p.37

other, continued until the 1990's. While there still remain fragments of dissent on either side, the reality of a bilingual Wales has only been recognised *de jure* since the Welsh Language Act of 1993 and *de facto* by politicians and public alike in the last decade or so. What must be re-asserted here, however, is that these events depict the genealogy of nationalism and nationalistic events in Wales and are, therefore, not solely attributable as the basis for Plaid Cymru's formation and subsequent political positioning. Nevertheless, the references to how the language played its part in contemporary Welsh politics, through, most notably, Gwynfor Evans' stance on the establishment of a Welsh language television station, and its resultant effects on the ideology and standing of Plaid Cymru, will be addressed at a later stage in this thesis.

So while the Acts of Union of 1536, and the subsequent 1542 Act, were actual, as opposed to mythological, junctures that occupy the minds of Welsh nationalists, there is little doubt that the events around this period, and the centuries of English incursions beforehand, have helped to establish a 'grudge mentality' in some Welsh people who see the troubles of Wales bound up with what they regard as these unwanted impositions. Indeed, it could be argued that any residual Welsh grievances that surface today have their roots in the defeat of the last native Prince of Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, in 1282, and the subsequent incorporation of Wales by England, endorsed by the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284. The Statute affirms that the country of Wales and her inhabitants would be put "under feudal authority and annex and unify the said country with the crown of the Kingdom (of England) in one political body".<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that the Statute of Rhuddlan was repealed in 1887 under the Statute Law

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<sup>2</sup> The Western Mail, 15/05/2004, p.14

Revision Act<sup>3</sup>, the years 1282 and 1284, along with the dates of the Acts of Union, 1536 and 1542, remain potent reminders of Wales' suppression as an independent nation. It is understandable, therefore, to observe how nationalists have focussed in on these dates in order to build up nationalist opinion. Subsequently, how these dates and events have acquired folklore status for some within Wales becomes explicable.

This 'pre-political phase', therefore, has resonances to this day. While the Welsh language provides a line of transmission from one era to another, the myth-making element, stemming from the 'pre-political phase', is exemplified in the case of Owain Glyndwr. Whilst acknowledging that Glyndwr actually existed, it is nevertheless evident that the liberationist, or anti-English Crown, deeds performed by Glyndwr have been romanticised over time in order to create an iconic figure that contemporary Welsh people can find inspirational; the notion of the heroic figure who had a vision of a flourishing independent Wales. Hence, Glyndwr's aspiring Welsh nation of the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century provides a paradigm, however tenuous, for nationalists in modern-day Wales.

### **Language, 'Myth-making' and Freedom**

Having identified language and 'myth-making' at this early 'pre-political phase', it is important to link these two concepts to Michael Freedom's interpretation of nationalism's principles to establish whether or not he regards them as core values. It is practicable to make a judgement that the 'myth-making' element can be extrapolated from both the fourth and fifth core concepts of nationalism, as exemplified by Freedom.

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Beresford Ellis, Wales: A Nation Again, (Garden City Press, Letchworth, 1968) p.70



The fourth core concept identifies a particularism that nationalism must highlight if it is to appeal to its intended audience. This particularism must be justified “in terms of competing notions of national space – geographical, linguistic, cultural, biological”<sup>4</sup>. ‘Myth-making’ celebrates this particularism – be it factually based, semi-authentic, or entirely mythical – and adorns it with a vitality from which people engaged in the politics of national liberation can take heart. Freedden continued his analysis of the fourth concept by citing “the evolving cultural domain of language”<sup>5</sup>. As the Welsh language was the dominant language of Wales at the time of the noted ‘period of particularism’ that feeds into our ‘myth-making’ epoch (i.e. the era of Owain Glyndwr’s rebellion) then a clear line of argument can be established on which Welsh nationalism can be rooted.

Language evolves over space and time and as it does it coincides with, and can be a marker of, a nation’s fortunes. In the historical sense, therefore, Freedden’s fifth concept – that which refers to sentiment and emotion – can be easily interwoven into this pattern of identification. While Freedden noted that all human beings experience a sense of excitability and emotion when considering things that they cherish, he remarked how it is in nationalism alone that “the role of emotion becomes an overriding *consciously* desired value”.<sup>6</sup> While it would be reasonable to contend that Freedden could have added fascism to this evaluation, as that too asks people to engage with a particular ideology for the same emotional commitment, there is undoubtedly a

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<sup>4</sup> Freedden, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p. 754

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*; p.754

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*; p.754

sense in which nationalism does seek to foster passionate, if not arguably irrational, sentiments. If an attempt is made to incorporate these core concepts into the arena of Welsh nationalism and nationalist development, then one area that may be identified as an inducer of passion and emotion is the fostering of *eisteddfodau* as showcases for the Welsh language and Welsh culture. Nation builders within Wales pinpointed the adoption of a National Eisteddfod – stretching back to 1176 but whose modern day instigator, Iolo Morgannwg, re-invented the *Gorsedd* of Bards at the Carmarthen Eisteddfod of 1819 – as a vehicle out of which the Welsh people could gain emotional attachment, and from which the idea of a coherently united Welsh cultural, linguistic, and possibly political, framework would emerge. In similar terms, Scotland also witnessed comparable periods of cultural invention and re-invention and the Highland Games stands as an example of a communal event that was fostered to induce solidarity and to engender an undemanding awareness of one's identity and belonging.

Interestingly, in the Welsh instance, Gwyn Alf Williams identified this period that saw the rebirth of the National Eisteddfod as significant in the development of a modern Welsh identity. Linking Welsh political thought, and radicalism in particular, into the *zeitgeist* of international political upheavals, Williams saw an alternative society arising in Wales. In Williams' words "the first modern Welsh 'nation' was born with the American and French revolutions".<sup>7</sup> By the 1790's, political and religious tracts dominated Welsh language publications, and this created a wellspring out of which Nineteenth Century patriots, inspired by the events in revolutionary France in 1789, "tried to root a Wales which was to be a radical and total breach with the

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<sup>7</sup> G. A. Williams, The Search for Beulah Land, (Holmes and Meier, New York, 1980), p. 1.

immediate past”<sup>8</sup>. That immediate past which, this thesis would argue, could plausibly be called a ‘post-Act of Union era’, would be replaced, in Williams’ opinion, by a reincarnation of “a remote past re-lived in romantic, Utopian and increasingly millenarian spirit”<sup>9</sup>. While these views and tendencies may have incited Welshmen and women to opt for nationalism as their salvation, it does not necessarily follow that that is the course on which they would progress.

If this thesis is to follow Williams’ interpretation of the growth of radical consciousness at this time, or what, alternatively, may be termed ‘national consciousness’, it needs to be pointed out that Utopian thought, for instance, eschews nationalism in favour of a pacifistic universalism. On closer inspection, indeed, Williams’ theory regarding the emergence of a tentative national, and nationalistic, consciousness appeared to be consumed by its need to inflate the substance of Welsh life at that time – its language, religion, and class divisions – into the instruments through which nationalistic political activism emerged.<sup>10</sup> While certain Welsh people undoubtedly did use the aforementioned realities as channels through which dissent against the *status quo* could be registered, Williams failed to mention the societal conservatism that linguistic adherence, religious observation and social stratification can also engender. While it may be more enlivening to play up the radicalism of the age, it is probably true to say that revolutionary inclinations, and nationalist intentions, were not as widespread around this time as some historians would have us believe.

Whilst not denying that there was a rise in nationalist sentiment, and an understanding

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid*; p.31

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p.132

of the possibilities attached to national self-government, it is feasible to argue that these views were held by a coterie of predominantly well-educated and motivated individuals but were not indicative of the population at large or of any coherent social movement within the wider public realm.

If the above observation has some basis in fact, then this vanguard seeking independent political control for Wales may have resonances when applied to Plaid Cymru. This is because the party shows signs of being an organisation – although numbering tens of thousands of members since its inception – which has been steered throughout its eighty-year history by a relatively small number of motivated people; as, indeed, it could be argued that most, if not all, political parties are. Possibly there are similarities between the ruling elite throughout Plaid Cymru’s existence and what Gwyn Alf Williams described as “the first spokesmen for this new ‘nation’ ... its ‘preacher-journalists’”.<sup>11</sup> Whilst trying not to fall prey to the claim of generalisation, it is fair to say that in historical terms, and by taking occupation and status as a guideline, the people within the various communities within Wales who have advocated nationalism, certainly in its numerous mainstream guises, have invariably come from the professional classes; people who are perceived to have a certain level of standing within their communities.

### **Hiraeth and Welsh Nationalism**

Returning to some of the ideological components under discussion, one fascinating area in which emotion, nationalism and Wales can be contextualised is

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*; p.132

through the Welsh expression *hiraeth*. This expression is unique in that it has no unambiguous meaning in translation. When used in Welsh it can mean longing or desire but it can also express passion and emotion. *Hiraeth* is a term often used at eisteddfodau and other cultural gatherings. It offers identification and attachment to all of those people who associate with, or have a love for, Wales. It is not, however, a uniquely nationalistic term. It is used by people of all political creeds to express their views on their homeland. It would be wrong, therefore, to link it with nationalism alone. What is exceptional, nevertheless, is how this expression is used, by nationalists and non-nationalists alike, to denote something peculiarly Welsh. It shows how, if nothing else, the use of language and, as in this instance, a specific term within that language, does offer something to the user that is unique. The extent to which it is employed to summon up passion and patriotism, and whether this acts as a conduit into what would be seen as identifiably nationalistic views, is naturally open to interpretation as each case arises. It does, however, show the significance of one singular word within a language; a word that has a certain symbolism, particularly to those advocating the ideology of nationalism.

Regardless of the debate as to whether a term like *hiraeth* has nationalist connotations or not, it would be fair to claim that it is possible, albeit in a tangential way, to match up the dominant features of Thomas Combs 'pre-political phase', language and 'myth-making', with the fourth and fifth concepts that Freedden believed were fundamental values of nationalist ideology. Does this, therefore, firmly set the foundations for a nationalist ideology that would come fully to fruition with the formation of Plaid Cymru? Though early indications would point in this direction, there are still the other phases of development to assess, as outlined by Combs, along with

the identification, or otherwise, of nationalism within Plaid Cymru once the party had been established.

### **The 'Liberal Party Phase'**

When moving on to an analysis of the 'Liberal Party phase'<sup>12</sup> as Combs titled it, nationalism can be viewed at a time of social, economic and political change associated with the epoch of industrialisation and the growth of urbanisation. It is during this period that dissent against the perceived iniquities of British authority, be it in a religious or political sense, became far more conspicuous. Socialist writers, like Gareth Miles and Rob Griffiths<sup>13</sup>, however, have disputed Combs' account of this 'Liberal Party phase' as a burgeoning nationalistic period. Attacking the Liberal Party inspired and dominated *Cymru Fydd* (literally meaning 'the Wales that will be' but often incorrectly translated as 'Young Wales') pressure group – a body that attempted to mirror the Scottish Home Rule Association and the Irish Home Rule movement – Miles and Griffiths maintained that the Liberals merely toyed with home-rule. They pointed out that the concept of home-rule, and the vision of a politically and economically independent Wales, was, in the words of Saunders Lewis “the spare time hobby of corpulent and successful men”<sup>14</sup>. This is undoubtedly a harsh assessment of this period of Wales' political history as it claimed that radical thought should be the preserve of the industrial working classes; a persistent argument that is forwarded by left-inclined writers. However, the 'Liberal Party phase', and liberalism itself, as a driving force for the development of nationalism in Wales, and the opening up of the

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<sup>12</sup> Combs, The Party of Wales, p.54.

<sup>13</sup> Miles and Griffiths, Socialism for the Welsh People, (Y Faner Goch, Cardiff, 1979)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p.10

political arena to allow for Plaid Cymru's formation and flourishing, needs more critical analysis than that offered by Miles and Griffiths. Also, an investigation of where liberalism connects to nationalism as part of Freedden's ideological map must also be undertaken.

While the Liberal Party's policy on devolved rule in a federal Britain can be pinpointed to their radical programme of 1885, wherein it announced that it would "entrust Wales, Scotland and Ireland with the free and full administration of their internal affairs"<sup>15</sup>, it was the association of some Liberal Party members with the setting up of *Cymru Fydd* and the campaign to seek the disestablishment of the Church in Wales that was of greater importance. The one Liberal Party politician of this period who is most associated with Wales, and the aspirations of *Cymru Fydd*, is David Lloyd George. Indeed, Peter Beresford Ellis, paraphrasing a sub-heading of an article in the *Young Wales* magazine from June 1896, even went as far as calling Lloyd George the "apostle of Welsh nationalism"<sup>16</sup>. By this time, Lloyd George had been advancing the notion of self-government for Wales for three decades. While it would be impolite to deny that Lloyd George was patriotically inclined, and only fair to acknowledge that he did desire a greater voice for Welsh people, the extent to which he represented a distinctly nationalist front is open to interpretation. His radical credentials cannot be denied but Peter Berresford Ellis is one commentator who has sought to highlight the criticism levelled at Lloyd George within Wales when Lloyd George turned his attention away from the 'home-rule' issue and began making speeches on the Boer

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<sup>15</sup> Berresford Ellis, *Wales - A Nation Again*, p.77

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p.67

War<sup>17</sup>. Lloyd George even endured criticism from *Young Wales* whose editorial line somewhat over exaggerated matters by claiming that Lloyd George had turned his back on his fellow Welshmen.

### **Henry Richard's Nationalism**

With this slightly unflattering representation of Lloyd George's overall commitment to matters Welsh under the spotlight, it is perhaps understandable how contemporary Plaid Cymru activists such as the former Ceredigion MP, Simon Thomas<sup>18</sup>, praise Lloyd George's fellow Liberal, Henry Richard, MP for Merthyr, as a far greater influence on Wales' distinctive brand of nationalism than the undoubtedly more well-known, and iconic, former Prime Minister. Similarly, but in a somewhat revisionist analysis of the individuals under consideration, Henry Richard is viewed as a Member of Parliament who was more in tune with traditionalist Welsh values such as non-violence and moral rectitude. These were traditionalist values in the sense that they stemmed from the religious convictions held by the church-attending majority. This contrasts sharply to the more lax attitude attributed to Lloyd George on this latter matter. While a nationalistic tinge can be attributed to both men the fact that Lloyd George let himself be corrupted by what some Welsh nationalists would refer to as 'English values' (i.e. moral laxity) adds to the romanticised, if not chimerical nature of nationalist thinking about social mores within Wales.

Praise for Henry Richard among some of the present generation of Plaid Cymru activists can be said to have come about because Richard embraced the causes that

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*; p.80

<sup>18</sup> Simon Thomas, *BBC Wales Today*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2004.



certain people within Plaid Cymru claim as ‘Welsh causes’; namely Christian (or humanistic) pacifism, Chartism and workers representation, and the co-existence of a patriotic and internationalist outlook. Relating Richard’s perspective on affairs to present-day thinking, Gwyn Alf Williams has stressed the internationalism advanced by Henry Richard. Bypassing a narrow jingoistic or xenophobic standpoint, Williams claimed an innately acquired point of view for Richard. He became, Williams has argued, “a good internationalist precisely because he was a good Welshman”.<sup>19</sup>

Continuing this line of reasoning and attribution, Williams has also contended that Richard became “what the late Raymond Williams called himself in his last years, a Welsh European”<sup>20</sup>. This internationalist and ‘Welsh European’ vision is a viewpoint that has come to the fore in recent years as the devolution, regionalism and decentralisation debates have reached a peak and as the steady process of Europeanisation continues unabated. This is an area that will be covered in more detail in subsequent chapters of this thesis. The importance of what can be described as nationalist viewpoints within the Liberal Party, as Thomas Combs observed, are nevertheless evident. So the ‘Liberal Party phase’, due to its absorption of the salient political concerns of the period, does appear to have its place in the development of nationalism in Wales. What must now be considered is how liberalism, the ideology that the Liberal Party embraced, can be incorporated into the ideological map that is being constructed using the Freedden paradigm.

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<sup>19</sup> G. A. Williams, *Peace and Power: Henry Richard A Radical for Our Time*, (CND Cymru, Cardiff, 1988) p.7

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

## The Role of Liberalism in Freeden's Model

Before analysing Michael Freeden on this matter, it is worth noting how liberalism and nationalism have been interwoven in the eyes of another writer on ideologies. Erica Benner has observed that “many of the concepts that have come to be identified as ‘core’ elements of nationalist ideology – nation, national identity or ‘consciousness’, and national self-government – began to acquire an important place in liberal and democratic thinking during the Nineteenth Century”.<sup>21</sup> The fashionable desire, at that point in time, for the relatively new portrayal of liberty, both individual and collective, and an attempt to understand one’s own purpose within the wider structure of community – what became known as ‘self-identification’ – can be put forward as reasons for discovering ideological linkages between liberalism and nationalism. In a similar vein, the upsurge in the level of discourse regarding the concept of freedom, traceable to the French Revolution of 1789, cannot be played down as it resonated in the minds of both liberals and nationalists. Looking at the way in which Freeden placed liberalism in his analysis of nationalist ideology it is evident that the link that Benner made can be fitted in to this discussion on the ‘Liberal Party phase’.

As stated in chapter 2, Freeden regards liberalism as a ‘host-vessel’ in which nationalist discourse can reside. While the thesis does not wish to spend too much time challenging this concept on its own merit, it is reasonable to ask whether it is really feasible, in assessing the genealogy of nationalist thought in Wales, to claim that nationalism was just residing within the biggest purveyor of liberal values, the Liberal Party, before it broke out of its skin to present itself to the world in the guise of Plaid

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<sup>21</sup> Erica Benner, ‘*Nationality without Nationalism*’, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 2, no.2, June 1997, p. 189

Cymru. While the more radical agenda of liberalism, pursued by the Liberal Party, would appear to be more conducive to nationalists who sought to alter the constitutional *status quo*, as opposed to the conservatism of a Tory Party intent on making only minor, if any, constitutional adjustments, the question that needs to be asked, with reference to Freedon's model, is why did nationalism use liberalism rather than conservatism as a 'host vessel'. One answer to this could lie in Combs' assertion that "The Liberal Party was... the only alternative within the present political structure to correct the injustices which existed"<sup>22</sup>. If the praxis of liberalism, demonstrated by the Liberal Party, is indeed seen as a route out, or 'alternative', there is little wonder that nationalists favoured this course of progressive action to unsettle the *status quo*. Liberals, as Freedon has noted, would not have had any qualms about accepting these nationalists into their ranks as liberals respect people's self-identification and, bearing this in mind, "liberalism must include respect for a sense of national identity and belonging"<sup>23</sup>. Whatever reservations liberals have about nationalism, and they have many with regard to the way in which certain more extreme or authoritarian forms of nationalism are seemingly dismissive of individual rights and claims, they do at least accept, as Freedon pointed out, that nationalism "sanctions the principle of self-government"<sup>24</sup>.

What would be valuable for this analysis would be to try to establish the depth to which nationalist views emerge within the nucleus of Liberal Party opinion during the 'phase' that Combs saw as important to the development of nationalism within Wales,

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<sup>22</sup> Combs, *The Party of Wales*, p.68

<sup>23</sup> Freedon, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p. 761

<sup>24</sup> Freedon, *Ideology*, p.99

or whether these nationalist views are merely fringe or peripheral concerns. By returning to Freeden's five core concepts of nationalism it can be shown that, as stated above, the identification of 'the nation' is not a core of liberalism, and, hence, despite the appeals for home-rule by Lloyd George and *Cymru Fydd*, the prioritisation of the particular group – the nation – is not a salient feature of liberalism at this, or any other, point in time. Nevertheless, this does not mean that nationalism was completely ignored by those holding liberal views during the period under discussion. Indeed, there is evidence of 'structural tolerance', as Freeden termed it<sup>25</sup>, to be found in the fact that nationalism was able to surface in liberalism, and the Liberal Party, in Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Wales. This acceptance possibly stems from the Political Idealism that pervaded liberal thought in this period. If Idealist thought was generally accepted, and therefore there was a climate in which there was clear evidence of "the complementary nature of the individual and social principles"<sup>26</sup>, then nationalism would have been able to find a voice as long as it didn't infringe on, or attempt to dominate or suffocate, those who favour individual thought and practice in contrast to collective identification. This is a key conceptual point in any attempt to understand where nationalism fits in with liberalism and vice versa.

One area in which there would be obvious signs of tension for someone with a nationalist disposition operating in a liberal ideological environment is when the issues of particularism and universalism are raised. In his discussion on this area of tension, Michael Freeden cited Lord Acton's contention that a pluralist liberalism can be adopted that is "put in the service not of freedom as self-development, but of freedom

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<sup>25</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.588

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*; p.181

from the unnecessary intervention of government”.<sup>27</sup> If this line of reasoning existed at the time, then nationalists could find an ideological home, albeit not ideal, in a Liberal Party whose core concept of liberty could be adapted by nationalists to embrace their desire for unrepressed national self-expression. The particular / universalist debate could then be managed in a way that would allow a synthesis to develop that stretches the use of the concept of liberty to embrace both camps. If this is done, and this thesis would argue that this is what appears to have happened in the case of nationalism and the Liberal Party in Wales, then a co-existence can, and clearly did, exist.

### **Conservatism and Organic Change**

The Tory Party, being the standard bearers of conservatism, could not offer the same conditions for nationalism to flourish for several reasons. This, however, does not mean that nationalists within Plaid Cymru have not borrowed some ideological concepts from conservatism, as will be demonstrated later in this thesis. One of the core concepts of conservatism, as Freedon read it, is “an insistence on controlled organic and natural change”<sup>28</sup>. Any person advocating ‘Welsh Nationalism’ would have great difficulty with being able to reconcile his or herself with this conservative core as, this thesis contends, natural change would not bring about the substantial modification to the governmental structures that would be required in order to create the countrywide awakening that nationalists desire.

If it was just a case of nationalism fostering resurgence, and a greater recognition or understanding of what being involved with your nation should entail, then

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<sup>27</sup> Freedon, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p.760

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, p.762

conservatism could act as its 'host-vessel' as this resurgence could come about through 'organic and natural change'. However, accepting a transformation along the lines desired by Welsh nationalists would require a more revolutionary and far-reaching stance. This is because, and here another reason why nationalists rejected the Tory Party enters the debate, Conservatism, as represented by the Tory Party, upheld the laws, customs, conventions and values of the Union; a Union that held the component parts of the United Kingdom together and did not advocate any radical change to this system of governance in the foreseeable future.

For the Tory Party there was immense symbolism in the construct that was, and still is, the Union – a symbolism of a potent, even nationalistic, expansionist and imperialistic Britain – and this was an image that the Tory Party did not wish to relinquish. Conservatism, therefore, dampened internal nationalist demands because nationalism, not only in Wales but also in Ireland and Scotland, threatened the continuation of the existing socio-political configuration, and its accompanying imagery. Unsurprisingly, it is evident to see why Welsh nationalists would, in this instance, shy away from the Tory Party as its value-system and ideological framework would not have advanced nationalism in Wales. If this attachment to liberalism, and the Liberal Party, as opposed to conservatism, and the Tory Party, appeared to be the most conducive for nationalists in this 'Liberal Party phase' then why did some nationalistically minded individuals seek to establish a distinctive political party and what, in ideological terms, did they hope to achieve? Subsequently, therefore, this thesis would argue that it becomes apparent when assessing this period that other 'thought-practices' – for instance, it could be contended that socialism was one – must

have played some part in influencing the people who were to form the new political body that was Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru.

### **Ideologies and Political Developments Pre-1925**

Thomas Combs mentioned the development of Welsh nationalism entering its third phase, what he labelled 'The Labour Party phase'<sup>29</sup>, in 1922. While it is possible to understand the reasons why Combs choose this date for his third phase, as it saw the demise of Lloyd George's Government and the manifestation of Labour as a mass party capable of taking power, this thesis contends that there is a case to be made for an earlier date to be put forward and 'The Labour Party phase' to be replaced by a more generic title such as the 'Burgeoning Socialist phase' or even the 'Working Class Recognition phase'. One of the reasons for this reappraisal of Combs' titling of his separate phases is that in consideration of this stage of development, and whilst there are no reasons, and it is not the intention of his thesis, to deny or denigrate the prominent role that the Labour Party played in the development of Welsh politics, and partly in the development of Welsh nationalism, it would be unfair to attribute socialism merely to the Labour Party. This is due to the fact that socialism had infused itself over the course of time into a variety of organisations and political movements.

### **Freedden's Core Concepts of Socialism**

With the above observation in mind, therefore, and before an historical assessment is made, Freedden's view on the relationship between socialism and nationalism needs to be considered. The socialist core, according to Freedden, contains five concepts. These

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<sup>29</sup> Combs, The Party of Wales, p.87

are “the constitutive nature of the human relationship, human welfare as a desirable objective, human nature as active, equality, and history as the arena of (ultimately) beneficial change”.<sup>30</sup> While core concepts two, three, and four can be adjudged peripheral to any nationalist concerns, it is the first and last concepts that could prove the most attractive to nationalists who deem themselves to be left-leaning. For socialists, the first concept – the constitutive nature of the human relationship – is often illustrated as an organic master / slave association that features not only in the works of Marxist and Socialist philosophers but its general theme can also be located in the writings of philosophers as diverse as Rousseau, Mill, and Nietzsche<sup>31</sup>. Using the language of contemporary social capital<sup>32</sup>, ‘vertical linkages’ are clearly visible within the structure and organisation of virtually every society. Herein the master / slave, employer / employee relationship is conspicuous. Socialists accept this and see the challenging, and breaking down, of these ‘vertical linkages’ to be a key objective.

Eventually ‘horizontal linkages’ should be fostered so that the fourth core concept of socialism, namely equality, can be enacted. Here, liberalism varies from socialism in that liberals maintain that by advancing the notion of universal values ‘horizontal linkages’ – treating your fellow man or woman on a moral, if not an entirely legalistic, equalitarian basis – are enacted without having to engage in class struggle or regime change. Whilst this ‘eye to eye’ notion of horizontal linkage would attract a nationalist, who would apply it on a particularistic basis, it may be more appropriate to contend that the espousal and application of nationalism would only exacerbate the vertical

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<sup>30</sup> Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp.425-426.

<sup>31</sup> see Chris Sparks and Stuart Isaacs, *Political Theorists in Context*, 2004 and Nancy S Love, *Dogmas and Dreamers*, 2005.

<sup>32</sup> James Farr, ‘*Social Capital: A Conceptual History*’, in *Political Theory*, vol.32, no.1, February 2004, pp. 6-33.



linkage tradition. This is because nationalists, of whatever shade, view the nation in a special light.

The nation has an esteemed place in the conceptual framework of nationalism, as it is the nucleus whose position and maintenance provides nationalists with their key *raison d'être*. Nationalism without the nation is implausible. Nationalism without other ideological concepts that define a person's identity and position within society – class stratification, egalitarianism, etc – is feasible. Here, therefore, it could be proposed that it is easy to evaluate that the liberal notion of individual identity could be surpassed by the desire to ferment a communal identity; a communal identity where all within the construct that is 'the nation' can relate, using 'vertical linkages', to that very nation. Socialism, it would seem, has more in common with nationalism on this concept than does liberalism; albeit that socialism seeks to eradicate the 'vertical linkage' while nationalism – so as not to dethrone or de-power the nation itself – is happy to maintain at least the semblance of a 'vertical linkage' between the individual and the nation that she / he has attachment or allegiance to. Certainly nationalism would seek to generate an *esprit de corps* that would give a sense of 'horizontal linkage' and equality. Indeed, this thesis maintains that the flowering of that *esprit de corps* may well prove to be imperative if a nationalist ideology is to have any chance of attaining a certain status, and then subsequently maintaining its appeal. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the fact that solidarity may be achieved through this venture, the 'vertical linkage' would still remain in place as the concept and idea of 'the nation' takes pride of place. Thus, there is always going to be a certain level of subordination in any political environment that is underpinned by nationalism.

## The Conception of History and Political Change

In keeping with Freedon's model, the fifth core concept of socialism, 'history as the arena of (ultimately) beneficial change', can be related to nationalistic visions in several ways. First and foremost, socialism and nationalism both envisage, and require, change as both a mechanism and a productive force. From Karl Marx's "the history of hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle"<sup>33</sup> through to Benedict Anderson's concocted 'imagined communities'<sup>34</sup>, an historical epoch is summoned up in which radical restructuring has either occurred or is set to occur; Marx's belief in historical materialism and the inevitable collapse of capitalism at some given point in time being an obvious example<sup>35</sup>. For nationalists the summoning up of *la belle époque* means that there may be an overlap with socialism as both ideologies advance what could be described as a romanticist vision as they seek to either create or recreate an historical or epoch-making era. In both ideologies, this 'process of creation' is classified by Freedon, albeit through differing descriptions, as a core concept. Given this justification, it is feasible to understand how somebody advocating an alternative socio-political course to the incumbent one could fluctuate between socialism and nationalism. This is because both are vehicles for social change and both offer a revolutionary, transformative route to societal advancement through the use of history as an arena of beneficial change; be it via the emphasising of certain historical events or through a glorification of what may be portrayed as a 'golden era', factual or mythical.

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<sup>33</sup> Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto, (Vanguard Press, New York, 1926), p.1.

<sup>34</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, (Verso, London, 1991)

<sup>35</sup> Chris Sparks and Stuart Isaacs, Political Theorists in Context, (London, Routledge, 2004), p.225.

In light of all this, therefore, it is certainly possible that nationalists in Wales, without a recognisably nationalistic vehicle in which they could operate in an unimpeded manner, would have to resort to inhabiting socialist groupings, especially as this period saw a major advancement in socialist theory and socialist political practice. At the end of the Nineteenth Century and start of the Twentieth Century, the socio-economic culture of Wales was locked into a blue-collar economy that encompassed the heavy industries of coal, iron and steel in the south, and the slate industry in the north. At the same time, mid and rural Wales was predominantly reliant on agricultural production. Taken as a whole, therefore, the working classes dominated the demographic map of Wales with few homegrown middle class professionals or members of the upper classes in existence. For the majority of the population, at this point in time, the Liberal Party was the party of choice; certainly that was the case, in electoral terms, after the 1868 Reform Act. Meanwhile, in organisational terms, the trade unions provided a political release valve, if not an altogether coherent voice, until the advent of the Labour Party at the end of the Victorian age. In societal terms, therefore, a slow but sure process of collectivisation was occurring; a process that would see socialism become a major political force and one that would eventually oust the Liberals, with their soon to be outmoded political and economic philosophy of individualism.

### **Radicalism and the role of the Welsh language**

In conjunction with this, the politics of direct action, be it through the Rebecca Riots, the Merthyr Rising of 1831 or the bloody Chartist advance on Newport in 1839, was embedded on the minds of Welsh radicals by the end of the Nineteenth Century.

Though regularly portrayed as working class, socialist-inspired activism, a nationalistic element can be attributed to all three of these actions, as each took place in large part, though not exclusively, through the Welsh language. One example of this is presented by Thomas Phillips, mayor of Newport at the time of the Chartist insurrection, who said that it was “Welsh in its origin and character... contrived by persons who communicated with each other in a language not understood by the authorities”<sup>36</sup>. Equally, in a move that summoned up historical passion, the essayist Harri Webb remarked that “when the ragged Chartists marched from the valleys of Gwent, the radical John Frost called on the name of Glyndwr to inspire them”<sup>37</sup>.

In all of the aforementioned instances, therefore, it would be feasible to claim that the Welsh language acted as an alienator, and was successfully manipulated for this purpose by the insurrectionists themselves, as the commanding ranks of the armed forces and the judiciary who took action to quell these rebellious acts could not interact with the rebels in their mother tongue. The fact that extrinsic forces seemed to be putting down the actions of the indigenous population added to the folklore of resistance that nationalists used as a supplementary to their armoury of grievances. Hence, these actions became part of the ‘myth-making’ process, which, as has been established through this thesis’ reading of Freedon, is a vital ingredient for fostering nationalism. While this is rarely commented on by historians or political commentators, it is reasonable to add that this division of languages cannot be underplayed as language, like ‘myth-making’, can be a prime motivator within nationalism and, albeit subconsciously or certainly not in any premeditated sense, the linguistic divide was

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<sup>36</sup> Gwynfor Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, (Talybont, Y Lolfa, 1992), p.110

<sup>37</sup> Harri Webb, *A Militant Muse*, (Bridgend, Seren, 1998), p.74

nurturing a sense of nationhood; a sense of nationhood that theoreticians within Plaid Cymru would later allude to.

One commentator who has noted the relevance of language in fostering nationalist sentiment is Jane Aaron. In her National Eisteddfod lecture of 2003, Aaron noted how the Blue Books, the infamous government report on education in Wales in 1847 that attempted to “shame the Welsh and persuade them to adopt the language and culture of the Englishman as a higher civilisation than Welsh culture”<sup>38</sup>, actually backfired on the Commissioners. Aaron then continued on this theme by citing the historian Ieuan Gwynedd Jones who, commenting on the effects of the 1847 Report, maintained that “for the first time in the century Welsh people...had to weigh and measure what their nationality meant to them in a painful but very effective manner”<sup>39</sup>. If nothing else, therefore, criticism of the Welsh language by English-speaking, London-based officials had induced a sense of patriotic feeling across Wales as, in the opinion of many people, an extraneous force was seen to be attempting to deny the birthright of the, mostly uneducated, masses. It could be argued, and this thesis would be supportive of the idea, that this sense of patriotism, and an allegiance to the Welsh language, aided the course and development of nationalism in the years ahead. Moreover, it undoubtedly helps to explain why, allied to a perceived threat to a Welsh tradition from outsiders, nationalists in Wales were to place such a huge emphasis on the continuation and survival of the indigenous language.

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<sup>38</sup> Jane Aaron, The Welsh Survival Gene, (Cardiff, IWA, 2003) p.7

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

Overall, therefore, one line of argument building within this thesis would contend that the countless acts of rebellion that Wales witnessed over the course of the industrial age may well have had socialist, or at the very minimum peasant or proletariat, inspiration but, ultimately, what arose out of these actions was a deeper sense of nationhood and community solidarity that was to eventually find an ideological home within nationalist, and later Plaid Cymru, 'thought-practices'. This will be further exemplified later in this thesis. Hence, socialism as an ideology, and the socialistic and nonconformist environment in which the bulk of the working classes were functioning, acted as a breeding ground for nationalism in Wales. The linkages, or as it may be termed 'overlapping consensus', between socialism and nationalism in Wales, though vigorously denied by generations of Labour Party activists, is something that comes across as quite apparent through an analytical reading of modern Welsh political history, and it is envisaged that the examination of various themes and concepts within Plaid Cymru's ideology, that will be take place in chapters 4 and 5, will reveal this to an even greater extent.

If nationalist ideas were taking root within a socialist milieu, and simultaneously those nationalistic views were finding expression within the Liberal Party, many of whose members were campaigning for home rule for Wales and Ireland and the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, then the question must be asked as to why some people felt that the formation of a distinctly nationalist, or at least a distinctly Welsh, political party was required. The instinctive supposition would be that the people who formed Plaid Cymru saw weaknesses, structural or ideological, in the other political parties at the time. Certainly, in structural terms, it is a fact that the prevailing political parties operated out of a London base and, barring the

constitutional concerns of the Liberals, these parties were not particularly Welsh-focussed; even though in the case of the Liberal Party, and particularly, upon its inception, in the case of the Labour Party, a great deal of electoral support and general goodwill was gained from Wales. Also, and perhaps somewhat ironically, many of the most prominent politicians and activists within those parties were themselves Welsh. To give some example of how far the issue of Welsh political autonomy had drifted away from the mainstream of Liberal Party policy, Gwynfor Evans cites Sir Ben Bowen Thomas who said that when the old *Cymru Fydd* campaigner E.T. John “rose on 11 March 1914 to present his Self-government for Wales measure, the few who were there listened to his voice as the cry of one risen from the dead”<sup>40</sup>.

This thesis would argue, however, that it is fair to maintain that it was in the ideological field where the real difficulties lay. With this in mind, an exploration of developments leading up to Plaid Cymru’s formation in Pwllheli in 1925 and the political thinking that sowed the seeds for this new political party requires examination. Likewise, using Freedon’s model, it is also imperative to try to delineate the core concepts from the peripheral and attempt, if possible, to classify the ideas, nationalist or not, into their ideological categories.

### **On the Ideological road to Pwllheli**

Carwyn Fowler has observed how “having witnessed the failure of *Cymru Fydd* to force a home-rule act for Wales, David Lloyd George turned his attention to UK

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<sup>40</sup> Evans, The Fight for Welsh Freedom, p.128

matters".<sup>41</sup> If Lloyd George's decision to concentrate on issues at a UK level is an accurate assessment, and with the nascent Labour Party taking 'the nation' out of their political rhetoric in favour of concepts such as 'workers control' and 'internationalism', then it could be argued that there was now an electoral vacuum, and deeper than that an ideological vacuum, for those people in Wales desirous for some degree of Welsh political autonomy. In contrast to Lloyd George, some cultural and political activists felt that the time was immanent to turn their and, hopefully, other peoples attention to singularly 'Welsh matters'.

While this thesis is concentrating on the ideological aspects, it would be correct to state that in electoral terms alone the choice of 1925 as the date for the launch of a new political party would not appear to be the most appropriate time. This is because Wales had three major political parties at that time – Labour, Liberal, and the Conservatives – and it would be fair to imply that of these three the Labour and Liberal parties could, certainly, both lay substantial claim to be the true representatives of Welsh political opinion and consciousness. The range of policies and ideologies encompassed by these three political parties ranged from Marxists in the Labour Party through to High Tory, and some far right, viewpoints within the Conservative Party. There were also varying degrees of nationalist sentiment within all three parties, and many individuals within the Labour and Liberal parties made great claim of their 'Welshness'.

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<sup>41</sup> Carwyn Fowler, A Durable Concept: Anthony Smith's concept of National Identity and the case of Wales, (PSA Conference paper, 2002), p.4



It was amidst this compact political marketplace that Plaid Cymru was formed in 1925. In electoral terms, therefore, it would be fair to contend that there was no natural constituency of voters desperate for a political party to emerge in order to sum up and represent their ideological position. If voters were seeking nationalism, socialism, liberalism or conservatism then there were outlets available; though the depth to which these 'thought-practices' were actually represented within the existing political parties is another matter altogether. All of this was problematic for Plaid Cymru but without further intensive psephological or demographic analysis – which it is not the intention of this thesis to provide – it is fair to conclude that 1925 was not the most auspicious time to launch a political party that sought acceptance from the Welsh electorate. It certainly was not a case, in electoral terms at least, of Plaid Cymru finding an eager audience awaiting them. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that Gwynfor Evans' notion that the formation of Plaid Cymru lit a candle that stood out "in the blackness of the night around them"<sup>42</sup> is somewhat fanciful. The reality of it all was that it would be a long while after 1925 before Plaid Cymru was to see signs of progress in electoral terms.

Returning to matters strictly ideological, one individual who certainly did feel that the time was right to form a new political party around this period was the writer and academic Saunders Lewis. As it turned out, it was Lewis' political philosophy that went a long way towards shaping the early thinking of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (Welsh National Party) - the party's full, original title – although Lewis cannot and should not be portrayed as the sole voice and ideological driver of the party at that

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<sup>42</sup> Gwynfor Evans, Land of My Fathers, p.442.

period in time. Lewis was party president from 1926-39 and it is probably fair to conclude that it was predominantly the character of Lewis who the general public associated with the name of Plaid Cymru at this time.

As he was, arguably, a 'giant', or at the very least a dominant and often contentious personality, in terms of Plaid Cymru's history, and more importantly for this thesis in terms of its morphology when it came to ideological content and development, it is the firm belief of this thesis that the political thought of Saunders Lewis needs to be addressed in some detail. Initially, his introduction to nationalist ideas must be traced before, using Freedom as a guide, the content of Lewis' ideology can be analysed. What must be remembered, before any study of Lewis' role in Plaid Cymru, and his ideological development is undertaken, however, is the unmistakable fact that Plaid Cymru was not then, is not today, and never has been, a 'one-man band'. Hence, alternative ideological positions and differing voices within the party cannot be sidelined in any discussion about Saunders Lewis' role in the party's ideational development.

### **'Seeing the Nationalist Light': Saunders Lewis' Wartime Conversion**

Saunders Lewis' conversion to nationalism came about through his reading of Maurice Barres' *Le Culte du Moi*<sup>43</sup>. This conversion occurred in 1916 when Lewis was in the trenches of Belgium. One of Barre's passages that was said to have inspired

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<sup>43</sup> G.A. Williams, When was Wales? (Penguin, London, 1985), p.281

Lewis was the one in which Barres claimed that “he who cuts himself off from his own past, his own land, is starving his soul and frustrating his own being”.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, there is a clear instance here of a ‘time and place’ setting mixed in with a large degree of emotion. Given Lewis’ predicament in the battlefield this would have undoubtedly been a poignant episode. It is also important to recall that these combinations of ‘time and place’ and emotion are core concepts of nationalism, according to Freedon. While it is impossible to deny the actuality of this conversion, it is probably reasonable to add that there must have been some embedded political viewpoints that Lewis brought with him into his ‘nationalist conversion’. What, undeniably, Lewis did bring into the arena that Barres was evoking was a literary romanticism. Referring to his introduction to nationalistic writings, Lewis revealed, in an interview in 1961, that it was “through Yeats, Synge, Collum and other writers belonging to the Irish literary tradition that he first came to understand the meaning of nationhood and the experience of patriotism”.<sup>45</sup> This romantic view of the exigencies of modern life was to play a significant part in the early pronouncements of Plaid Cymru, and it remained an important part of the Lewis psyche throughout his life.

Eulogising about the profundity of Saunders Lewis, one leading Plaid Cymru activist of the early years, D.J. Williams, noted how there was a lot more going on within Lewis’ mind and soul than just a simplistic conversion to nationalism through the reading of a book during a time of extreme stress and longing. Williams

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<sup>44</sup> Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas, Presenting Saunders Lewis, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1983), p.4

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*; p.23

commented that Lewis' "conversion to Roman Catholicism and Welsh Nationalism seem to have taken place simultaneously within him, the ideal and the practical aspect of his being, each as it were a complement to the other".<sup>46</sup> This must have been a stimulating coalescence and Saunders Lewis' attachment to his religious ideals marks a significant strand within his own, and Plaid Cymru's, ideological development.

Religion as a leitmotif within Plaid Cymru is a conceptual issue that will be assessed in chapter 5. Strikingly, where there is a notable absence of religion is in Freedon's classification of the core concepts of nationalism. In the reasoning of Freedon, and when applied to the particular case of Plaid Cymru, religion must, therefore, be viewed as a peripheral concept; one that influences the core but is not, in itself, an essential driver of nationalism. Where it is worthy of appraisal, and confirming the realisation that there are nationalisms in a plural sense as opposed to just one set of ideas to be labelled as 'nationalism', is when it becomes evident that this categorisation could, and possibly should, be applied to 'Welsh nationalism'; if it is the case that that is the label to be attached to the set of ideas exemplified by Plaid Cymru. But, in the case of Irish nationalism for instance, religion should be positioned as a core concept. This is a timely reminder that this thesis is dealing with a specific set of ideas collectively registered, rightly or wrongly, as 'Welsh nationalism,' and the subsequent portrayal, or filtering, of this 'Welsh nationalism' through the views expressed by one particular political party operating within this political environment, namely Plaid Cymru.

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid*; p.4

## Lewis, Conservatism and Nationalism

While Saunders Lewis brought both literary romanticism and religious conviction into the arena from which Plaid Cymru's ideology was to evolve, Lewis also brought a certain tinge of conservatism to the ideological composition. In a speech given at Llandrindod Wells in 1923, Saunders Lewis presented his interpretation of nationalism and what that nationalism could deliver for Wales. For Lewis "another name for nationalism is conservatism. In essence nationalism and conservatism are one and the same".<sup>47</sup> To further exemplify this theory, Hywel Davies noted how, during the course of his address, Lewis "pointed to the Conservative Party as being the English Nationalist Party".<sup>48</sup> Considering what has already been outlined with regard to the liberal and socialist influences on the development of nationalist thought and practice, and the all round challenge to the *status quo* that these bodies of opinion brought with them, it appears curious that Lewis summoned up conservatism as an inspiration, and even more so to equate conservatism with nationalism. That is not to contend that conservatism endorses the *status quo* as such, but conservatism's favouring of organic, evolutionary change ahead of a revolutionary or radical restructuring of the Welsh polity would not appear, *prima facie*, to offer a solution to the problems that Lewis and others claimed were in existence.

Michael Oakeshott's remarks on the disposition of conservatism, in contrast to Lewis' interpretation, would appear to show that there was a high level of contradiction between the principles of conservatism and the ideology of nationalism, and in turn, Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. For Oakeshott, "to be conservative...is

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<sup>47</sup> Miles and Griffiths, Socialism for the Welsh People, p.12.

<sup>48</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-45, p.29

to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded...".<sup>49</sup> Lewis' political vision, and the accepted line of thinking within Plaid Cymru, would appear to go against this Oakeshottian appeal for familial and societal familiarity in a carefully limited and rational political environment. This is because this reading of conservatism counters all of the ideals of romanticism, and all of the social, cultural and political restructuring of any given society, to which that particular nationalism is committed.

Furthermore, Michael Oakeshott also criticised any ideology or mode of thinking that implied that some form of "utopian bliss"<sup>50</sup> was achievable. By any reckoning, nationalism, with its onus on creating or, at the very minimum, offering fortification to a society that, according to Freeden, has the positive valorisation of the nation, and the nation's key component parts, as one of its core concepts, must surely have some perception of what it believes to be a near-perfect, if not quite utopian, society; a society in which the values of 'the nation', according to the nationalist agenda, are initially promoted and then ultimately embedded. It was clear to Oakeshott<sup>51</sup>, and this thesis would support his general line of criticism, that conservatism, with its emphasis on promoting growth and change through organicism rather than teleology, could not countenance such idealistic, Enlightenment-style thinking as that on offer from nationalism.

Before applying the Freedenite analysis to Lewis' view, it is intriguing to consider

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<sup>49</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.337

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*; p.337

<sup>51</sup> see Bruce Haddock, 'Contingency and Judgement in Oakeshott's Political Thought', in *European Journal of Political Theory*, vol.4 no.1, January 2005, pp. 7-21.

the second segment of Lewis' Llandrindod speech. In this, Lewis claimed that "the national movement is a reaction – an attempt to nurture a Welsh conservative party, and to safeguard the civilisation which we share".<sup>52</sup> Remembering that this was a couple of years before the launch of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru in 1925, it would be fair to assess that if Lewis did indeed view 'the national movement', as it could possibly be described, as a movement created as a reaction to events and whose destiny it was to act as the conservationists of Welsh society, then this reading rails against the radicalism of earlier interpretations and it also places Lewis' brand of nationalism in the reactionary camp.

Highlighting the conservative tendencies displayed by Lewis, Charlotte Davies, paraphrasing Saunders Lewis from *Egwyddorion Cenedlaetholdeb* (The Principles of Nationalism)<sup>53</sup>, has placed Lewis' view of Plaid Cymru's responsibility as not one of modernising Welsh society but rather one that attempted to "seek its roots in a much older nationalist principle, that of the early Middle Ages, when respect for a diversity of cultures was combined with an acceptance of the international moral authority of the Christian Church".<sup>54</sup> There is an interesting intersect here, with arguably quintessential conservative values – certainly in terms of Christian moral authority – being portrayed by Charlotte Davies as a 'nationalist principle'. With this in mind, and to further examine the link between nationalism and conservatism, and to analyse the core concepts of conservatism, it would prove insightful to return to Freeden.

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<sup>52</sup> Miles and Griffiths, *Socialism for the Welsh People*, p.12

<sup>53</sup> Saunders Lewis, *The Principles of Nationalism*, 1926

<sup>54</sup> Charlotte Davies, *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, p.30

## Freeden's reading of the Conservative core

Michael Freeden claims that the “two main core notions of conservatism concern an insistence on controlled organic and natural change, and a belief in the extra-human origins and underpinning of the social order”.<sup>55</sup> Taking the first core notion to begin, it could be argued that if conservatism’s reticence to allow dynamic change within society were accepted, then the insistence on ‘controlled and organic change’ would almost certainly stifle new, non-conservative and non-organic, initiatives. Any change in these circumstances, and certainly any change that may offer Wales a fresh system of government and the creation of a radically different society, would appear to be unacceptable to conservatives. Rising out of this, a question must be asked as to how many nationalists, beside Saunders Lewis that is, would accept this tight organicist approach to change knowing that it would set them automatically onto a gradualist, if not painstakingly slow, pathway to change. Freeden has noted how this organic system promoted by conservatism cannot counter change that is “destructive of the past or of existing institutions and practices”.<sup>56</sup>

As Saunders Lewis must have realised that the arrival of a Welsh society that had a measure of self-government, and was sworn to preserving the Welsh language and culture, could not come about if it were not for a very substantial alteration to what were ‘existing institutions and practices’, it appears somewhat perplexing, in this instance at least, that he would endorse the tenets of conservatism. Certainly the more traditionally radical (i.e. left-of-centre) voices within Plaid Cymru in its early years,

<sup>55</sup> Freeden, Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology, p.762

<sup>56</sup> Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.333



such as D.J. Davies and Wynne Samuel, wanted to distance the party from any hints of conservative practice at this time. This was predominantly evident in the economic field where D.J. Davies, in particular, wished to eschew existing economic conventions by promoting co-operativism in order to “undermine capitalism and transform it from within”<sup>57</sup>. For Davies this would lead to a new economic and social system that would be markedly different from what has gone before and it would be based not on any ‘existing practices and institutions’ but on “the unifying and inspiring forces of national feeling”<sup>58</sup>.

The second core concept that Freeden attributed to conservatism is that conservatives observe “a belief in the extra-human origins and underpinning of the social order”.<sup>59</sup> This is one concept that Saunders Lewis, at least, could have feasibly accepted and embraced as part of his nationalist outlook. This was because Lewis’ religious convictions provided him with the justification for ‘a belief in the extra-human origins and underpinning of the social order’. As a Christian, Lewis’ foundationalism, or his social philosophy, would have emanated from the Ten Commandments and his belief in creationism. As Plaid Cymru was not then, and is not today, a religiously based political party, such as, for example, the Ulster Unionist Party within Northern Ireland or, even more explicitly, the Hindu nationalist, BJP, in India, there are no sectarian restrictions or obligatory declarations required for membership. Whilst religious adherence may have grown organically within conservatism as an ideology, and the Conservatives as a political party, no such demands were made on Plaid Cymru

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<sup>57</sup> D.J. Davies, ‘*The Way to Real Co-operation*’, in The Welsh Nationalist, May 1932, p.8.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*

<sup>59</sup> Freeden, Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology, p. 762.

as an organisation. Whilst some people within Plaid Cymru may have shared Lewis' enthusiasm for religion, many did not and, thus, any 'belief in the extra-human origins and underpinning of the social order' remained a personal matter and one that did not take centre stage within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. The fact that it never moved from being a peripheral concept to a core concept may indicate, and this thesis would endorse this view, that Saunders Lewis, despite his intellectual leadership and skills as a political debater, did not have the overall influence and ability on moral matters to persuade or coerce the party down the road to accepting a religious underpinning for Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. Arguably, this shows that Lewis' views did not receive blanket approval from either the party's policy-making elite or its rank and file.

Taken as whole, therefore, in terms of supplying social stability this second core concept of conservatism is not totally incompatible with nationalism and could act as a core or peripheral concept within its ideological make-up, depending on how each individual shade of nationalism sees itself. Where a more disputable point arises is with the juxtaposing of the first core concept of conservatism alongside nationalist intentions. To the casual observer, the first core conservative concept may well appear totally incompatible to nationalism, even as a peripheral or adjacent concept, as it would give the impression of seeking to block the transformative process through which nationalism would have to pass if it were to achieve its objectives; this is because of conservatism's insistence on 'controlled' organic and natural change as opposed to the forced changes that nationalism may seek to impose. It does, however, presuppose that nationalists demand radical change to existing practices. Nevertheless, forms of nationalism do exist that seek to bolster and gradually reform society whilst

hanging on to traditional foundations and conventional practices. This, as stated earlier, may be broadly seen as a Burkean approach and it is one that has been traditionally represented by the British Conservative Party.

However, the above must be regarded as reformist conservative nationalism as opposed to the types of nationalism that essentially require the obliterating of existing practices. Be it a case of secessionist or liberationist nationalism, the latter of which Plaid Cymru gives the impression of demanding, this thesis would contend that there appears to be no plausible way for arguing the case that organic change – an evolutionary mode that cherishes existing institutions and practices and argues for minimal disruption to current socio-political formations – could possibly be accepted by those advocating the ‘Welsh nationalist’ cause.

Another line of contention, and one that could have been used by Saunders Lewis in defence of his seeking compatibility between nationalism and conservatism, materialises when consideration is given to the unhealthy aspects of organic, non-liberal societies. For instance, the spectre of racism and xenophobia is often apparent within conservative societies whose reluctance to accept change overflows into a detestation of heterogeneity. Conservative tendencies that are entrenched within some people in modern-day Britain, with the refusal to contemplate the inclusive nature of a multicultural society, or, likewise, to accept parity with other nation-states within the construct of the European Union, are contemporary examples. Lewis makes an interesting case-study to assess at this juncture as his views were somewhat paradoxical on this matter. This was down to the fact that he rejected interference in Welsh socio-political and cultural life from the British state machinery whilst

simultaneously offering Wales up as an archetypal European nation that was able and willing to play its part in the evolving social and political culture of Europe. Indeed, in Plaid Cymru's earliest political pamphlet, *Egwyddorion Cenedlaetholdeb* (The Principles of Nationalism), authored by Lewis in 1926, Wales is summoned to claim her place "in the League of Nations and in the community of Europe, by virtue of her civilization and its values".<sup>60</sup> Freedon's citing of the nationalist core concept of 'positive valorisation' can be witnessed here as, in Lewis view, Welsh 'civilisation and values' are blessed with a virtuous essence. Fighting for the civilisation of Wales was a favourite theme of Lewis' throughout both his political and literary lives. That civilisation, according to him, though thoroughly Welsh in language and being, nevertheless had a European character. This viewpoint of Lewis', and through association the viewpoint of Plaid Cymru's, was sometimes pejoratively referred to by critics of the party as Plaid Cymru's 'Continentalism'<sup>61</sup>.

Saunders Lewis' perspective on Wales' position within Europe amalgamated with his views on nationalism, literary romanticism and religion to form a distinct personal philosophy; a personal philosophy that, as mentioned earlier, was undoubtedly influential but ultimately not overbearing in terms of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' in their entirety. Gwyn Alf Williams described Lewis' view thus: "His simultaneous commitment to an utterly intransigent nationalism and to a radical reappraisal of Welsh tradition through its literature was grounded in a firm and focussed ideology which saw Wales as a nation of Europe, and of a Europe defined in terms of Latin

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<sup>60</sup> Jones and Thomas, Presenting Saunders Lewis, p.29

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*; p.34

Christendom and the lost values of the Middle Ages".<sup>62</sup> Where this thesis would maintain that it is reasonable to disagree with Williams' assessment is through raising the contention that Lewis' ideology may have been 'firm and focussed' in his eyes but, to students of political ideology, Plaid Cymru was, at this stage of its development, on certain topics indecisive, and at other times indecipherable. Pinpointing this uncertainty, or lack of clarity, Dafydd Glyn Jones has said of Lewis that he tried to sell to the Welsh public and, it could be argued, that he tried to sell to the membership of Plaid Cymru, "a brand of nationalism which he must have known was too sophisticated for most people to understand".<sup>63</sup> Sophisticated or not, Lewis was reaching out to other ideologies in order to forge his, and by association Plaid Cymru's, political perspective.

### **Lewis, Fascism and Nationalism**

The other, and most contentious, host-vessel which Lewis' brand of nationalism brings into play is fascism. Freedon's model affirmed how fascism is the only ideology other than nationalism to recognise 'the nation' as a core concept. But what of the other core concepts of fascism and how do they equate with Plaid Cymru's 'Welsh nationalism' and, in this instance, with the ideology of Saunders Lewis? Fascism's other core concepts, according to Freedon, were "leadership, totalitarian organicism, myth (determinist and / or anti-modernist), regenerative revolution, and violence"<sup>64</sup>. Leadership and totalitarian organicism can be dismissed from Plaid Cymru's line of reasoning from the outset as leadership in fascist terms is autocratic and

<sup>62</sup> G A Williams, When was Wales?, p.279

<sup>63</sup> Jones and Thomas, Presenting Saunders Lewis, pp.24-25.

<sup>64</sup> Freedon, Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology, p.763.

unchallengeable. As is the case with most other political parties, Plaid Cymru, throughout its existence, has always had leaders who have driven policy and stamped their mark on the party. However, none of these leaders, not even the influential figure of Plaid Cymru's intellectual grandee Saunders Lewis, could be accused of autocratic rule. This was despite the fact that Lewis did envisage the benefits of a nationalistic vanguard taking Plaid Cymru's message to the Welsh people; "leadership by a responsible elite"<sup>65</sup>, as Gwyn Alf Williams termed it.

It is reasonable to argue, thus, that not one of Plaid Cymru's theoreticians or leading lights would seek to countenance the notion of strong leadership in the direct fascistic terms enunciated by Freedom. Indeed, D.J. Davies' opposition to some of the directions and ideas emanating from Saunders Lewis were expressed in articles such as 'The Insufficiency of Cultural Nationalism'<sup>66</sup>, and 'The Way to Real Co-operation'<sup>67</sup>, wherein a more socialist, pluralist, and egalitarian vision for Wales was sought to override any narrow cultural expressionism and oligarchical tendencies that some within the party may be showing signs of endorsing. For the likes of D.J. Davies, Kate Roberts, Wynne Samuel, Gwynfor Evans and others, the party's mission should be to aim to spread power throughout Wales— to make it a truly nationwide and representative phenomenon – rather than attempting to restrict it and centralise power in the hands of a select few. These views were to prove prescient as Plaid Cymru did adopt a more pluralistic stance as it developed over time. This is best summed up through analysing the party's thoughts on creating a decentralised society, which will

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<sup>65</sup> Gwyn Williams, *When was Wales?*, p.281

<sup>66</sup> D.J. Davies, 'The Insufficiency of Cultural Nationalism', in *The Welsh Nationalist*, March 1932.

<sup>67</sup> D.J. Davies, 'The Way to Real Co-operation', in *The Welsh Nationalist*, May 1932.

be addressed later in this thesis.

Totalitarian organicism is another core concept within fascism. This is also rejected by Plaid Cymru because, as this thesis will expand upon in chapter 5, notions such as subsidiarity, decentralisation, and a democratic, and non-hierarchical, form of 'communityism' are either core or peripheral concepts within the party's 'thought-practices'. By its very nature of authoritarian discipline, totalitarian organicism denies pluralism and it would find repellent the form of individual or localised development – in community terms – advocated by Plaid Cymru. This is because this 'bottom-up' personal and communal enhancement favoured by Plaid Cymru runs directly counter to the 'one size fits all' centrally commanded, 'top-down' system of organic growth put forward by the proponents of fascist ideology. The fact that these fascistic elements, such as leadership and totalitarian organicism, are absent illustrates, if a reading of Freeden is conducted, that their non-attendance could sway Plaid Cymru's form of nationalism into the categorisation of 'thin-centred nationalism'. This could be indicating, as this thesis is proposing, that Plaid Cymru's nationalism, in line with Freeden's model, may not be as watertight as many commentators and party activists conceive it to be.

The myth element is one that has already featured in this thesis. What is interesting when the notion of 'myth' arises within the fascist core concepts is how Freeden bifurcates myth into 'determinist' and / or 'anti-modernist' positions. The determinist position – the Thousand Year Reich standpoint, as it could be characterized – has no precedent, certainly not in any vainglorious way, in Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'.

Nevertheless, where a determinist position could be applied – although the myth element here becomes very tenuous – is when Saunders Lewis' objective of a fully unilingual, Welsh-speaking Wales, is presented for analysis. Lewis once pronounced that “we cannot aim at anything less than to annihilate English in Wales...It must be deleted from the land called Wales”.<sup>68</sup> This use of language to create a ‘fully Welsh’ Wales is a strategy used on occasions by nationalists – examples may be found in Spain within some of the thinking emanating from Catalan and Basque nationalists<sup>69</sup> – who seek to forge unity through a singular description, in this case language.

Tying this in with some of the theories and theorists of nationalism, it was Elie Kedourie who claimed that “nationalism imposes homogeneity”.<sup>70</sup> Although it would be correct to maintain that any adherence to the nation and nationality must necessarily entail a degree of homogeneous acceptance, and while Kedourie's claim could be argued over at length, it is evident that Saunders Lewis not only moved along the same lines as the school of nationalist reasoning that Kedourie was assessing but, it could be contended, Lewis' tone in talking about the annihilation of the English language, and its deletion from Welsh soil, could be portrayed, as it was by his detractors, as fascistic.

As previously observed, the concept of language as a driver and a motivator of political ideas tends to appear time and again among the rhetoric of nationalists in Wales and, in this particular instance, among the prime theoretician of Plaid Cymru in

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid*, p.281

<sup>69</sup> Diego Mura and Alejandro Quiroga, ‘Spanish nationalism: Ethnic or civic?’ in *Ethnicities*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 2005, pp.9-29.

<sup>70</sup> Paul James, *Nation Formation*, p.142



its formative years. Perhaps, however, it is not surprising that language features so prominently in Lewis' pronouncements, or indeed in Plaid Cymru's early political philosophy, because, faced as the party's thinkers and policy-makers were with a Wales that was without the state institutions and developed civil society that was conspicuous in other, fully emblazoned, nation-states, the promotion of the Welsh language – whose very existence and status Tudur Jones called “the most significant and valuable mark of our national identity”<sup>71</sup> – became the mission of Plaid Cymru from its inception.

With regard to the creation of a unilingual Wales, where there is some inconsistency in this line of argument is that it is possible to step easily into the conceptual region of totalitarian organicism; a concept that other competing concepts like decentralisation and pluralism seek to refute. Arguing for the flowering of community values on the one hand while insisting on the prominence and, idealistically, the triumph of the Welsh language as the encompassing language on the other hand, could leave Plaid Cymru open to charges of inconsistency of thought as possibly unattainable, or seemingly incompatible, ideals are woven together. This only adds to the contention, which this thesis proposes, that the political ideology of Plaid Cymru is strewn with competing notions that prevent ideological coherence and straightforward classification.

### **Anti-Modernist Discourse**

Turning to the ‘anti-modernist position’ that features in Freedden's interpretation

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<sup>71</sup> R Tudur Jones, The Desire of Nations, (Llandybie, C Davies, 1974) p.15

of the 'myth' concept of fascism, there is some indication of a potential overlap with the 'myth-making' element that could be viewed as an attribute of nationalism. There would appear to be a thin, possibly at times indecipherable, line to be drawn between 'myth-making' in order to create a, supposedly positive, sense of patriotism and to colour events in a more favourable way to your particular ethnic group or ideological position – as could be observed in the various claims of valour and glory that have emanated from the diverse traditions who represent all of the protagonists who took part in an actual historical incident, such as a sporting contest or a choral or brass band competition that crosses ethnic or ideological boundaries, for example – and 'myth-making' for a more malicious invention of, or rewriting of, a sometimes true but more possibly fictitious, or semi-fictitious, event or epoch. Although differentiation is very difficult in these instances, it may be possible to make a case that the former is normally attributed to nationalism or, more specifically in Plaid Cymru's case, 'communityism', while the latter is more likely to be found at the forefront of fascist discourse. Nevertheless, it is important to stress a degree of caution in regard to these interpretations because, as previously noted, there are ambiguities and areas of distortion and overlap.

Saunders Lewis' 'anti-modernist' approach is most clearly represented through his anti-industrialisation stance. From the 1920's onwards, Lewis' writing and speech-making is littered with attacks on both the process and the reality of industrialisation itself, and the political parties, Labour especially, who, he claimed, fed off it. In 1938, Lewis, as editor of Plaid Cymru's monthly paper, *Y Ddraig Goch* (The Red Dragon), launched a scathing attack on Marxism. He attacked Marxism's materialist base and

“its acceptance of capital ‘factoryism’ as the basis of life”.<sup>72</sup> Lewis had, in fact, been advocating a return to an agrarian Wales for many years. As he remarked, “agriculture should be the chief industry of Wales and the basis of its civilisation”.<sup>73</sup> In the Plaid Cymru pamphlet *‘The Ten Points of Policy’*, published in 1934 and penned by Lewis himself, the author maintained that “for the sake of the moral health of Wales and for the moral and physical welfare of its population, South Wales must be de-industrialised”.<sup>74</sup> Other, though by no means all, Plaid Cymru figures were to adopt this highly contentious position. Like Lewis, Plaid Cymru’s parliamentary candidate in the Rhondda throughout the inter war years, Kitchener Davies, also “viewed his nationalism as part of an anti-Communist tirade”.<sup>75</sup> It must be remembered, however, that as Lewis and some of his supporters attacked left-wing ideology at this period in time others, like D.J and Noelle Davies for instance, were advocating socialist solutions for Wales’ woes.

There was a belief among some in Plaid Cymru circles, nevertheless, that Wales and the Welsh people were enduring a regressive stage in history as materialism and materialistic values, of both a capitalist and a socialist bent, were ubiquitous. In terms of decline, of equal disaster in the eyes of many of Plaid Cymru’s theoreticians was the recognition that the language and ‘value-culture’ of ‘old Wales’ was also rapidly disappearing. For those within the party who held these views, such as Lewis and Kitchener Davies, progression, as the solution to this regressive stage, was to de-industrialise and to rediscover their Welsh identities through the Welsh language,

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<sup>72</sup> D Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.102

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*; p.101

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

<sup>75</sup> Chris Williams, *Democratic Rhondda: Politics and Society 1885-1951*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1996), p.168

predominantly, but also through the absorption of the available indigenous literature and culture. Hence, for Lewis, amongst others, modern, industrialised Wales was an undignified and deteriorating geographical space that required urgent, Plaid Cymru-inspired, attention if it was to reverse its seemingly terminal decline. This decline had apparently been in motion since the Victorian era if one considers the opinion of Ieuan Gwynedd Jones. Appearing to summarise the thoughts of Saunders Lewis on this ‘undignified’ period, Jones stated that “the Welsh language was a precious and singular possession of the masses of workers at a time when the inhuman, dehumanizing and brutalizing forces of industrialism were alienating them from nature and from society”.<sup>76</sup> It was this ‘de-humanising’ environment which Lewis sought to radically transform by showing the people of industrialised Wales that nationalistic principles and practices, embodied, as he saw them, by Plaid Cymru, could not only offer deliverance from industrial enslavement but it could also help in providing a greater purpose and meaning to their lives through an appreciation of ‘Welsh values’.

While this undoubtedly Arcadian view of Lewis, and others within Plaid Cymru – an Arcadianism that could be categorised as being a slant on the ‘anti-modern’ myth concept espoused by fascism – could be labelled politically naïve when the harsh realities of everyday life all around them were taken into consideration, is it really appropriate to term the actual rhetoric and application of Lewis’ and the party’s anti-industrialisation views as fascistic in tone or ambition? While there is no disputing the fact that some activists within Plaid Cymru did appeal to Welsh workers to abandon capitalist industries, there was no *demand* for them to do so; again, harking back to the

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<sup>76</sup> John Davies, A History of Wales, (London, Penguin, 1993), p.392

rejection of totalitarian organicism mentioned earlier, this appeal couldn't be portrayed as totalitarian in attitude or essence. Hence, the words of Lewis, Kitchener Davies and others, appear to be no more than pleas to people's better judgements by asking them to abandon the austere industrialised environment in order to seek fulfilment in 'a return to nature'.

Where the naivety element of this appeal could be further highlighted, however, is when one considers the reality of life, and survival, in the harsh economic conditions that beset industrialised Wales in the 1920's and 1930's. At a time of high unemployment and minimal welfare relief, asking people to abandon their workplaces – assuming they were in employment – in order to start afresh in rural Wales, and asking them to subsist through the undertaking of tasks that they were not trained for, was an impractical proposition. Whilst many people had to rely on soup kitchens for a meagre daily meal, Saunders Lewis and his supporters were remarkably reticent on the ostensibly pressing matter of finding alternative employment for the destitute, as indeed was Plaid Cymru as a whole. Lewis, however, rather than making policy speeches on measures to alleviate the severe conditions, turned his thoughts to the renewal of community harmony through spirituality and nationhood. What the people of industrial Wales should take on board, Lewis maintained, is the fact that “nationalism is above all a fountain head of heroism and of brave resolve. It gives a beaten people hope. It gives them resourcefulness and drives away apathy and cynicism and selfishness”.<sup>77</sup> This rhetoric comes across as equating nationalism with salvationism and, in addition, the reference to 'selfishness' further exemplifies Lewis'

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<sup>77</sup> Jones and Thomas, Presenting Saunders Lewis, p.31

disdain for materialism; even though materialism in this context would have meant steady employment and the basic provisions that that employment could provide. In this reading, therefore, and trying to gauge how this would have played to the audience at that time, it is little wonder that, when presenting its ideology, Plaid Cymru as a whole, and not just the visions of Lewis and his allies, was seen as unworldly.

Similarly, taking into account the emerging bipolarity of activist politics across Europe in the 1930's, with Fascism and Communism attempting to attract the participation of the masses, the dismissive and intransigent position that Saunders Lewis and, if only through party connection if not any deep sense of conviction, the membership of Plaid Cymru took on the ideology of Communism – at the very time that Communist sympathisers on the ground in the South Wales coalfield were at the forefront of providing help to impoverished communities – made them easy targets at this turbulent time in modern European political history. Foremost in their condemnation of the chimerical views of Lewis, Kitchener Davies and their followers were the Labour Party who dismissed Plaid Cymru as merely “pro-fascist rabble”.<sup>78</sup> While the Labour Party censure was perhaps to be expected, Richard Wyn Jones has commented on Plaid Cymru’s impracticable oratory at the time. For Jones, “the Nationalists, whilst able to incorporate community into their political philosophy, found it hard to relate to what one might term ‘actually existing societies’”.<sup>79</sup>

What Lewis, and Plaid Cymru, didn’t succeed in doing throughout this period was

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<sup>78</sup> Chris Williams, Democratic Rhondda, p.168.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Wyn Jones, ‘*Care of the Community*’, in Planet: The Welsh Internationalist, 109, 1995, p.18

taking on board what Freeden referred to as ‘cultural constraints’. Freeden comments on how “cultural constraints on ideologies serve to anchor them firmly into the context of space and time”.<sup>80</sup> Arguably, Plaid Cymru positioned itself outside these cultural constraints – Saunders Lewis most certainly did – as practical considerations were ignored or sidelined. Had Saunders Lewis petitioned the people of industrial Wales when there was full employment and a buoyant economy and asked them to consider de-industrialisation and the adoption of a rustic existence then he would not have impinged on the ‘cultural constraints’ that are present whenever the mental or ideational construction and, more importantly, the implementation of political ideology occurs. It seems that Plaid Cymru, or certainly elements within the party, had not learnt the harsh lesson that, when presenting any political perspective to the general public, coping with everyday actualities must always appear to be more a pressing concern than promoting that party’s political theories. Some within the party, however, were acknowledging ‘actually existing societies’ and it was these voices – those of Kate Roberts, D.J. and Noelle Davies, Gwynfor Evans and J.E. Jones for example – who challenged the pronouncements of Saunders Lewis at various times throughout this era.

### **Criticism of Plaid Cymru’s ‘Fascism’**

Certainly Plaid Cymru had their critics throughout this period who tried to align the party to far right ideas; critics, it must be said, of whom most, if not all, would not have been conversant with the intricate nature of political ideologies. Even as recently as 2002, the Labour MP for Caerphilly, Wayne David, shocked those around him when

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<sup>80</sup> Michael Freeden, Ideology, p.58

he launched a tirade against Saunders Lewis and Plaid Cymru in the House of Commons during a debate on racism in contemporary Wales. David claimed that “the strong strand of racism and xenophobia in Plaid Cymru’s history is well tabulated. We only have to look at some of the writings of Saunders Lewis, the founder of Plaid Cymru, to recognise the truth of that. Let me make it clear he was an anti-semite”<sup>81</sup>. Even allowing for embellishment on Wayne David’s behalf, there is no doubt that some people within Plaid Cymru made the task of the critics who sought to label the party as fascist fairly straightforward. This was partly due to the fact that, after Saunders Lewis, one of the leading Plaid Cymru activists and theoreticians at the time was the revolutionary-minded Ambrose Bebb. Bebb was an admirer of the tactics of *Action Francaise*, the French fascist movement. With people like Bebb declaring his admiration for the visceral activism of *Action Francaise* it is little wonder that the opponents of Welsh nationalism sought to tarnish Plaid Cymru with the hallmark of a fascist organisation. As Gwyn Alf Williams noted, Bebb, in one outburst in 1922, had cried out “it is a Mussolini that Wales needs”.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, “in a startling speech in 1923, he called for military discipline, a training camp, five years of drill and prison martyrs”.<sup>83</sup> These may rightly have been viewed by Bebb’s opponents as inflammatory comments but where it is quite justifiable to state that, at the start of World War Two, Plaid Cymru did open itself up for criticism was through its opposition to conscription “on the grounds that Welshmen should not be forced to fight in an English war”.<sup>84</sup>

Not surprisingly, given this stance and the criticism it brought with it, the early

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<sup>81</sup> Carwyn Fowler, ‘Nationalism and the Labour Party’, in *Llafur*, vol.8, no.4, 2003, p.101

<sup>82</sup> Gwyn Williams, *When was Wales?*, p.280.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Charlotte Davies, *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, p.69



1940's were, in Charlotte Davies' words, "a period of confusion and decline for the Welsh Nationalist Party".<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the most sustained denunciation of Saunders Lewis and Plaid Cymru around this period came from the *Western Mail*. One of its columnists, angered by Lewis' call in 1943 for a negotiated peace to end the Second World War, wrote, in a seemingly heedless tone, "week by week for years they have been preaching their doctrines of racialism and neo-Fascism in the by-ways of Wales".<sup>86</sup> As a lot of this criticism can be put down to political point scoring by other political parties, and by newspapers hostile to Plaid Cymru's message, a defence could be forwarded here that backs the argument, made by Carwyn Fowler<sup>87</sup> among others, that it would be wrong to consider Plaid Cymru to be in any sense of the term a fascist organisation; or, indeed, one that consciously embraced fascist core or even peripheral concepts.

This whole debate raises several points when circumstances arise where nationalist bodies are being tarnished as crypto-fascist, or even fascist sympathisers or borrowers of some elements of fascist ideology. Thus, in a wider sense, the overlap between nationalism and fascism, using Freedén's model, may well be too harsh on nationalism, and its borders; that is, however, if consideration is made of the empirical knowledge available that more than suggests that fascism is a far more intoxicating and bellicose ideology altogether. On this point of bellicosity, Freedén observed that fascists "exploit nationalism as the justification of offensive militarism directed at real and imagined enemies".<sup>88</sup> Considering the linkage cited here by Freedén, it would appear somewhat

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<sup>85</sup> *ibid*

<sup>86</sup> D Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.239.

<sup>87</sup> Fowler, *Nationalism and the Labour Party*, p.101

<sup>88</sup> Michael Freedén, *Ideology*, p.99

paradoxical, however, for anyone to attempt to attribute an overtly militaristic attitude, exhibited through fascism, to Plaid Cymru as a whole. This is because, as this thesis would contend, two of the ideological concepts that are attributable to the party, and its spokesmen and women take pride in proclaiming to this day, are pacifism, and its adjacent concept of 'non-violent direct action'. These concepts will be examined in chapter 5, and their relevance to the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru will be analysed at that stage.

This is not to claim, however, that militarism as a concept and engine for transforming society is completely lacking from Plaid Cymru's reasoning. As stated above, Ambrose Bebb was militaristic in his social and political theorising and, similarly, a militarist perspective has been laid at the door of Saunders Lewis. Having experience military life during the Great War, Lewis followed Bebb in 1923 "with his proposals that Welsh patriots should accept military-style discipline, and that Wales would benefit if someone would carry out an action on behalf of the nation resulting in a prison sentence".<sup>89</sup> Without seeking to confer blanket approval of these sentiments, it is important that a few words of caution are injected here. This is because both these 'call to arms' were made before Plaid Cymru's formation and no doubt reflected, to some extent, the radical nationalism of the age; visible to varying degrees, it could be argued, in Ireland, the Middle East and, in an admittedly different ideological sense that was shortly to turn menacing, in Italy.

Furthermore, in the case of Lewis cited above, his comments were made at a

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<sup>89</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945, p.27

meeting at the Eisteddfod; there is a tradition of political orators using the opportunity of speaking at a meeting on the Eisteddfod *Maes* (Field of competition) to punctuate their addresses with a generous dose of hyperbole. Additionally, and this relates to the charge that Lewis sought to bring fascist or extremist ideas into his nationalistic outlook, Lewis countered criticism by saying that “excess, in all movements, is an ever-present threat. I have no hesitation in saying that hot-headed and limitless nationalism is a highly dangerous thing”.<sup>90</sup> In a supportive note, Hywel Davies, in a similar manner to Carwyn Fowler, has dismissed claims that Saunders Lewis embraced elements of fascism or ultra-nationalism. Davies wrote that Lewis’ anti-statist views were in direct contradiction to the intentions of fascist ideologues. As Davies observed of Saunders Lewis, “rejecting the fascist emphasis on the state and the allegiance of the individual to the state, Lewis described the nation as ‘a community of communities’”<sup>91</sup>. The concept of ‘communityism’ within Plaid Cymru’s morphology – ‘communityism’, along with the idea of ‘the nation’, being the concept that envelops the notions of allegiance and the individual’s supposed affiliation to society – shall be assessed in further detail in chapter 5.

Overall, therefore, it is feasible to contend that while Freedman may be generally accurate in his labelling of the core concepts of both nationalism and fascism, our general interpretation and understanding of the range and depth of each individual concept – the multifarious usages, positive and negative, of ‘myth-making’, for example – may require a far more in-depth analysis than this thesis can allow. What must be reiterated, however, is that nationalism and fascism in general, and certainly if

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<sup>90</sup> Jones and Thomas, *Presenting Saunders Lewis*, p.27

<sup>91</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.28

the relationship or similarities between the two are applied to the case of Plaid Cymru in particular, as this section of the thesis seeks to do, should not be regarded as natural, even symbiotic, allies or, as may specifically occur when the example of nationalism is concentrated on, one that is seen as a gateway, or stepping-stone to the other; as, for example, a Marxist would argue that Socialism should be a step on the road to Communism.

### **Green ideology, Lewis, and Plaid Cymru**

In the preceding assessment of Plaid Cymru's 'anti-industrialisation' rhetoric it was noted how a call for a 'return to nature' must have sounded futile to those people who were in most immediate need of short-term materialistic relief. In the light of this, therefore, and through the use of Freeden's classification of the core concepts of green ideology, it should be possible to examine the extent to which these concepts feature in 'early' Plaid Cymru thinking. Michael Freeden has identified four core concepts of green discourse. These are "the relationship between human beings and nature; valued preservation; variants of holism; and the implementation of qualitative human lifestyles"<sup>92</sup>. Taking them step-by-step, and applying them to the pronouncements of Saunders Lewis, it is evident that the first core concept, 'the relationship between human beings and nature', has to enter the equation whenever talk of a 'return to nature' is mooted. If Saunders Lewis was serious about de-industrialisation, and what would be its inevitable consequences, such as de-urbanisation for instance, then this first core concept needs careful consideration as it may prove to be a core of early Plaid Cymru ideology. This is because, as Freeden claimed, "nature becomes an

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<sup>92</sup> Michael Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.527

overriding factor in guiding human conduct”.<sup>93</sup> However, whether de-industrialisation, and de-urbanisation would lead to policies that championed nature as a prime mover, should Lewis’ vision have come to fruition, is unclear. There is little doubt that the workings and existence of the natural world would have had to be a major consideration of Plaid Cymru if de-industrialisation had been enacted. Nonetheless, the concept of nature becoming an ‘overriding factor’ is probably too prescriptive even for Saunders Lewis as it puts a ‘deep ecology’ commitment to the forefront.

The second concept is the ‘valued preservation of all forms of life on earth’. The acceptance of the finiteness of resources would have some relevance here, as capitalist expansion was even more unchecked then, as Plaid Cymru repeatedly indicated, than it is at present. Subsequently, if Plaid Cymru was to seek a return to a rustic, pre-industrial society, then issues such as the ethical utilisation of animal husbandry, and the arguments for or against vegetarianism would have to be broached in due course. The fact that these issues do not feature among Plaid Cymru rhetoric or literature of the time could probably add to the contention that Plaid Cymru’s ‘green agenda’ was not meticulously fashioned. What appears to be more plausible, if these green core concepts are to be attributed to Plaid Cymru, are the adjacent concepts that attach themselves, Freedon has maintained, to these core concepts. Hence, the inevitability of “imposing constraints on progress, development, and thus on history”<sup>94</sup> would have been looked at favourably by those within the party who saw Wales being subsumed further and further into a capitalist world that was de-humanising the populace.

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<sup>93</sup> *ibid*

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*

The third concept that Freeden summons up, 'the promotion of variants of holism', is noticeable when the idea of the individual in tune with, but not subservient to, his or her geographical space is considered. The evolving community-based focus of Plaid Cymru thinking was also an area in which this holism could apply as failure to operate with, and appreciate the presence of, those around you, both human and non-human, inevitably leads to a diminishing of one's own life. Freeden commented on how, depending on the individual circumstances, some adjacent concepts to holism, such as egalitarianism and social change could be summoned. In the case of Plaid Cymru it is feasible that these adjacent concepts would be brought into the arena as egalitarianism could signify equality under the ceiling that is 'the nation' and, subsequently, equality of opportunity and contribution for all of those who are part of the decentralised 'community' could result. This would appeal to nationalists who eschew, as has been previously alluded to, overbearing centralisation or 'top-down' directives. This egalitarianism is not necessarily comparable to financial equality but it is more of an egalitarianism of belonging and inclusion. When the concept of social change is addressed, it is fair to say that this must inevitably occur, to a certain degree, whenever a fresh ideological direction is introduced. Plaid Cymru's desire for social change, however, is far reaching and it is evident through their transformative programme. This social change would be enacted through a clear structure and direction and it ties in with green ideology in its championing of the natural world as a positive 'thing-in-itself' and also as a bulwark against the de-humanising effects of industrialisation, which is portrayed as a process that automatically leads to the despoiling of nature.

On the fourth concept of green ideology, 'the implementation of qualitative human lifestyles', Saunders Lewis invoked aestheticism. The flourishing or reawakening of the arts, literature, and cultural experiences of Wales, was all seen as part of Plaid Cymru's holistic vision of Welsh society as interactive and interdependent. In this refined, uncluttered, and spiritualistic society, the 'quality of life' would be raised, not just for those who could seek material pleasures, but for everyone. So a move away from the daily grind of work within a capitalist environment would supposedly free up the people of Wales and enable them to develop, with the aid of a Plaid Cymru government, the spiritual and artistic sides to their nature. This, in theory, would lead to qualitative improvement all around.

If Plaid Cymru was attempting to conjure up an ideal scenario in which Welsh society flourishes in a rural idyll, then it could be argued that this leaves the party open to accusations of promoting primitivism. It may be a valid argument at this stage to raise the question of whether Plaid Cymru was merely accepting primordialist assumptions; assumptions that maintain that beneath the surface of history the forms and complexities of society remain relatively unchanged<sup>95</sup>. If this was to be the case, and primordialism could be appended to Plaid Cymru's ideology, then it would appear to reinforce Plaid Cymru's view that Wales is, in essence, an agrarian society. What has transpired over time is that this society has been pummelled into accepting modernity and industrialisation. In this line of reasoning, all of the events in Welsh history since the death of Llywelyn in 1282, and certainly those since the Act of Union in 1536, could be seen as an unnatural detour away from what primordialists would

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<sup>95</sup> Paul James, Nation Formation, p.18

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argue is the exact condition of Welsh society. Raymond Williams' writing on nationalism, in which he commented that "all the *real* processes have been cultural and historical, and all the *artificial* processes have been political, in one after another dominative proclamation of a state and an identity"<sup>96</sup>, serves to show how political and, additionally, legalistic developments can be contextualised away from cultural and historical actions and processes. In this case, therefore, some within the party at the formative stages of its history may have wished to argue, although it is not the task of this thesis to do so, that Plaid Cymru could align itself into the primordialist camp as the party regard the survival of the Welsh language and culture, along with an intrinsic sense of what 'Welsh values and traditions' entail, as more important than the political administration of the geographical space that is Wales. To use a Foucauldian analogy<sup>97</sup>, therefore, it would appear that there are two separate and distinctive 'power structures' at work in this case.

### **Other 'Thought-Practices' in 'Early' Plaid Cymru**

Before a Freedenite assessment of Saunders Lewis' ideology, and its underpinning of 'early' Plaid Cymru's ideology as a whole, is undertaken, it is important to identify and assess other ideological developments within the party in the years leading up to 1945. The major policy documents will also be given a Freedenite reading in order to highlight some of the concepts that have been under discussion up to this point in the thesis.

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid*; p.104

<sup>97</sup> Geoff Danaher, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, Understanding Foucault, p.24



It is feasible to contend that the three major statements of intent produced by the party in the years between 1925 and 1945 were *Egwyddorion Cenedlaetholdeb (The Principles of Nationalism)* in 1926, *Ten Points of Policy* in 1934 and *Can Wales Afford Self-Government* in 1939. The first of these, *The Principles of Nationalism*, represents Saunders Lewis' views on what the party should be all about. Focussing heavily on his contention that Wales had to reclaim her inheritance – linguistic and Christian – Lewis states that freedom is more importance than independence. The degree of freedom that Lewis seeks is “exactly that degree of freedom which is necessary in order to make civilization secure in Wales”<sup>98</sup>. In this evaluation of freedom, therefore, Lewis tried to clarify his view that this was not a conception of freedom that would prove challenging to those other forces who are likely to come into contact with it. As *The Principles of Nationalism* stresses, “that freedom will not only benefit Wales but will also contribute to the welfare and security of England and all other neighbouring countries”.<sup>99</sup>

So what can be deduced from this rendition of the concept of freedom? Using Michael Freeden's study of ideology as a guide, it is interesting to see how Freeden cited L. T. Hobhouse's notion that freedom “required control and limits on human action”<sup>100</sup>. The freedom extolled in *The Principles of Nationalism* appears to run parallel to Hobhouse's conception as the theory maintained that certain limitations on an individual's actions – hence, not unconditional, libertarian freedom – could entail greater liberty for people overall. In theoretical terms, this is approaching Utilitarian

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<sup>98</sup> Jones and Thomas, Presenting Saunders Lewis, p.29

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*

<sup>100</sup> Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.202

territory, although it would appear anomalous to contend that the presumption of the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' could sit comfortably in a nationalist setting wherein the nation and its properties are supposed to bring absolute, and not just majoritarian, happiness; unless, that is, some divisions in society (i.e. class or religious differences) were to be accepted and even propagated. However, this would appear to contradict a basic tenet of nationalism, namely the intention to create or mould a unified, if not fully homogeneous, society.

Adding further to the lack of clarity on this matter, Saunders Lewis' reading of 'freedom' also accepted that Wales could never be totally independent because a self-governing Wales would still have to operate within an interdependent global network. Moreover, and this was non-negotiable for Lewis, Wales would only be a component part, and not a separate entity, within a reinvigorated Christendom. With these aspects to consider, Lewis commented that he could never support "the principle of independence .... as it is anti-Christian".<sup>101</sup> Building on this remark a decade later, Lewis proclaimed that Plaid Cymru "has sought to base itself on Christian sociology, and that Christianity is as essential to the Nationalist Party as is anti-Christian materialism to Marxism".<sup>102</sup>

What Lewis was seeking for Plaid Cymru, it would appear, was a discourse and direction that rejected the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment project. This, like so much of Lewis' political philosophy, is paradoxical because Lewis was adopting an ideology, nationalism, which had emanated out of the Enlightenment, to argue for its

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<sup>101</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945, p.82

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*; p.102

displacement with some re-energized version of Middle Age Christian adherence. It may be fair to conclude, therefore, and this thesis would concur, that this ideological pattern returns Lewis' thoughts to the field of conservatism. As Freedden explains, this outlook has resonances in the Burkean tradition, German conservatism, and the French ultramontanism that followed the Revolution of 1789<sup>103</sup>. As he was a Roman Catholic, it is clear to see the appeal of the latter, at least, to Lewis. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his Catholicism may account for why Lewis introduced religion into many of his political and philosophical declarations while, concurrently, others within Plaid Cymru perceived of their religious position as strictly personal matters and, hence, regarded them as distinct from their political pronouncements.

Religion, consequently, could be seen as an adjacent concept to Freedden's third core nationalist concept of ensuring 'politico-institutional expression' over the first two core concepts of 'the nation' and its 'positive valorisation'<sup>104</sup>. The problem arises, however, as to where this expression is to be sited. Lewis did not advocate a Welsh base for his Christianity. Instead, he promoted a European notion of Christendom and this, therefore, would operate outside of the normal jurisdiction of the nation-state. Alas, there are clearly difficulties in this line of reasoning for any advocate of nationalism to overcome. If sovereignty, albeit mostly a spiritual account of sovereignty as opposed to a concrete political one, rests with extraneous forces, then the role of 'power' within the nation – 'power' being another adjacent concept to 'the nation', in Freedden's view<sup>105</sup> – would appear to decrease. In a sense, therefore, what is

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<sup>103</sup> Freedden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.364

<sup>104</sup> Freedden, *Is Nationalism A Distinct Ideology*, p.752

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*; p.754

being brought into play is the way in which nationalism, or nationalist action, can embrace other social, cultural, political, or, in this instance, religious bodies. The argument for nationalism to adopt an internationalist stance, to a certain extent, also enters the ideological discourse at this time. What this all comes down to is Lewis' insistence that there is no real substance in the notion of independence as a panacea. This is almost certainly why Lewis stressed the term 'freedom' time and time again. Further to this, the notion of 'freedom' – albeit that it is a more amorphous image of freedom than Lewis envisaged – has remained a powerful and recurring theme for Plaid Cymru's members throughout its existence.

Adopting a liberal perspective, Lewis saw the extension and enactment of freedom as constituting the high point of a civilisation. If that freedom then led the Welsh people to accept a distinctly non-Welsh (i.e. European) reading of Christianity then that is perfectly acceptable. In this, and other conceivable instances, the ideal of 'the nation', and its 'positive valorisation' – notwithstanding the assertion that the nation is merely an abstract conception in the first place – does not take precedence over the free thought and expression of its key component parts, namely its people. Looking at evidence such as this endorsement of individual choice and freedom, and a rejection of particularistic tendencies, it becomes more apparent that Lewis' thought, and the overall aims and objectives of Plaid Cymru at that time, were running in opposite directions to the then fashionable centralist and statist rejection of individuality in favour of the politics and philosophy of the undifferentiated masses. It is possible to argue, therefore, that the ideologies of fascism, communism, and socialism seem somewhat out of kilter with the theories springing forth from *The Principles of Nationalism*.

## Plaid Cymru and the Ten Points of Policy

Moving on to another personal declaration by Saunders Lewis, *The Ten Points of Policy*, published in 1934. In this document Lewis confirmed “social pluralism within national communities as being the keystone of his social vision”.<sup>106</sup> The extent to which this ‘social pluralism’ could be realistically enacted, given the party’s call for a monolingual, Welsh-toned society, is somewhat unclear. If pluralism is to be taken at face value then a diverse society must ensue. There is little evidence to suggest that this is what Plaid Cymru, or at least Saunders Lewis writing on behalf of Plaid Cymru, desired. If this terminology were offered today then interpretations regarding the creating of a multicultural or multi-ethnic society would abound. As there was no genuine conception of this in inter-war Wales, Lewis’ appeal for social pluralism has an undefined and possibly hollow ring to it; especially so given some of Plaid Cymru’s earlier pronouncements on the objective of encouraging the development of a degree of conformity – linguistic and religious at least – within Welsh society.

Furthermore, given Saunders Lewis’ undeniable disdain for capitalism in general, it seems highly unlikely that a capitalist, industrial sector would be allowed to operate within, and add to the enhancement of, this environment of social plurality. Knowing that the party sought to distance itself from both the concepts of capitalism and industrialism, it would be fair to conclude that neither would have been seen as being central to the development of Welsh society should Plaid Cymru have attained political office in this period. Similarly, it would appear evident, given past pronouncements,

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<sup>106</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.100

that any movement designed to expand and encourage the use of languages and cultures, other than Welsh, would receive little sympathy in the same administration. Social pluralism, therefore, could be seen as a rhetorical, though unrealisable, feature of Plaid Cymru's ideology at that point in time. Social pluralism itself could only be considered as a peripheral concept within that ideology and, this thesis would contend, it was a very weak concept at that. Again, it would be fair to argue that in relation to this concept and its place within Plaid Cymru thinking, the dichotomy between thought and action appears great.

What is also notable, as a general point within *The Ten Points of Policy*, is how the document reflects Lewis' "stated aim of seeking a Welsh point of view that could be applied in wider contexts".<sup>107</sup> In this instance, Lewis envisaged 'the Welsh model' becoming a guiding light for countries far and wide. Wales, it was envisaged, would prove to be a progressive example of a country reclaiming her inheritance. In this example, the prioritising of the nation, combined with the conservatism and romanticism of celebrating times past, is evident. What is not on view, however, is any display of ethnic nationalism or expansionist rhetoric; indeed 'the Welsh model' is designed to be used as a tool for forging relationships with outside bodies as opposed to alienating them.

One area of *The Ten Points of Policy* that entered new ground as far as Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' was concerned was the reference to the proposed

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid*

organisational structure of Welsh society and its management of the economy under a Plaid Cymru administration. As point five of the document noted, “trade unions, works committees, industrial boards, economic councils and a national economic council, cooperative societies of individuals and of local and administrative authorities, should have a prominent and controlling role in the economic organisation of Welsh society”<sup>108</sup>. Here, for the first time in an accessible form, Plaid Cymru’s economic policies were being enunciated. With the inclusion of trade unions, works committees and cooperative societies, there are clear indications of the more left-inclined policies that others within the party, such as Kate Roberts and D.J and Noelle Davies<sup>109</sup>, saw as essential to the party’s ideological development. By including a range of bodies that need to be consulted and included in the management of the Welsh economy, there is undoubtedly a sense of economic pluralism in the party’s reasoning; even if the social pluralism mentioned earlier is still questionable. Where there was still inconsistency, however, was in the fact that Saunders Lewis was opening up to these representative bodies – indicative of his “philosophy of cooperative nationalism”<sup>110</sup> – whilst maintaining a series of attacks on capitalism in general and the industrialisation process in particular. Trying to square the circle on this remains one of the conundrums of Lewis’ legacy as Plaid Cymru’s president and, certainly in his eyes, its chief political thinker of its early years.

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid*; p.101

<sup>109</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p. 160.

<sup>110</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.101.

## The Price of Self-Government

Published in 1939, the pamphlet, *Can Wales Afford Self-Government?* offers a departure from the domineering political viewpoint of Saunders Lewis. The pamphlet also took Plaid Cymru's economic reasoning into unprecedented areas. Furthermore, it could be argued that it grounds, and offers justification for, the party's socialist and co-operativist principles; areas of Plaid Cymru's ideology that will be addressed in detail later in this thesis. As noted above, one instantly perceptible difference about *Can Wales Afford Self-Government?* is its authorship. Unlike the hitherto examined texts, this pamphlet was written by D.J and Noelle Davies. Commenting on their style and approach, Laura McAllister noted how "the Davieses' was a pragmatism quite different to that of Lewis".<sup>111</sup> Sidelineing the romanticism of Saunders Lewis, D.J. and Noelle Davies argued for a reconstructed Wales "based predominantly on decentralist socialist policies and including the large-scale nationalisation of key industries"<sup>112</sup>; documenting, as it is important to do, that these demands came a decade before the implementation of the nationalisation programme of the post-war Attlee administration. On this theme, it is worth noting that D.J. Davies and Noelle Davies had both been, perhaps unsurprisingly when considering some of their opinions, members of the Labour Party. This was at a time when workers control under Clause 4 was a central principle for the Labour Party. What is notable about the work of D. J. and Noelle Davies, however, is the way in which they cleverly weave their radicalism, and their socialist inclinations, in with the historical positioning of Wales as a formerly well-endowed nation. Evidence of this arises when they quote the mediaeval Wales of

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<sup>111</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.27

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*; pp.27-8



Giraldus Cambrensis in which “no one of this nation ever begs, for the houses of all are common to all, and they consider liberality and hospitality amongst the first virtues”<sup>113</sup>.

The recounting of this companionable society, according to D.J. and Noelle Davies, was in stark contrast to the situation being experienced in their Wales of the 1930's. The reason they give for Wales being poor was down to the contention that “under an alien imperialist Government, seeking alien interests, her resources have been unused, disused and misused”.<sup>114</sup> Further to this abandonment and squandering of resources, D.J. and Noelle Davies also introduced the notion of power into their argument. For this purpose, Michael Freedon's assessment of power as an adjacent concept<sup>115</sup> can enter the discussion as power is portrayed, in this instance by the Davieses, in a hegemonic sense. Hegemonic power involves social control and its two liberating forces, in the view of the Davieses, should be nationalism, to rid Wales of the ‘alien imperialist Government’, and socialism, to act as a liberator of the Welsh economy. The hegemonic view is an interesting perspective as it allows for a redressing of grievances.

What manifests itself out of all this, according to the pamphlet, is “the eternal distinction between the imperialists whose whole life comes to depend on dominating others and the nationalists who ask for nothing but liberty to ‘cultivate their own garden’ without interfering with anybody else's”<sup>116</sup>. This is an example in which calls for the unshackling of the chains of imperialism was designed to evoke a strong sense

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<sup>113</sup> D.J. and Noelle Davies, Can Wales Afford Self-Government? (Caernarfon, Swyddfa'r Blaid, 1939), p.38

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*

<sup>115</sup> Freedon, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.77

<sup>116</sup> D.J. and Noelle Davies, Can Wales Afford Self-Government? p.39

of injustice among the indigenous people; freedom from extraneously imposed power being a key component of liberationist nationalist thought. Furthermore, the citing of the liberationist argument within the realm of hegemonic power invoked the work of Antonio Gramsci and his belief that the ideology of the ruling class is arranged in order to safeguard that class's interests.<sup>117</sup> It is the view of this thesis, therefore, that D.J. and Noelle Davies skilfully intertwined nationalist and socialist discourse to offer a critique of imperialist capitalism and its effects on Wales, and in doing so somewhat redressed the ideological balance within Plaid Cymru away from Saunders Lewis romantic vagaries and towards a more socio-economically realistic vision of what could be achievable within Wales.

One example, from *Can Wales Afford Self-Government?*, in which the aforementioned socialist and nationalist grievances coalesced, emerged when the Davieses proclaimed that "this catastrophic depression in the Welsh coal trade was the direct result of the policy of the English Government".<sup>118</sup> Apart from the nationalistic solution of self-government, one way out from this crisis in the coal industry that the Davieses proposed was that there should be a revival in Welsh agriculture under a "system of owner-occupiership".<sup>119</sup> The Davieses, perhaps slightly quixotically, contended that the move away from heavy industry and onto an agricultural base would not entail major upheaval as "many miners have spent their childhood on farms".<sup>120</sup> Consequently, it is interesting to note how, akin to Saunders Lewis, the Davieses foresaw a restructuring of the Welsh economy, away from a centralised

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<sup>117</sup> Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.19.

<sup>118</sup> D.J. and Noelle Davies, *Can Wales Afford Self-Government?* p.43

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*; p.60

<sup>120</sup> *ibid*.

industrialised core and outward to the rural districts, wherein co-operativism would flourish. The differences between Saunders Lewis and the Davieses, it is fair to contend, was in the way that the Davieses used the language of socialism to describe their vision for an economic transformation of society whereas Lewis stuck more closely to the imagery of de-industrialisation without going into fine detail about its replacement. The intervention of D.J and Noelle Davies, and the publication of *Can Wales Afford Self-Government?*, was important at this stage of Plaid Cymru's ideological development, however, as the Davieses, and the pamphlet, either introduced or enhanced concepts such as decentralisation and co-operativism, and the ideology of socialism, into the political arena. Plaid Cymru could then be seen to be discussing these matters and, to varying degrees, the party became associated with these concepts and 'thought-practices'.

Nevertheless, through the use of Freedinite reasoning, it becomes evident that what was beginning to emerge by the end of the 1930's was a sense of multiple ideological identities within Plaid Cymru. As the party's thinking became more advanced, and as more individuals engaged in the ideational processes within the party, so adjacent and peripheral concepts arose to enhance the overall ideological make-up of Plaid Cymru. Where Plaid Cymru could be said to have stepped outside of its 'nationalism' is when D.J. and Noelle Davies endorsed socialism over and above the core concepts of nationalism. Perhaps this diversion from nationalism's core concepts was inevitable as any political party, and Plaid Cymru is no different on this point, attempts to construct a programme that is comprehensive and relevant enough to justify its existence. The notion of this ideological branching out was observed by Freedden. As he pointed out in defence of his contention that nationalism "fails to meet

175

the criteria of a comprehensive ideology”<sup>121</sup>, nationalism’s “conceptual structure is incapable of providing on its own a solution to questions of social justice, distribution of resources, and conflict-management which mainstream ideologies address”.<sup>122</sup>

The Davieses may have presciently realised the limitations that nationalism carries and therefore they may have decided to expand the ideological underpinning of Plaid Cymru’s morphology. Hence, the contribution of D.J and Noelle Davies to Plaid Cymru’s ideological development was crucial in that their “particular brand of co-operative, decentralist socialism ...merged neatly with Plaid Cymru’s existing commitment to the small-scale economic unit, and its anti-state focus”.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, according to Laura McAllister, the political outlook of D.J and Noelle Davies was also “much needed in an organisation which, until then, had interpreted politics largely from a cultural perspective”.<sup>124</sup> Noelle Davies also maintained that the party should champion a heightened co-operativist approach and she was evidently influenced by European cooperative movements. Furthermore, Noelle Davies thought that the emerging Danish model of social and educational cooperation was one that Wales could emulate and even augment<sup>125</sup>. If this line of reasoning is observed in the context of her allied campaign for the greater use of the English language within the party, then Noelle Davies could be portrayed as not merely an important figure in the gradual modernisation and evolution of Plaid Cymru as a social and political force, but also in respect of her achievements as a woman within a male dominated political party operating within a male dominated society.

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<sup>121</sup> Freedon, Is Nationalism A Distinct Ideology, p. 751.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid*

<sup>123</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.55

<sup>124</sup> *ibid*

<sup>125</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945, p.108.

Overall, therefore, and importantly, for this thesis, it could be proposed that the intervention into the debate by the Davieses instigated, or at least accelerated, the demise of 'early' Plaid Cymru ideology and opened up the arena for what would be a perceptible ideological realignment within Plaid Cymru after World War Two. In a sense, therefore, there occurred a distinctive 'ideological break' from the political philosophy and 'thought-practices' of Saunders Lewis-inspired 'early' Plaid Cymru.

### **The Denouement of 'Early' Plaid Cymru' Ideology**

Having looked at some of the key ideological points, there is now a need to add the application of Freedon's ideological model to provide a summation of Lewis' personal ideology; an ideology that certainly had its internal critics, as has been mentioned, but nevertheless was an ideology that dominated Plaid Cymru's political philosophy and public persona certainly up until the 1940's, and whose legacy, even today, occasionally emerges. Lewis' problem lay in terms of his ideological clarity; certainly, that is, in the eyes of the people, namely the general public, which Plaid Cymru, as a political party, had to win over if it wanted to achieve its stated political aims and objectives. This thesis contends that, given the evidence at hand, Saunders Lewis was clearly not an unmitigated conservative, fascist, or green thinker. Although some elements and concepts are undoubtedly brought in, it is possible to contend that Lewis' form of nationalism is the 'host vessel' in which these concepts rest.

Interpreting Lewis' thinking, it would be fair of this thesis to state that it is 'the nation' that is the arena for cognisant change; cognisant change that should involve

'the nation' providing both the geographical space and the academic environment for cerebral, as well as concrete, transformation. Putting this across in a way that was not too subliminally inclined was, and possibly still is, the problem. Lewis' predicament – ideational confusion – may, by the end of this thesis, prove to be Plaid Cymru's predicament. It could certainly be argued that there is a case to be made for claiming that the ideology of nationalism could be seen as Lewis' 'flag of convenience'. If that is so, and if Lewis' beliefs were in tune with the core concepts of nationalism, as stated by Freedon, then Plaid Cymru's ideology – certainly that is the ideology of post-1945 Plaid Cymru, whose beliefs and policies are less conspicuously nationalistic than those of Lewis – would be even more open to charges of using nationalism as a 'flag of convenience' than was Lewis, and Plaid Cymru, in its 'early' incarnation.

With the withdrawal of Saunders Lewis from frontline politics at the end of World War Two, what Plaid Cymru had to do, particularly given the onslaught against the party for its supposed flirtation with fascism, was to dispose of those parts of its 'thought-practices' that the party found uncomfortable or distasteful – like the linkage with the obtainment of nationalism through a militaristic channel – along with those elements that took the party's ideology into the field of 'cultural constraints' – namely the adherence to a quixotic philosophical stance that projected the unrealistic attainment of a society in Wales that was de-industrialised and observant of a morally righteous anti-materialist position. Admittedly, some of those within the party who held different opinions and diverse political perspectives from Saunders Lewis on a series of issues had already challenged the leadership line through the processes of internal debate and the publication of articles and pamphlets. However, post-1945, and in many respects post-Lewis, the party's theoreticians had to attempt to open up Plaid

170

Cymru's policy and philosophical arenas so that fresh, more relevant concepts could be absorbed. Many of those concepts, the degree to which they are core or peripheral to Plaid Cymru's ideology, and their development and application will be scrutinised in the following chapters. In general, therefore, the years after 1945 will be scrutinised using the Freedenite method of identification and assessment, although in doing so the thesis will not lapse into a standard political history of Plaid Cymru as it will present the ideologies and ideological concepts in a thematic as opposed to a chronological order. Hence, the contention of this thesis is that 1945 can be pinpointed as the year in which the ideology of Plaid Cymru underwent an ideational, or even, arguably, an Althusserian-style epistemological break; Lewis' rationale was to be replaced by new 'thought-practices' and Plaid Cymru left its 'early' stage and entered its 'modern' one.

## **Chapter 4: Ideologies associated with ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru**

Having determined how different ideologies and ideological concepts played their part in the development of Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ in its formative years, it is now important to trace developments after World War Two. This thesis has chosen to take 1945 as the date that marked a watershed in Plaid Cymru thinking. This has been decided upon because it is at this time that the party had to face up to the emergence of a new social, economic and political environment in Britain, as the arrival of the Beveridgean welfare state secured the bond between the individual and the state. In addition to this new ‘individual-state’ relationship, this thesis would also contend that the arrival, in 1945, of Gwynfor Evans as party president enabled Plaid Cymru to evolve in different ideological and structural directions. This was not altogether surprising given that Evans’ own social and political interests differed somewhat from the pre-war leadership of the party. Hence, this thesis will regard the period from 1945 as the era of ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that this is an estimated date, as an ideological evolution, and a realisation that a change of direction and emphasis was required, had actually been taking place in some quarters of Plaid Cymru during the Saunders Lewis presidency of the inter-war years; as expressed by activists such as D.J and Noelle Davies, for example. Therefore, perhaps somewhat inevitably, there will be instances where the thesis will return to pre-1945 statements and literature as certain issues materialize and also because there is no absolute division between what this thesis regards as ‘early’ or ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru. Hence, in chronological terms, some ‘modern’ pronouncements and thinking can be attributed to the days of, what this thesis deems to be, ‘early’ Plaid Cymru.



Continuing the flow and methodology of the thesis, and by using Freedden's model for purposes of analysis, this chapter will analyse the ideologies in their entirety; that is not to deconstruct them *per se* but to explain their relationship and usage within Plaid Cymru. Having undertaken this task, the subsequent chapter will then explore the major ideological concepts within Plaid Cymru's thinking. As many of these are linked directly to the ideologies to be discussed in this chapter, some of the ideological patterns and language used when analysing these concepts are bound to arise within this chapter. It is important to the thesis, however, to separate the overarching ideologies, comprehensive in their scope, with the core or peripheral concepts that make Plaid Cymru's ideology, and any other political party's ideology for that matter, unique. This is what the thesis will attempt to do.

Four ideologies – nationalism, socialism, liberalism and feminism – will be examined in this chapter. The first three of these – nationalism, socialism and liberalism – are the ideologies that predominantly emerge within the language and writings of 'modern' Plaid Cymru. Thus, it is these three ideologies that will dominate the discussion in this chapter. The fourth, feminism, requires some degree of attention, nevertheless, as feminist ideas have emerged within Plaid Cymru over the years and it would, therefore, be amiss to discard the ideology of feminism in its entirety. Although these four ideologies have been highlighted, it is not the intention of this thesis to completely dismiss other ideologies, or to claim that the ideology of Plaid Cymru can only be examined in relationship to, and using the tenets of, these other competing ideologies. It is merely a case that investigations prove that the aforementioned four, but in particular the first three of nationalism, socialism and

liberalism, have dominated the political rhetoric within the party in the last sixty or so years.

Another macro-ideology, conservatism, will not be addressed in this chapter as any conservative viewpoints displayed by Plaid Cymru representatives garnered overwhelmingly in the period that this thesis has labelled 'early' Plaid Cymru. Though there are some traditionalists within the party – guardians of the Saunders Lewis tradition, for instance – who would regard themselves as social or religious conservatives, their numbers within the party today are very few, and are dwindling rapidly. Whilst conservatism has its place within the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru, therefore, this thesis would contend that those advocating the conservative disposition are peripheral to the party's ideological motor. Hence, conservatism, though in existence within the party since 1945, will not feature as one of its major ideological strands. As a result, of the four stated ideologies, nationalism must be addressed first of all. This is because it is the ideology of nationalism with which Plaid Cymru's ideology is most often measured against, attributed to, and labelled as.

## **Nationalism**

Rightly or wrongly, any survey, scientific or unscientific, of a hundred Welsh people with a moderate understanding of, and interest in, Welsh politics would undoubtedly conclude that Plaid Cymru is a nationalist political force. This is understandable, to a very great extent, as the party's formative name was Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (Welsh Nationalist Party). It is also apparent when a survey of party literature is undertaken. With anti-Englishness in evidence on occasions – England being the traditional enemy or 'Other' in nationalistic terms – the spectre of

nationalism pervades Plaid Cymru's narrative. As far back as 1939 the opening paragraph of *'The New Wales: Synopsis of the Policy of the Welsh Nationalist Party'* emphasised Plaid Cymru's belief in maintaining its conception of the traditional society in Wales. To demonstrate this, Wales is described as a *'teulu'* (family)<sup>1</sup>. This communitarian-style depiction appears innocent enough until the reader is informed that the English have, over the centuries, "completely disintegrated the 'tribe', and the traditional idea of 'bonedd' and 'perchentaeth'"<sup>2</sup>. While *bonedd* equates to bond in English, *perchentaeth*, like *hiraeth*, has no straight translation. It broadly means 'possession-of-a-house (ism)' – a wide distribution of property ownership. There are hints here of a 'blood and soil' nationalist position being adopted by Plaid Cymru as the bond is seen as traditional, and a steadying influence on society, and those outside of the bond, the English in this instance, are portrayed as the destructive force who have demolished that precious connection. The idea of the bond and attachment to things Welsh was further exemplified by DJ and Noelle Davies. The Davieses summoned up a Welsh term *'cydweithbrediad'*<sup>3</sup> (working together) to project the future. According to them, the only alternative to *cydweithbrediad* would be "the progressive swallowing up of Wales by England, with an inevitable further deterioration in both the quantity and the quality of her population, and the ultimate extinction of our nation"<sup>4</sup>. This is a fatalistic message that is typical of 'blood and soil' nationalism as a doomsday scenario is presented with attachment and commitment to the preservation of the nation seen as the only means of ensuring survival for the culture under threat.

<sup>1</sup> Plaid Cymru, *The New Wales: Synopsis of the Policy of the Welsh Nationalist Party*, (Swyddfa'r Blaid, Caernarfon, 1939), p.1

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> DJ and Noelle Davies, *Wales: The Land of Our Children* (Swyddfa'r Blaid, Caernarfon, 1942), p.28

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

Where Plaid Cymru's views differ from many who encourage 'blood and soil' nationalism, however, is that the party does not, on the whole, advocate the 'blood' element of 'blood and soil' on two counts. First, unlike for instance the Basque separatists' insistence – in their interpretation of what constitutes ethnicity – that true Basques should be able to prove a timeline of eight generations<sup>5</sup>, there is no biological or ethnic qualification laid down by Plaid Cymru for either membership of the Welsh nation or subsequent inclusion in the everyday activities of that nation. Second, there is no indication of any call to arms evident within Plaid Cymru's literature or rhetoric. Justifying this position of Plaid Cymru as a non-aggressive political force, Dafydd Wigley, in an interview conducted for this thesis, testified to the difficulties of co-operating with nationalist parties overseas who "take a different line on these things"<sup>6</sup>. Wigley went on to remark that "our nationalism is civic nationalism not ethnic nationalism"<sup>7</sup>. The Meirionnydd Nant Conwy MP, Elfyn Llwyd, concurred with this as he asserted that Plaid Cymru's "civic nationalism is quite different from the old Balkan-type nationalism"<sup>8</sup>. Dafydd Trystan, the party's current Chief Executive, also offered a corresponding viewpoint. When asked whether he regarded himself as a nationalist his response, after admitting that nationalism was a broad conceptual field, was that he defined himself as "a civic nationalist"<sup>9</sup>.

Although, sporadically, London, England, Westminster and so forth appear in Plaid Cymru literature and rhetoric as the oppressors of Welsh national fulfilment, it is never a belligerent opposition that stems from the party. Plaid Cymru's November

<sup>5</sup> see, for instance, Antony Alcock, *A History of The Protection of Regional Cultural Minorities in Europe*, (Basingstoke, MacMillan, 2000), pp. 75-6.

<sup>6</sup> Dafydd Wigley, *Interview*, 25.02.02

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Elfyn Llwyd, *Interview*, 21.10.02

<sup>9</sup> Dafydd Trystan, *Interview*, 08.03.03

1974 Election Manifesto, *Power for Wales*, exemplified this rhetorical interplay in its appeal to the people of Wales. “Why should we suffer for the Imperial illusions of a London government? Let us have our own government instead”<sup>10</sup>, the manifesto demanded. In relation to Plaid Cymru’s perspective on what brand of nationalism it espouses, this thesis would note that, rather than being of a jingoistic variety, the opposite would appear to be true with concepts such as pacifism and non-violence to the fore, as shall be shown in the following chapter.

### **The Role of The Gwerin**

One question that needs to be considered is whether some of the above observations expose a degree of indistinctness when it comes to Plaid Cymru’s embracing of nationalist tenets. If an insistence on adopting a bellicose or imperialistic stance is seen by some nationalists as a prerequisite for assuming a nationalist position then this thesis would contend, as will be exemplified at a later stage, that Plaid Cymru does not fall within that category of confrontational or expansionist nationalism. However, the principle of a ‘self-governing’ Wales is evident within the statements and language of Plaid Cymru; albeit one that is to be engendered and shaped by non-violent political action rather than any form of armed insurrection. Indeed, a Nietzschean approach can be observed if a timeline is started with Saunders Lewis’ wartime declaration that the success of Plaid Cymru’s programme was dependent upon “the awakening of the nation, the *gwerin* [folk] of Wales, to ‘will’ its own salvation”<sup>11</sup>. The use of the phrase ‘will its own salvation’ suggests that providence is an identifiable factor within Plaid Cymru’s view of the nation’s destiny.

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<sup>10</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Power for Wales*, (General Election Manifesto, November 1974), p.8

<sup>11</sup> Saunders Lewis, *Wales After the War*, (Caernarfon, Swyddfa’r Blaid, 1942), p.36

Here, another link can be made between nationalist rhetoric and a religious strand whose public image is the *gwerin*, the ordinary *Volk* of Wales, who are imbued with a greater, embedded sense of time and place than other members of society who nationalists sense lack the 'earthiness' of the *gwerin*. In Marxist language this would provide justification for a proletariat revolution; given the assumption that the importance of the proletariat to Marxists is akin to the importance of the *gwerin* to Saunders Lewis at least, but also, arguably, to Plaid Cymru as a whole. Interestingly, as the body of people labelled 'the proletariat' has been adopted and romanticised by certain figures and organisations for their own stated political ends, so too, according to Dave Adamson, has the *gwerin*. For Adamson, the *gwerin* "was an intellectual construct evident in all spheres of intellectual activity in Wales, reproduced as the image of the nation and itself reproducing that image"<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, the entire reliance on salvation proves a difficult area for nationalist justification as religion lies outside of Michael Freeden's core concepts of nationalism. As a peripheral concept, therefore, the centralisation of religion as a driving force for the party's 'thought-practices' adds to the perception, using the Freeden paradigm, that Plaid Cymru's ideology does not fit comfortably into the nationalist category. This is clearly a contentious classification by Freeden as there are many examples of nationalisms – Catholic Nationalism in Ireland, Hindu Nationalism in India, and the melting pot of religious fundamentalism and nationalist insurgency that is in evidence in Palestine, are just some cases in point – wherein nationalism is defined through religious declaration. There are clearly difficulties, therefore, in Freeden's positioning of religion outside of the core concepts of nationalism.

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<sup>12</sup> Dave Adamson, 'The Intellectual and the National Movement', in Ralph Fevre and Andrew Thompson (eds.), Nation, Identity and Social Theory, p.67

Furthermore, the bonding process involved in nationalist and religious affiliation is very similar and these communities do, in certain instances, have an ideological overlap. In these cases, nationalism can prove to be a driving force within a religion, and vice versa. This thesis, therefore, must judge Plaid Cymru using the Freedden model, while at the same time maintaining a critical eye towards Freedden himself as this thesis is not claiming that the model he has devised is without imperfection. Hence, on the evidence of the aforementioned claim regarding religion as a core concept within nationalism at least, the Freedden model is open to criticism. Nevertheless, as stated early on in this thesis, it is the contention of this thesis that the Freeddenite model remains the most appropriate model for undertaking this type of analysis of Plaid Cymru's ideology. Regardless of this, criticism of Freedden, if or when appropriate, will be offered.

Continuing on the theme of the *gwerin* and nationalism, Gwynfor Evans comments on the link between nationalism and the actions of the *gwerin* to achieve autonomy for Wales. Emphasising decolonisation in his nationalist vision, Evans noted how "in Wales the first step is to supplant the present '*diwreiddiedig ac uchelgeisiol griw*' (the deracinated and ambitious crew); and to resist the unbearable arrogance of London civil servants and politicians who always know what is best for Wales"<sup>13</sup>. Evans continues by stating that "with will and vision this nation can create her own environment"<sup>14</sup>. A recent party theoretician, Phil Williams, pointed out that that very environment – its geographical and ontological space – is in existence at present and, moreover, this environment plays a salient part in the everyday reasoning and expression of people in Wales. As Williams has commented, despite everything

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<sup>13</sup> Gwynfor Evans, *Land of My Fathers*, (Talybont, Y Lolfa, 1992), p.450

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

that has occurred to break down the indigenous population's sense of Welshness, and the determination of the Welsh people to continue to exist as Welsh people, "it is the single identity of Wales that is ascendant"<sup>15</sup>. As long as this holds – in the minds of the Welsh people as a whole and Plaid Cymru supporters in particular – then nationalism will always be a viable and extant option. Furthermore, Phil Williams sets this 'single identity' theory into an encircling geographical space. For Williams, Wales is "large enough to fill the horizon but small enough to recognise every human being as an individual. The point is this: Wales is small enough for us to care about every part of it"<sup>16</sup>. Introducing the concept of democracy into this debate, Cynog Dafis, the former Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion and AM for Mid and West Wales, while exploring the question of why group and national identity is important, has observed that, in the case of Wales, "identity derives from external factors such as terrain and location. It is consolidated through organisational networks and shared institutions. Crucially it is fed by shared historical and cultural experiences. It is transmitted down the generations. Thus has national identity survived in Wales... despite the complete absence until very recently of formal political structures"<sup>17</sup>.

Michael Freeden's view on this envisioning and actuality was evident when he stated that nationalism is an ideology that "concentrates on the exceptional worth of a nation as a shaper of national identity"<sup>18</sup>. Here, however, Lewis, Evans, Williams and Dafis appear to be implying that Welsh national identity is in existence. What it merely needs is a reshaping and a reconditioning and, taking Gwynfor Evans'

<sup>15</sup> Phil Williams, *The Psychology of Distance*, (Cardiff, Welsh Academic Press, 2003), p.3

<sup>16</sup> Phil Williams, *Voice from the Valleys*, (Bridgend, Seren, 1981), p.20

<sup>17</sup> Cynog Dafis, 'Migration, Identity and Development', in *Agenda*, Summer 2004, p.5

<sup>18</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideology*, p.98



observation, a detaching of some aspects of its corpus. What needs to be established, therefore, is whether others in Plaid Cymru share these views and whether, through the use of Freedden's model, these opinions are identifiably nationalist. In nationalistic terms, therefore, what this thesis is interested in establishing is whether there is anything deeper or more substantial within Plaid Cymru's view of the nation other than the party's desire to merely recast the Welsh body politic so that it is in line with a more responsive, emotional, and psychologically 'Welsh' approach; which, it would appear at first glance, is the position generally favoured and endorsed by most, if not all, of the Plaid Cymru politicians and activists featured in this thesis.

With the aforementioned in mind, however, all may not be as straightforward as it first appears. Laura McAllister, for instance, has noted how there have been debates within Plaid Cymru "between those who view Welsh nationalism as a free-standing ideology and those who argue for a more explicit and detailed political location"<sup>19</sup>. If the 'free-standing ideology' approach is accepted, then appeals to emotion and a sense of history and purpose will prevail. The recasting of the Welsh body politic will be achieved primarily through encouraging a deeper sense of Welsh identity and fostering practice that is identifiably Welsh; via, for example, an extension of education through the medium of Welsh or encouraging people to take part in traditional Welsh societies such as *Urdd Gobiath Cymru* (Welsh Youth Organisation) or *Merched Y Wawr* (The Women's Movement).

Some nationalists may be content with this burgeoning of activity that is representative of the indigenous culture. Nevertheless, this seamless adoption may,

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<sup>19</sup> Laura McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.158

ultimately, prove too narrow in its scope and practice for any political party, let alone a party seeking structural and societal transformation such as Plaid Cymru, to adopt. The dilemma of being a political party is important here because, as McAllister observed, “the electorate requires a set of policies which explains the precise type of government Plaid proposes”<sup>20</sup>. One of the key differences between a nationalist pressure group or organisation and a nationalist political party – purportedly nationalist, as this thesis is claiming, in the case of Plaid Cymru – is thus highlighted as the political party is required to offer a comprehensive agenda to the general public that evinces clarity of thought and deed. Michael Freeden’s talk of nationalism as a ‘thin ideology’ is relevant in this instance because if Plaid Cymru’s ‘free-standing ideology’ supporters are seen to be in the majority then nationalism’s role or effect within Plaid Cymru will be severely limited. This ‘thin nationalism’ is almost debilitating in the sense that by burdening ‘the nation’ with symbolism, and then asking it to be the provider of moral strength, it subsequently fails to, in Freeden’s words, “produce a scheme for the just distribution of scarce and vital goods – the famous ‘who gets what, when, how’ question that is seen to be central to politics”<sup>21</sup>. What could be argued, therefore, is that for nationalism to succeed, and for Plaid Cymru to succeed, if indeed it is nationalism that the party seeks to portray, a process of augmenting and expanding its subject-matter and political philosophy is required.

### **Considering Nationalism: Some Thoughts from within Plaid Cymru**

With Laura McAllister’s views on the directional debate in mind, this thesis would maintain that an analysis of how the term nationalism is viewed by some people within Plaid Cymru is useful to observe. This process of self-identification

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.98

should prove unproblematic if Plaid Cymru is a nationalist party and, hence, its supporters label themselves as nationalist. However, perhaps the most striking thing that came across during a series of interviews conducted for this thesis was, for a variety of reasons, the reluctance to use or endorse the terms 'nationalist' or 'nationalism' by some of Plaid Cymru's members themselves. While it is important to re-iterate yet again that the data in this thesis features only a very small sample of opinion collected through the interviewing process, it is nevertheless valuable, given that they are all party members who, presumably, joined Plaid Cymru because they supported the party's aims, objectives, and general ideological position, to present and assess the comments given by the interviewees. It is the contention of this thesis, therefore, that it would then be useful to attempt to inculcate the views of the interviewees into this thesis' overall examination of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'; whilst clearly being mindful of employing generalised positions from individual responses.

During one such interview, Gareth Pritchard, who, as both a grassroots member and an academic who has conducted research into Plaid Cymru's demographic appeal, is able to offer a distinctive perspective on the party, disagreed with the viewpoint that held that Plaid Cymru is a nationalist party. This assertion comes about because Pritchard maintained that there is "no real concept of violent opposition to 'the Other' within Wales, and certainly not within the politics of Plaid Cymru"<sup>22</sup>. With reference to the 'blood and soil' conception of nationalism mentioned previously, it is interesting to note how Pritchard focused upon the need for violent opposition to 'the Other' in order to identify or classify nationalism; though, this thesis notes, this is

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<sup>22</sup> Gareth Pritchard, Interview, 7.10.2002

only one way of classifying nationalism. Pritchard continued by affirming his belief that, in a Welsh context, nationalism is a term used by the opponents of Plaid Cymru, such as the Labour Party, to attempt to denigrate Plaid Cymru. This thesis believes, however, that it must be noted that there is no overwhelming wave of public opinion in Wales that is seeking to cast aspersions on Plaid Cymru's character or behaviour. Hence, this thesis believes that it is worth stating that such loose portrayals or classifications could be put down as much to the dissemination of political propaganda, by political parties and individuals alike, than it is to any exegetic evaluation of a person or a party's political ideology.

Nevertheless, where this portrayal or representation clearly does not equate with reality is through the fact that Plaid Cymru – if indeed it is nationalist political party – does not advocate violent expression as a means of achieving social change within Wales. Equally, Michael Freedon, in his ideological model, did not cite violent expression as one of the core concepts of nationalism; although violence is a core concept in fascism, a 'host-vessel' of nationalism<sup>23</sup>. Unless this thesis intends to pursue the argument that Plaid Cymru's ideology is in line with fascist thinking, which no serious commentator has even proffered, then the linking of Plaid Cymru with violent expression on the one hand and fascist ideology on the other will only lead down a blind alley that serves no purpose to this exploration of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' as a whole.

Returning to the thoughts of Gareth Pritchard, and further exemplifying his belief that Plaid Cymru is not a nationalist party – certainly given his understanding of what

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<sup>23</sup> Freedon, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?*, p.763

classifies nationalism and nationalist parties – Pritchard commented on how “the language of Plaid Cymru generally is not the language of nationalism, aside that it is from a few right wingers in Gwynedd”<sup>24</sup>. Overall, therefore, Pritchard, who has contended that Plaid Cymru is “not a revolutionary activist party”<sup>25</sup>, took the line that Plaid Cymru is not really nationalistic in its outlook and could consequently be pigeonholed as a political party that is seeking evolutionary change for Wales within the mainstream of Welsh, British, and European politics. If this is so, and evaluating Pritchard’s comments about a section of nationalists in Plaid Cymru’s heartlands who, he maintains, seek a swifter, more direct route to the establishment of an autonomous Welsh polity, then this thesis would argue that certain comparisons could be made at this stage with the debate within the SNP in Scotland over ‘gradualist’ or ‘fundamentalist’ strategies<sup>26</sup>.

### **Nationalism as a Taboo**

A question must be asked as to whether Gareth Pritchard is a lone voice in his inquiring as to whether Plaid Cymru is actually a nationalist party. The answer to that question, through interpreting the data gathered through the series of interviews that were conducted for this thesis, would appear to be that Pritchard is not necessarily alone in his contention; albeit recalling that individual responses, particularly those that are not in positions of any great influence within the party, cannot, and should not, be assumed to be fully representative of party opinion on this or any other matter. Nevertheless, this thesis believes that it is vital to note the views of another interviewee who also questioned the connection between Plaid Cymru and the

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<sup>24</sup> Gareth Pritchard, Interview, 7.10.2002

<sup>25</sup> ibid

<sup>26</sup> see Jonathan Hearn, Claiming Scotland (Edinburgh, Polygon, 2000)

ideology of nationalism. Keith Morgan is a County Councillor from Swansea and, of interest as far as this debate on ideology is concerned, a former member of the Communist Party. Although Keith Morgan has left Plaid Cymru for the Liberal Democrats since the interview for this thesis took place, his thoughts on matters relating to the party and its ideational structure are still of some significance and, it was felt, are still relevant to the thesis as it seeks to penetrate the morphology of opinion within Plaid Cymru. Hence, Morgan's thoughts will not be discarded despite his movement away from the party. When probed on the matter of ideological identification, Morgan was adamant in his dismissal of the nationalist tag for Plaid Cymru. As he remarked, "I cringe when I hear people describe themselves as Welsh nationalists. I don't like the word nationalist – it has bad connotations. I feel uneasy about it"<sup>27</sup>. But a question that needs to be asked of Morgan, and others like him who repel from the nationalist label, is whether this unease has come about because of recent events highlighting ethnic nationalism – and instances of genocidal practice – in places like Bosnia and Rwanda?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM admitted, during in interview conducted for this thesis, that he has pondered the above question in recent years and he claimed that he has noted some linkages between the representation of nationalism and violence. Thomas, who has described himself as a patriot rather than a nationalist – a practical declaration as far as Freedom is concerned as he claimed that "patriots may extol their nation without denigrating others"<sup>28</sup> – was keen to explain that "there is a difference between a patriot and a nationalist because of the way in which people perceive nationalism. I never use the term nationalist because of the connotation that people

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<sup>27</sup> Keith Morgan, *Interview*, 19.11.01

<sup>28</sup> Freedom, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p.753.

have of it. It is a negative concept and my relationship with my country is not negative”<sup>29</sup>. Somewhat curiously, however, Thomas then hurdles ideologies and commented that “this obviously goes back to Hitler and people see nationalism as something that tries to force its own nationality on other people”<sup>30</sup>. Former party leader, Dafydd Wigley, addressing the party’s annual conference in 1995, also identified nationalism, albeit in its most visceral form, with “the tragedy of the nations of the former Yugoslavia”<sup>31</sup>. For him, “any politics built on race or ethnic purity is an abomination”<sup>32</sup>.

There is undoubtedly some concern, judging from the aforementioned comments by two senior party figures, with regard to the portrayal and understanding of what nationalism signifies, and what adherence to specific forms of nationalism could, under certain circumstances, lead to. Furthermore, for Rhodri Glyn Thomas, the representation of elements of nationalism within fascist ideology is given as a reason to redefine his own ideology from nationalism to patriotism. It is important to stress once more, however, that this does not link Plaid Cymru with fascism in any way, shape or form. It is the belief of this thesis that Rhodri Glyn Thomas was merely addressing other people’s perceptions of what nationalism entails and how it is enacted.

Overall, it would appear from the interviews conducted for this thesis that some Plaid Cymru members are wary, to a certain extent, of the label of nationalism, and what they believe nationalism as a ‘set of ideas’ implies. This may perceivably

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<sup>29</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Interview, 14.05.01

<sup>30</sup> ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Dafydd Wigley, Plaid Cymru Annual Conference, 1995

<sup>32</sup> ibid

account for the somewhat irresolute nature of the party's own belief in itself as a nationalist force, or any acknowledgment that, both as individuals and as members of the collective that is Plaid Cymru, they are putting forward nationalistic points of view. Moreover, it could also be used as evidence to back up Freedon's belief that nationalism, taken purely on its own merits, is a thin ideology. Using this logic, nationalism may be fine at encouraging horizontal linkages among people within a defined geographical space, or those with a shared sense of history, but, and this is apt for Plaid Cymru as it is a political party operating within an advanced liberal democracy with a complex social system, it requires furnishing from other ideologies for it to offer a lucid political programme. So there would appear to be a mental picture, in the minds of the aforementioned Plaid Cymru members as well as some of the party's detractors, of nationalism as a narrow, and often crude, set of political and cultural objectives. Nationalism, therefore, could be portrayed as a straightjacket and a sign of ideational weakness in a complex plural political environment. It is little wonder, in that case, that some people within Plaid Cymru, as the interviews conducted for this thesis have demonstrated, appear reluctant when asked to associate themselves or the party with nationalism.

### **Nationalism and Internationalism**

The fear of being boxed in through identification with nationalism, and nationalism alone, could be one reason why Plaid Cymru members seek to accentuate their belief in internationalism as another appendage to the body politic. Interestingly, the Plaid Cymru Summer School and Conference held at Llangefni in 1959 discussed the issue of internationalism in great depth. Although the actual definition and usage of the term by Plaid Cymru could be challenged, it was decided at Llangefni that the



term 'international' rather than 'foreign policy' should be used. The justification given by the party was that "Plaid Cymru dislikes the division of the world into 'us' and 'foreigners', which the term 'foreign policy' implies"<sup>33</sup>. There is evidently an identification here with, and not a rejection of, 'the Other'. Likewise, politics, and the political viewpoint of Plaid Cymru in particular, can be depicted during this discourse using holistic terms.

The former Plaid Cymru MEP, Eurig Wyn, is somebody who empathises with this holistic nationalist / internationalist view. Wyn, when interviewed for this thesis, commented on how he joined Plaid Cymru at the age of 17 because he was "attracted to the idea of self-determination"<sup>34</sup>; a core concept of nationalism according to Freeden but, in addition, most, if not all, theorists would attribute the desire for 'self-determination' to nationalist ideology. Not content with this description, however, Eurig Wyn explained in some detail how, as a young man, he "wanted, and still wants, Wales to be part of a worldwide movement for self-government"<sup>35</sup>. So there are universalist concerns raised by Wyn with regard to worldwide self-determination and the acknowledgment that the geopolitical order is based on the nation-state system. A problem may arise in this line of reasoning if the dichotomy of universal / particular is examined. However, Wyn was presenting his case along the lines of universal rationality (i.e. we want self-determination because it will be beneficial to us and thus we presume that you desire the same). Wyn's argument is thus compatible because, as Freeden remarked, "ideologies are designed to be communicable and are by no means idiosyncratically subjective"<sup>36</sup>. What this connecting of concerns –

<sup>33</sup> Plaid Cymru, Summer School and Conference, 1959, p.63

<sup>34</sup> Eurig Wyn, Interview, 22.10.02

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*

<sup>36</sup> Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.31

national and international – ensures is that it also dampens any criticism of Wyn’s views as being narrowly nationalistic or excessively particularistic.

By adjoining his concerns and ambitions for autonomous rule at home with a general concern for self-determination for whatever interested parties crave it throughout the world, Eurig Wyn, and others who share his views in Plaid Cymru, bring the issue of internationalism and a global perspective into the general discourse of the party. To these ends, the existence and the potential for universal change that is held out by the existence of the United Nations is crucially important. As Charlotte Davies has pointed out, Plaid Cymru’s desire for a self-governing Wales to seek admission to the UN has been an essential objective of the party since the UN’s inception in 1949<sup>37</sup>. For instance, the party conference in 1968 asserted that “a Welsh Government would immediately apply for membership of the United Nations organisation”<sup>38</sup>. While some people such as Keith Morgan – “if we had a seat at the UN who’ll look at us, it is purely symbolism, purely ideology”<sup>39</sup> – and Dafydd Elis-Thomas – “in my view membership of the United Nations is a piece of nonsense”<sup>40</sup> – play it down, for Eurig Wyn “it is vital that Wales becomes a member of the UN”<sup>41</sup>. The current party president, Dafydd Iwan, also maintains that his “vision of a new Wales is that it should be a proper part of the EU and a Member of the UN”<sup>42</sup>.

A utopian element enters the debate here as Plaid Cymru could be seen to be adopting the principles of world government, or a world forum at least, who would

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<sup>37</sup> Charlotte Davies, Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century, p.57.  
<sup>38</sup> Plaid Cymru, Annual Conference, 1968  
<sup>39</sup> Keith Morgan, Interview, 19.11.01  
<sup>40</sup> Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Interview, 12.11.02  
<sup>41</sup> Eurig Wyn, Interview, 22.10.02  
<sup>42</sup> Dafydd Iwan, BBC Radio Wales, 05.07.03

implement subsidiarity to subdivide the world into national and regional entities; many of which are already in existence, though calls for national and communal self-determination would have to be judged and then, possibly, consented to. This is not as far reaching as it may at first appear and, as Laura McAllister has observed, utopianism is very much part of what she defined as “Plaid Cymru’s intellectual heritage”<sup>43</sup>. Transferring the three components of utopianism – association, community and co-operation<sup>44</sup> – from a national to an international scale would provide Eurig Wyn and Plaid Cymru with a justification for their internationalism, and the party’s desire to pursue universal practice of national or communal self-determination. This idea is at variance from many nationalist parties, such as many of those that have recently arisen in the former Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>45</sup>, for example, who more often than not preach a sense of localism or parochialism at the expense of wider concerns.

### **Internationalism: ‘Wales as a European nation’**

In similar terms to Eurig Wyn’s, Plaid Cymru’s current MEP, Jill Evans, has also adopted an internationalist stance. Evans has linked her internationalism with an attack on the notion of independence as a concept, and independent existence as a practice. For Evans, “independence is a meaningless concept in modern Wales. No country or state is independent or separate from its neighbours and partners in the world and I would not want Wales to be either”<sup>46</sup>. Elin Jones, the AM for Ceredigion, has similar views to Jill Evans on Wales’ position in regard to its place in the world

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<sup>43</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru p.58.

<sup>44</sup> ibid

<sup>45</sup> Robin Wilson, ‘*The Politics of Contemporary Ethno-Nationalist Conflicts*’, in Nations and Nationalism, 7 (3), 2001, pp. 365-384

<sup>46</sup> Jill Evans, Interview, 18.05.02

and also its “constitutional aspect”<sup>47</sup>, as Jones described it. For Jones the party’s objective is “freedom within the European Union”<sup>48</sup>. To her this is “an internationalist perspective but it is also a nationalist perspective. But it is not an insular nationalist perspective. It is an outward looking nationalist perspective”<sup>49</sup>.

This development of ‘Wales as a European nation’ in an internationalist sense has been conspicuous within Plaid Cymru for many years. Peter Lynch, in his *Minority Nationalism and European Integration*, maintained that as far back as the 1930’s “Plaid was critical of British isolationism and a general reluctance to take a European perspective on a range of political questions”<sup>50</sup>. Three decades on, at the 1962 Summer School and Conference at Pontarddulais, Plaid Cymru’s Executive placed the party’s onus upon “ensuring the best possible terms for Welsh entry into the Common Market”<sup>51</sup>. Five years later, at the Summer School and Conference at Dolgellau, the Plaid Cymru members who had gathered further emphasised the demand for Welsh recognition within the European context with a nationalistic appeal. In a statement released at the time, the party claimed that they desired the establishment of a European community “on the basis of equal respect and recognition of all the historic nations of Western Europe - *L’Europe des Patries* – would be completely compatible with the philosophy and aims of our movement”<sup>52</sup>. Taking this statement as a guide, it could be argued that a commitment to European involvement was being enshrined in the party’s ideational construction as a core concept. If this is so, however, it could be interpreted as offering a challenge to the Freedomite core nationalist concept of

<sup>47</sup> Elin Jones, *Interview*, 16.10.02

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

<sup>50</sup> Peter Lynch, *Minority Nationalism and European Integration*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press), p.56

<sup>51</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Summer School and Conference*, 1962, p.23

<sup>52</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Summer School and Conference*, 1967, p.17

‘positive valorisation’ of the Welsh nation. While it would appear straightforward for a confederation of European nation-states to pool together, difficulties may arise on the questions of sovereignty – for example, if some areas of control were handed over from each individual nation-state to centralised European bodies – and in terms of allegiance; if, for instance, the European Community were to act as another focal point to which people would feel that they have a sense of duty, then the prioritisation of ‘the nation’ would inevitably suffer to some degree, and thus nationalist core concepts, as Freedon reads them, would be diminished.

Despite some concerns, the theme of ‘Wales in Europe’ has continued apace within Plaid Cymru up to the present day. Phil Williams, who during his time as vice-chair of the party held responsibility for overseeing policy and research, produced the document *Towards 2000: Plaid Cymru’s Programme for Wales in Europe*. Williams pleaded for the party to embrace Europeanism in their future thinking. Williams’ call for Wales to have a voice within the European Community is one of near despair. He argued that “if Wales is to survive as a vibrant and confident society we must win full national status within the Community”<sup>53</sup>. This relationship, real or imagined, between Wales and other European countries has been an area for discussion within the party since its inception.

Just as Saunders Lewis talked of Wales’ emotional and literary attachments with continental Europe, so a contemporary Plaid Cymru politician, former leader Dafydd Wigley, is keen to stress the ‘European dimension’ as a backdrop to Plaid Cymru’s policy-making. Wigley has maintained that he has “always regarded Wales as being a

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<sup>53</sup> Phil Williams, *Towards 2000: Plaid Cymru’s Programme for Wales in Europe*, p.14

European nation. In terms of our language and culture, our religion and our folklore we are mainstream European, and our place is in the common European homeland”<sup>54</sup>. On a practical note, also, Dafydd Wigley has been at the forefront of promoting links with, and speaking on behalf of, smaller nations that Plaid Cymru members most clearly identify and empathise with. Anthony Packer, a Plaid Cymru member who translated the autobiography of Vytautas Landsbergis, the leader who presided over Lithuania’s path to independence, has claimed that while during one visit to Lithuania he was told that the Lithuanian freedom movement “respected Dafydd Wigley for having been the first MP to raise questions about Baltic independence at Westminster”<sup>55</sup>.

Despite the positive impact of Wigley’s interventions on behalf of Lithuania, and notwithstanding the obvious successes that Plaid Cymru has helped to engender on the international front, there is, nevertheless, a streak of emotionalism evident within Plaid Cymru’s rhetoric whenever Wales’ place in Europe is placed under the spotlight. As has been noted earlier, Freedon has identified emotion as a core concept of nationalism. The unusual aspect in this instance, however, is that this emotionalism shown by Plaid Cymru is not identifiable with Wales, and Wales alone, as observers of nationalism would expect, but, within the morphology of the party, it is spread further afield to incorporate a larger geographical and, since the inception of European Community, a politico-institutional space. While this may be unproblematic in itself, where Plaid Cymru may encounter serious problems ahead is when it has to face up to the question of whether the maturing of a common European identity – something advocated by Europhiles throughout many political parties across Europe –

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<sup>54</sup> Dafydd Wigley, *Interview*, 25.02.02

<sup>55</sup> Anthony Packer, ‘*Tough choices as Lithuania leads the way*’, in *Welsh Nation*, Summer 2004, p.5

would represent the apogee of a ‘post-nationalist’ age and would leave the nationalist and the pseudo-nationalist parties of Europe who bought into the European project clutching at ideological straws. Though this ‘post-nationalism’ may appear somewhat of an anathema to a party that is purportedly nationalist, the ideological stance adopted by Dafydd Elis-Thomas, as noted later in this chapter, opens up new areas down which the Plaid Cymru ideological dialectic could travel.

### **Gwynfor Evans and the concept of ‘Internationalist Nationalism’**

Notwithstanding the assurance with which the aforementioned members hold their views on internationalism and the ‘European dimension’, perhaps most prominent of all Plaid Cymru activists in declaring their internationalist convictions is Gwynfor Evans. Evans dedicated a chapter in his book *Fighting for Wales* to what he labelled “Internationalist Nationalism”<sup>56</sup>. In an attempt to clarify his thoughts on these matters, Evans commenced his justification for using the term ‘internationalist nationalism’ with his contention that “Plaid Cymru is an inherently internationalist and anti-imperialist party. It aims to free Wales from the shackles of British imperialism so that it can cooperate creatively with other nations in Europe and the world”<sup>57</sup>. Although Evans emphasised his, and what he contended to be Plaid Cymru’s, disdain for ‘the Other’, in the guise of ‘British Imperialism’, where Evans differed from some within his party is when he accentuated Wales’ historical links westward with Ireland, and the other Celtic nations, rather than placing the onus upon forging relationships with those countries in continental Europe who make-up the European Union.

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<sup>56</sup> Gwynfor Evans, *Fighting for Wales*, (Talybont, Y Lolfa, 1997), pp.154-161

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*; p.154

As a historian it is perhaps not surprising that Evans looks backward at times in his political writing, and this is evident as he cites and praises “the Irish national struggle”<sup>58</sup>. He also mentions the close relationship that Plaid Cymru enjoyed with Fianna Fail in the 1940’s and 1950’s. Hence, Evans’ internationalism, in contrast to the more contemporary internationalism of the pro-Europeans, placed Wales firmly in the Celtic brotherhood as Celtic alliances, and Celtic allegiances, were prioritised. Here, possibly, Evans had more in common with ‘early’ Plaid Cymru thinking as the anti-Anglicisation, anti-imperialist nature of pan-Celtic nationalism is to the fore. ‘Early’ Plaid Cymru members may have been critical of the British Empire, and supportive of the liberationist claims for those nations that were suppressed by imperialism, but, as Hywel Davies has pointed out, “it was the Irish campaign for self-government and subsequent developments in Ireland that provided its main source of political fascination”<sup>59</sup>. It could be contended, therefore, that although Evans’ internationalist views were more akin to those of pre-World War Two Plaid Cymru, the evolution of the party’s ideology, and the burgeoning of the European Community, would have forced Gwynfor Evans to reassess his outlook and take on board a less Celticist position in favour of a broader internationalist position. What, this thesis would agree, Evans did manage to do during his term of office as party president was to act as a bridge between the old view of internationalist nationalism, as being centred on the Celtic fringe, and the new internationalist nationalism, exemplified by members such as Jill Evans and Eurig Wyn that looks to Brussels and beyond to forge links with ethnic groups such as the Kurds and the nomadic tribesmen and women of the Western Sahara.

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid*; p.158

<sup>59</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party, 1925-45*, p.107.



Whether old or new visions of internationalist nationalism are presented, however, there appears little doubt that Plaid Cymru has, from its inception, presented itself as a party that is not introspective, or geographically or ideationally restricted; fundamentally it has not fallen into the trap of aligning itself with narrow nationalist concerns. In conceptual terms, the leap has come from the traditional linking by Plaid Cymru of Welsh cultural and political interests with Celtic nationalism, where both shared similar apprehension, in ethno-linguistic terms, with regard to English cultural and socio-political expansionism, and the recent alignment by Plaid Cymru with peoples and organisations outside of the traditional confines of the British Isles and Brittany who are advancing the case for self-determination in cultures that seen as part of the developing world. The interesting aspect here, certainly as far as nationalism is concerned, is that these developing world nationalisms appear to have little in common, in structural or historical terms, with the Plaid Cymru experience as they have evolved in societies that have not experienced industrialisation or have not taken the intellectualist political route that has been followed by western societies since the Enlightenment. What Plaid Cymru has done by empathising with the Kurds and the people of the Western Sahara, therefore, is not just to recognise that national self-determination is part of a universal praxis but also, as Freeden noted, it is “to indicate a belief in the overriding validity of intuitions and to make assumptions about human similarity, even identity, with particular repercussions concerning political conduct and its conceptualization”<sup>60</sup>.

Consequently, it can be claimed that ‘self-determination’, be it on a national, ethnic, or communal basis, eclipses particularistic historical, structural and political

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<sup>60</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.33

traditions. It can even eclipse entire macro-ideologies. If certain leading members of Plaid Cymru, such as Eurig Wyn, Jill Evans and Dafydd Elis-Thomas, are associating themselves with these ideological developments that are occurring a great distance outside of Wales' borders, it could be advanced that this shows a maturity in Plaid Cymru's view of itself as a political organisation, its links with other bodies and campaigning groups throughout the world, and, especially, its contentment with its current ideological position. Therefore, internationalism, or 'internationalist nationalism', as Gwynfor Evans has labelled it, can, this thesis would agree, be justly described as being an embryonic aspect of Plaid Cymru's morphology.

### Plaid Cymru's *Weltanschauung*

The message emanating from the aforementioned elected representatives of the party, both past and present, is that Plaid Cymru has a *Weltanschauung* that is at the heart of the party's self-identification. This *Weltanschauung* reads that the geopolitical map is constituted chiefly through the interrelationships and interaction of political units administered chiefly on a national basis. This thesis would contend that Plaid Cymru would argue that, having reflected and evaluated the state of the world in its present constitution – and any political or cultural organisation seeking recognition and a degree of autonomy would undoubtedly concur – what is acknowledged to be the normal practice globally, namely varying degrees of self-government by people within their allotted geographical spaces, should be applicable to all who petition for it. This line of reasoning is evidenced in the party's 1968 Conference debate on 'National Freedom', during which, as party records show, delegates emphasised "the inalienable rights of nationhood"<sup>61</sup> before reaching an accord that concluded that

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<sup>61</sup> Plaid Cymru, Annual Conference, 1968, p.17

“national freedom is the condition of national survival”<sup>62</sup>. There is a sense in these instances, therefore, that if you are incapable of administering your own geographical-political space, or if you are prohibited from doing so by some repressive forces, then you are experiencing a sense of disembodiment from the standard geopolitical *modus vivendi*.

While this petitioning for national representation and national autonomy would appear to be a reasonable condition on which to proceed, what could be contended here, however, and it is a point of view that this thesis would uphold, is that this ‘world-view’ of Plaid Cymru’s is little more than an abstract universalism that lends itself to what amounts to an essentially conservative position wherein the nation-state is seen as being set in concrete; an immovable “natural political arrangement”<sup>63</sup>, as Freeden termed it. This, it could be argued, is a problem appertaining to all nationalist parties, and all nationalisms, as the reliance on the entity that is the nation appears to override all other concerns. Nevertheless, is it really plausible for regional, national, or even local fluctuations in composition to occur, and be taken on board, if the nation-state or the nation – in this case the Welsh nation – is being held out as the model for governance most suitable for, or most sought after by, the people of that geographical area. Thus, by arguing along these lines, it could be suggested that the nation is too rigid or too inflexible a component to attempt anything other than a parochial application of nationalism. In other words, it may be appropriate to conclude that internationalism causes more problems for the nationalist, and their nationalism, than it creates solutions.

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.173.

This method of calculation could lead the nationalist to refrain from seeking any approval for their ideological positioning in the outside world; hence, their time and effort may be better employed by being centred solely on ‘their nation’ and ‘their brand of nationalism’. Furthermore, if Plaid Cymru’s position is considered, it would appear somewhat at odds to be desirous of, as Elin Jones manifestly is, the concept of ‘freedom within the European Union’ at a moment in time when Wales is generally viewed as a regional component of the European Union rather than a national unit. Moreover, in the aforementioned instance, this identification may prove to be somewhat awkward due to the fact that, as Elin Jones herself has proclaimed, “I am always sceptical about too much talk of regionalisation because I don’t see Wales as a region”<sup>64</sup>.

### **Plaid Cymru and Self-Identification**

Descriptive labelling, be it done internally or externally, can prove problematic to parties espousing nationalist ideas. With this in mind, it is important to note how the ‘Wales is a region, Wales is a nation’ debate is one that has led to the impression that the Welsh political discourse about identity can be somewhat opaque. Arthur Aughey commented on how D.E. Owens, writing about Plaid Cymru in 1985, described “the division within nationalism not as romantic versus realist, but as regionalist versus nationalist”<sup>65</sup>. This thesis would contend that other ideologies and ideological concepts were dominating Plaid Cymru at the time that Owens made this observation and that nationalism during that period, in both thought and practice, was not to the fore in the party’s rhetoric. What appears clear, however, is that, as Owens remarked,

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<sup>64</sup> Elin Jones, Interview, 16.10.02

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Aughey, Nationalism, Devolution and the Challenge to the United Kingdom State, (London, Pluto Press, 2001) p.118

clarity of description, or the lack of it, can lead to difficulties when a political body is identified, rightly or wrongly, with a specific political ideology.

Adding to this debate on identification, some within Plaid Cymru, most notably Gwynfor Evans<sup>66</sup>, insist on calling Wales by its ancient Welsh-language title of ‘Cymru’; thus introducing another angle to the discussion about self-identity, national identity and nationhood. Richard Wyn Jones has commented on this aspect of evaluating national identity with his observation that the fact that the issue of nationhood – the “central narrative”<sup>67</sup>, as he puts it – is not discussed more openly within Welsh society as a whole, and in particular on the Welsh political scene, “reflects the complex and contested nature of national identity in Wales”<sup>68</sup>. However it is considered, this apparent shortage of discourse concerning identity and nationhood has to be problematic for Plaid Cymru. This is because any difficulty in inciting within Wales a debate on nationhood and identity – concepts, it could be argued, that any nationalist party would put to the fore – cannot be seen to be beneficial to Plaid Cymru’s advocacy of a distinctive Welsh identity and an autonomous Welsh political system.

The noticeable failure by Plaid Cymru activists to transmit their own strong sense of identities – observable in research by Jonathan Bradbury, which showed that 85% of Plaid Cymru candidates at the 2001 National Assembly election thought of themselves as having an exclusively Welsh identity<sup>69</sup> – may be explained in terms of either a communication breakdown or a strategic miscalculation. The communication

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<sup>66</sup> Gwynfor Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, p.9.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Wyn Jones, ‘*On Process, Events and Unintended Consequences: National Identity and the Politics of Welsh Devolution*’, in *Scottish Affairs*, no.37, autumn 2001, p.37

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*; p.40

breakdown factor may be evident if the message about identity and ‘self-identification’, exemplified by the aforementioned candidates, was not being thoroughly disseminated throughout Welsh society. While it is feasible to adopt a cynical viewpoint on this entire debate on identity and nationhood, and to place these views into a pot entitled, to borrow from Michael Billig, ‘banal nationalism’<sup>70</sup>, it is, nevertheless, an indictment of either a weak nationalist position held by Plaid Cymru or, alternatively, poor strategic party management, that these issues have not been forced onto the political agenda through a more pro-active political campaign.

When issues outside of the nationalist or self-determinist arena are considered, Plaid Cymru has to be careful in the sense that it is not seen as a circulator of an “illusory holism”<sup>71</sup>, as Freeden termed it. This implies that the peripheral concept or concepts – in this instance ‘internationalism’, ‘utopianism’, and the attainment of some form of democratic world government, possibly through a fortified United Nations – takes attention away from the core concepts. Adapting this into the scenario in which Plaid Cymru operate, an overabundance of internationalist or globalist ideology within the party would invariably weaken its appeal as a party of Wales; a party, that is, of a well-defined geographical space that contains its own distinctive sets of problems and issues. Nationalism, therefore, may have difficulties interacting with internationalism. These difficulties are further enhanced if, or when, a political or cultural dilemma arises that requires action to be taken that favours either the nationalist or the internationalist perspective. If Eurig Wyn, Jill Evans, and others within Plaid Cymru who use internationalist rhetoric were faced with this conundrum then their attachments to nationalism, and Plaid Cymru’s stated aim of ‘putting Wales

<sup>70</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London, Sage, 1995)

<sup>71</sup> Michael Freeden, ‘*Ideological Boundaries and Ideological Systems*’ in *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 8(1), 2003, p.7

first' would be sorely tested. In Freedenite terms, therefore, the 'illusory holism' could be their Achilles heel if, as Jill Evans has gone on record as stating<sup>72</sup>, the party regards itself as nationalist.

### **Plaid Cymru and 'Post-nationalism'**

The former leader of Plaid Cymru, Dafydd Elis-Thomas, moves the debate on nationalism within the party, and the positioning and understanding of nationalist ideology in a Welsh context, on a stage further. Elis-Thomas, responding to a question asked in an interview for this thesis, espoused the benefits of adopting a position he described as 'post-nationalism'. The question sought an answer from Elis-Thomas as to whether he considered Plaid Cymru to be a nationalist party and whether he regarded his own views as nationalistic. His reply was very much in the negative on both counts: "the party is post-nationalist and I am definitely post-nationalist"<sup>73</sup>. Attempting to elucidate his viewpoint, Elis-Thomas continued by stating that his definition of nationalism is, he freely admitted, rather limited. Rejecting what he called the "back to the nation-state"<sup>74</sup> model, he declared that he wants to see Plaid Cymru "working within the island of Britain with our sister nations, and within the EU, to develop the greatest possible autonomy for Wales"<sup>75</sup>. This rejection of the 'nation-state model' is telling as he believed that "you should have a national culture based on a reasonable politics of nationality but that is not the same thing as nationalism. I don't believe in this claim of the nation to historic national self-determination"<sup>76</sup>. This contradicts previous and, in many instances, current Plaid

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<sup>72</sup> Jill Evans, Interview, 18.05.02

<sup>73</sup> Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Interview, 12.11.02

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*

Cymru thinking on this matter as Elis-Thomas would appear to be questioning Plaid Cymru's original and, debatably, even its present *raison d'etre*.

On the subject of 'post-nationalism' Michael Ignatieff has commented that "post-nationalism, and its accompanying disdain for the nationalist emotions of others, may be the last refuge of the cosmopolitan"<sup>77</sup>. Furthermore, Ignatieff ridiculed the emotionalism that is a Freedenite core concept of nationalism and acts as a driver within nationalist ideology. For Freeden, emotionalism is imperative to the continuation of nationalist ideals. He has stated that "nationalism institutionalizes and legitimises emotion as a motive force of political, not just private, life"<sup>78</sup>. But if sentiment and emotionalism are removed from the equation, thus denying nationalism of one of its core components, according to Freeden, how can the post-nationalism advocated by Dafydd Elis-Thomas fit in to a nationalist ideological framework. Or is this a case of Elis-Thomas estimating that Plaid Cymru are not a political party rooted in nationalism; certainly, that is, not to the extent that they cannot change their ideological position to either embrace other ideological approaches, or to make the nationalism represented by the ideology of Plaid Cymru as thin as possible so that only 'the nation' remains as a core concept.

One question that can be asked of Elis-Thomas here is, 'Is he really arguing that there is no historical foundation to Plaid Cymru's nationalism?' He certainly sees the role of nationalism as personified by Plaid Cymru's ideology – if nationalism is what it really is – as being about "building confidence, building the nation, building the economy, building the body politic. That is what the practical politics of the national

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<sup>77</sup> Paul James, *Nation Formation*, p.196

<sup>78</sup> Freeden, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p.754



question is about”<sup>79</sup>. Pragmatism, for Elis-Thomas, is a vital ideological component and it is something he feels that Plaid Cymru needs to develop and express. What is of interest in this application is the contrast between this account of practical ideals and the heady romanticism so often evident in the pronouncements of Saunders Lewis and other members of Plaid Cymru during their ‘early’ stage.

Following on from his longing for Plaid Cymru to adopt a more pragmatic approach to politics in Wales and beyond, the reference to the European Union in Elis-Thomas’ view of Plaid Cymru’s position is outlined further when he described Plaid Cymru’s ideology as “green, left-of-centre European regionalist”<sup>80</sup>, adding calculatingly, “but you probably wouldn’t get that answer from all members”<sup>81</sup>. When considering Elis-Thomas’ ideology, and his depiction of the party’s ideology as a whole, it is worth recognising that Dafydd Elis-Thomas has been an identifiably left wing member of Plaid Cymru since the 1960’s; Laura McAllister talked of his “commitment to New Left ideas”<sup>82</sup>, while Richard Wyn Jones referred to him as “the *marxisant* Dafydd Elis”<sup>83</sup>. Moreover, his deviation from what would be regarded as traditionalist and nationalist issues reached its zenith during the late 1980’s when, as party president, he refused to condemn in-migration into rural Wales despite a vocal, and often bitter, campaign fronted by the nationalist poet R.S. Thomas that sought and gained support from some sections within Plaid Cymru. Dave Adamson, in *Class, Ideology, and the Nation*<sup>84</sup>, recognised this period as one of major sociological and ideological shifts within Wales as a whole, and within Plaid Cymru in particular. It

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*

<sup>82</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.169

<sup>83</sup> Richard Wyn Jones, ‘From Community Socialism to Quango Wales’, in *Planet*, 118, August / September, 1996, p.59

<sup>84</sup> Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation: A Theory of Welsh Nationalism*, p.136

would be fair for this thesis to conclude, therefore, that Elis-Thomas' ideological journey to a post-nationalist position undoubtedly fermented during this period.

### **Probing Elis-Thomas' 'Post-nationalist' concepts**

If Elis-Thomas' post-nationalist position is to be assessed using the Freedden model then the concepts that he sees making up this post-nationalist position need to be analysed. 'Regionalism', 'pragmatism', and 'green leftism' appear to be Elis-Thomas' core concepts. As has already been established, Freedden does not classify any of these concerns in his core concepts of nationalism. Nevertheless, there could well be room for these concepts under a 'post-nationalist' umbrella. Regionalism is certainly problematic to those who espouse nationalism. Elis-Thomas' view that Plaid Cymru "should drive towards European federalism"<sup>85</sup> may appear to match the approach of people like Jill Evans and Eurig Wyn, who wish to see the 'Wales in Europe' message built upon, but it remains an axiom that regionalism takes away from nationalism its notion of 'someone to oppose'. Adopting regionalism encourages an encircling of the nation – in this instance the Welsh nation and any demands for autonomy from within – and locating it in a broader context. That process would nullify further nationalist demands, as regionalism or, similarly in this context, federalism has to conduct itself within clear though restrictive guidelines. Hence, nationalists view talk of regionalism with suspicion as it can ultimately be perceived as a new form of theoretical or governmental straightjacket.

Political pragmatism, as mentioned previously, is important to Elis-Thomas.

Asked in interview whether he saw Plaid Cymru today basing their everyday practice

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<sup>85</sup> Elis-Thomas, Interview, 12.11.02

and overall ideology more on pragmatism than romanticism his reply was a clear-cut 'yes'. He also commented that Plaid Cymru's thought and practice had to be "based on the ability to govern"<sup>86</sup>. If Laura McAllister's analysis is to be believed, and this thesis would support McAllister on this matter, elements of this pragmatic approach have become evident over time. McAllister contended that "the 1990's saw Plaid far more concerned with electoral tactics and organisational matters than with wider political and ideological questions"<sup>87</sup>. In her opinion, "this tells us something of Plaid Cymru's emergence as a relatively mature political party"<sup>88</sup>. McAllister bases her judgment on a review of party rhetoric at the time. For example, Dafydd Wigley, party leader during the 1990's, claimed in 1995 that "we desperately need a dynamic non-doctrinaire progressive political party"<sup>89</sup>.

While, to a certain extent, pragmatism undoubtedly has its place in getting a party's message across, and in delivering political success, this thesis would contend that any significant retreat from a romanticist position, however fragile or peripheral that position may be, must inevitably weaken the nationalist standpoint. If this line of reasoning is applied to Plaid Cymru's case, any rejection of the romanticist position would inevitably further reduce the ideological line of transmission between the present and the past. Saunders Lewis' romanticism may seem dated to many but his 'appeal to the past' still resonates to a certain degree within the party. If Plaid Cymru wad to adopt a position whereupon some elements of the party's original social and political philosophy appeared to be outdated this thesis would argue that that may be interpreted by some traditionalists within the party being too radical a change for

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<sup>86</sup> *ibid*

<sup>87</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.183

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*

<sup>89</sup> Dafydd Wigley, *Plaid Cymru Annual Conference*. 1995

them to accept, as they may construe it as a departure from Plaid Cymru's formative aims and objectives. Therefore, 'Post-nationalism', if it does indeed include this appeal to pragmatism over romanticism, could be seen by some members within Plaid Cymru as being a perspective that is simply too progressive for the party to take on board.

If nationalism, in a westernised sense at least, is seen as a liberationist demand for a form of radical democracy, albeit within a defined geographical space, then 'green leftism' can be seen as an adjacent concept in that it compels the practitioner down the radical, society changing – both physically and psychologically – route. Elis-Thomas could therefore be justified in including 'green leftism' in his vision of a society positioned on a 'post-nationalist' ideology. Michael Freeden noted how, in comparison to other ideologies, green ideology is "more pluralist, decentralized, and 'democratic' or popular, but less intellectually coherent"<sup>90</sup>. What may attract a left-winger like Elis-Thomas to green thinking is the 'post-material' element contained within. Freeden has cited the German Greens – much admired by Elis-Thomas – and their "switch away from consumerism towards alternative conceptions of the quality of life"<sup>91</sup>. This, for Elis-Thomas, is the future ideological direction of European politics and it is a line that he would like to see Plaid Cymru adopt. As he remarked, "I'm looking forward to the next 'opening up of the green left'. I think the European left, and especially the regional based green left, are going places"<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.546

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*; p.547

<sup>92</sup> Elis-Thomas, *Interview*, 12.11.02

## **Elis-Thomas and Ideological ‘Free Floating’**

In his championing of ‘post-nationalism’ as the ideological option for Plaid Cymru in the years ahead, it could be argued that Elis-Thomas is playing the role of the free-floating intellectual within Plaid Cymru. This ‘free-floating’ theory was first advanced by Karl Mannheim and what it could mean in this instance is that Elis-Thomas is detaching himself from the party’s social and ideological history in order to “free-float among the different social and historical perspectives available in society”<sup>93</sup>. This may, however, lead to unpredictable and, arguably, inconsistent modes of thinking. This could actually be what he is attempting to engender within the party and to this extent, it is interesting to observe Richard Wyn Jones’ citing of Elis-Thomas’ “postmodern guise”<sup>94</sup>, through which, Wyn Jones maintains, he seeks to evoke “a powerful reaction in favour of democracy.... through celebrating and embracing inconsistency”<sup>95</sup>. Nevertheless, the dilemma that could arise for Elis-Thomas, and possibly for Plaid Cymru as a whole, is if a postmodernist stance becomes associated with the party’s policies and sense of identity. This is due to the fact that postmodernism negates reflection and argues instead for an eclectic dynamic to drive political action. This lack of reflection would eliminate any appeals to the past and any traditional values. What postmodernism would succeed in doing, therefore, is to erase any nationalistic, or even conservative, discourse from the party’s morphology. Hence, it would be fair to conclude that the postmodernist route – a route that is highly suspicious, and even contemptuous, of all forms of identity and particularistic claims – is one that Plaid Cymru would seek to avoid, as it almost certainly would lead to the undermining of the party’s *raison d’etre*.

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<sup>93</sup> Freedon, *Ideology*, p.15

<sup>94</sup> Richard Wyn Jones, *From Community Socialism to Quango Wales*, p.65

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*

Dafydd Elis-Thomas, however, is unabashed in his questioning of all of the foundations that many within the party hold dear. Pushing the introspection argument to what he presumes to be its logical end, Elis-Thomas, in a lecture given in 2000, asked, “What is Welsh identity? I am uncertain, though I know there are a lot of them. What is the Welsh experience? Again there are many of them, and they are still going on”<sup>96</sup>. Challenging homogeneity and the construction of a unitary identity, Elis-Thomas concluded by stating that “the idea that we need to try to reconstitute a variety of events and places into some kind of coherent whole seems to me itself to be a rather futile exercise.... Why should we try, or even desire or need, to fit ourselves into such superimposed structures?”<sup>97</sup>. Elis-Thomas’ counterbalance to this is a celebrating of “heterogeneity, diversity, and a localism which by letting go and letting be implies a non-dominant non-universalist globalism”<sup>98</sup>. However, this may appear to be a controversial proposal for some within Plaid Cymru to embrace. This is because Elis-Thomas’ views would seek to reduce the emphasis on the Freedenite core nationalist concept of ‘positive valorisation of the nation’ in order to encourage a looser conglomerate of ideas and values that are, by their very nature, geographically and ideationally dispersed.

Echoing some of these themes, Chris Williams has argued the case for what he terms a ‘post-national Wales’<sup>99</sup>. Using conceptual language that Elis-Thomas would almost certainly agree with, Williams has contended that upon reconfiguration, “this ‘post-nation’ would be a society that has discarded the notion of a homogeneous

<sup>96</sup> Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Wales – a New Constitution (St. David’s Day Lecture, Welsh Governance Centre, 2000)

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*

<sup>98</sup> *ibid*

<sup>99</sup> Chris Williams, ‘*A Post-National Wales*’, Inaugural lecture, University of Glamorgan, 14.10.2003

nation-state with singular forms of belonging, and that is instead inclusive and culturally diverse”<sup>100</sup>. Expecting a backlash against his thoughts, Elis-Thomas has asked “why should identity itself be seen as singular, when it can be much more comfortably felt as relaxed and plural?” The clear implications of Williams’, and Elis-Thomas’, craving for the end of homogeneity in Wales is that that homogeneity is a real and active presence. This thesis contends that this picture of uniformity is overplayed by some writers and empirical evidence, for instance Williams’ own submission that, according to the findings of the 2001 Census, 590,000 people living in Wales today were not born in Wales<sup>101</sup>, somewhat goes against this portrait of homogeneous hegemony.

It is also important to acknowledge that the issue of inclusivity through the re-classification of groups and individuals is something that every European society is currently battling with. Hence, Wales is not alone in its analysis of demographic change. Nevertheless, given the aforementioned, the theory of plurality could be one concept that Elis-Thomas may feel comfortable with. But is it realistic to assume that Plaid Cymru members place Elis-Thomas’ desire for the maturing of a plural identity – be it political, linguistic, ethnic, or whatever – as one of the reasons that people attach themselves to the party; a party, it is important to recall, whose outward appearance is still identifiable with a yearning to uphold the values and traditions of the decidedly non-plural concepts, in many of these members minds at least, of the ‘Welsh nation’, and ‘Welsh national identity’.

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid*

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*

Laura McAllister has also commented on Elis-Thomas' penchant for ideological 'free-floating'. Labelling Elis-Thomas a "chameleon"<sup>102</sup>, McAllister remarked that "from Marxist ideologue on the picket line to Peer in the House of Lords, there is no doubting Thomas's capacity for sizeable and significant shifts in political perspective and priorities"<sup>103</sup>. Notwithstanding McAllister's remarks, and taking the 'free-floater' analogy as a marker, this thesis would claim that it is fair to conclude that his adoption of 'regionalism', 'pragmatism', and 'green leftism' has enabled Elis-Thomas to cast his own ideology; an ideology that he has sought to implant into current Plaid Cymru thinking. Furthermore, it has also enabled him to label his view 'post-nationalist' as he seeks new directions away from the traditional thought patterns of many within the party. As to whether or not Plaid Cymru will follow the Elis-Thomas conception of 'post-nationalism', however, only time will tell. Nevertheless, there are some signs that influential people within the party are reassessing Plaid Cymru's role and its perception to the outside world. One of these is Lila Haines, the current Director of Plaid Cymru's Policy Unit. Haines, rejecting many of the old perceptions that the general public may hold of the party, has maintained that within Plaid Cymru "nationalism is being refined and how the party implements that nationalism is also being reformulated"<sup>104</sup>.

What members of Plaid Cymru have to address when they examine the party's, and their own, attachment to a form of nationalist ideology, is the 'proportionality'<sup>105</sup> aspect, as Freedden labelled it. This is a question of magnification. In other words, how much do, or should, Plaid Cymru emphasise the nationalist concepts to be found

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<sup>102</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.77

<sup>103</sup> *ibid*

<sup>104</sup> Lila Haines, Interview, 04.03.03

<sup>105</sup> Freedden, Ideology, p.64



within its ‘thought-practices’. If, for example, Plaid Cymru overemphasises ‘the positive valorisation of the nation’ as its core concept, then people will invariably question what else the party has to offer; in terms of social policies on health or education, for instance. They could also be contending with a rival party – a party such as *Forward Wales* possibly – who also stress the ‘positive valorisation of the nation’ at the heart of its political ideology. Alternatively, if the dissemination of a core concept becomes too fragmented, or reduced to an oversimplification, then the potency of that core concept is diluted; possibly to the point whereby it becomes a peripheral concept.

Proportionality, therefore, has to be addressed by Plaid Cymru, as indeed it has to be by all organisations or parties who possess a political ideology, and, even when core concepts are being accentuated, a median has to be arrived at. As Freedon observed, “political systems cannot function without the middle-range magnification that ideologies supply”<sup>106</sup>. For the elements of nationalism present within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ this ‘middle-range magnification’ is crucial. This is because, as has been highlighted earlier in this thesis, even some of Plaid Cymru’s elected representatives – its policy-making and opinion-forming elite – are liable at times to shy away from identification with many of the elements represented by nationalisms worldwide. Some, such as the party’s former leader, Dafydd Elis-Thomas, even refute the ideology of nationalism in its entirety. Hence, ‘post-nationalism’ must be regarded as just as viable, and given its middle-range magnification perhaps even more appealing to potential party supporters, than are the

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid*; p.65

core ideas that go to make up nationalist ideology. On this judgement, therefore, Elis-Thomas' more pragmatic route may actually be the way ahead for Plaid Cymru.

## **Socialism**

While nationalism is the ideology that mostly comes to mind whenever the name Plaid Cymru is mentioned, it is socialism that many within the party see as the basis for its political programme. As noted in the previous chapter, it was the Davieses, D.J and Noelle, who first introduced a level of profound socialist thinking, and a markedly socialist agenda, into the party's ideological arena. Phil Williams, commenting on D.J Davies' role as a prominent thinker on economic affairs within Plaid Cymru, remarked that "he had a very strong commitment to workers control and democracy and this has remained a constant theme in the party's policy"<sup>107</sup>. Similarly, Laura McAllister has commented on how socialism is "a current running through the development of Plaid Cymru. Its influence has ebbed and flowed, but from the party's beginnings, it has been a strong presence"<sup>108</sup>. Without returning in any depth to a discussion on the influence of the socialist-inclined Davieses on 'early' Plaid Cymru ideology, this thesis would contend that while it would be fair to conclude that McAllister is correct in her judgement that socialism has always been there or thereabouts within the 'thought-practices' of the party – for instance, a motion to the party's annual conference in 1938 criticised Plaid Cymru's "existing philosophy, recommending instead an economic and political system based upon socialist principles"<sup>109</sup> – it is only when an assessment of 'modern' Plaid Cymru is considered

<sup>107</sup> Phil Williams, *Interview*, 25.09.01

<sup>108</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.160

<sup>109</sup> Laura McAllister, 'The Perils of Community as a Construct for the Political Ideology of Welsh Nationalism', in *Government and Opposition*, vol.33, no.4, autumn 1988, p.512

that socialism becomes accepted as an ideology that most, if not all, of the party feel comfortable about endorsing.

Various interpretations of Plaid Cymru's 'socialism' have been forwarded over the years. In 1967, R.C. Collins, in a pamphlet entitled '*Workers Control in Wales*', remarked that "the Plaid programme appears to be socialist in the libertarian tradition, descending from Proudhon rather than Marx"<sup>110</sup>. The startling revelation here, if Collins is to be believed, is in the fact that Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was an anarchist who rallied against the state-centric policies of his day. If Proudhon's 'libertarian socialism' were to be transposed onto Plaid Cymru's political programme, arguably at any point in the party's history, the case that the party could then advance for the centring of the nation as a focus for socio-political and cultural power would be highly implausible. This is because, as Freeden has noted, libertarianism "obscures an ideology's foundational principles by reorganizing the core units of furniture"<sup>111</sup>. In the case of Plaid Cymru and Wales, one of those core units to be reorganised may well prove to be 'the nation' itself.

The one core unit, or concept, that Plaid Cymru could not do without is the politico-institutional core of 'the nation', and its corresponding corridors of power, for it is those that Plaid Cymru seeks to inhabit in order to achieve the party's primary policy objectives. Although some of these theoretical issues will be addressed in the ensuing chapter on concepts, it would appear at this juncture that R.C. Collins' argument that Plaid Cymru's political programme follows the 'libertarian socialist' line that has been extracted from Proudhon may well prove to be misguided. If,

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<sup>110</sup> R.C. Collins, *Workers Control in Wales*, (Plaid Cymru, Caernarfon) p.9

<sup>111</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.95

surprisingly, it does happen to turn out to be correct, then Plaid Cymru's thinking on the role and centrality of 'the nation' is either distorted – either that is in the party's mind or in the minds of those political commentators and theorists who write on these matters – or there would appear to be a serious conceptual imbalance in Plaid Cymru's ideology as, using information garnered through R.C. Collins and those aforementioned writers that have commented on the party's ideological construction, Plaid Cymru would concurrently propose both an enhancing of, and a deconstruction of, Wales' central state machinery. In this instance, if accurate, it would be fair to conclude that Plaid Cymru would be transcending hitherto recorded ideological models.

In a more contemporary setting, questioned as to whether Plaid Cymru is a socialist party, the former Chief Executive of Plaid Cymru, Karl Davies, argued that it is “far more complicated than that. The party's ideology could be said to be a mix of socialism and liberalism, although there has been a consistent thread of socialism since the 1940's”<sup>112</sup>. The use of this intersection with socialism and liberalism is noteworthy. In terms of radically altering a state's infrastructure through the implementation of social policies, something incidentally that Plaid Cymru have consistently proposed, Michael Freeden supplied a concrete example when he noted how the major changes in Britain in the past one hundred years or so have occurred under the ideological conditions that Karl Davies claims for the party. The birth and flowering of the welfare state was that major infrastructural change and, according to Freeden, “most of the ideologists of the welfare state were hybrid social-liberals”<sup>113</sup>. Nevertheless, where the difficulty lies for Plaid Cymru, if they do exhibit both

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<sup>112</sup> Karl Davies, *Interview*, 09.10.01

<sup>113</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.86

socialist and liberal tendencies, is whether the party view this socialist / liberal intersection as decontested; implying, therein, that members of the party are settled on their interpretations of what all of the ideological concepts that can be labelled socialist or liberal, and are in use by elements within the party, have clearly defined and understood meanings. This thesis would contend that the ideological debates, and the variations in individual thought and action within the party, as shown throughout this thesis, suggest that the concepts and ideologies within Plaid Cymru are far from decontested.

Alternatively, to quote Freeden, is it the case that Plaid Cymru is attempting to operate, and engage with people, on the “semantic parameters of political language, even when these parameters are rejected by some of the participants”<sup>114</sup>. If so, it is perfectly feasible that some or all of Plaid Cymru’s members could reject socialism, liberalism, or the conjunction of both, as Karl Davies would view it, and still remain members and supporters of the party. Therefore, in this instance and given these conditions, nationalism may be the ideology, albeit that it is a thin ideology that requires additional concepts from elsewhere on the ideological spectrum for it to be fully furnished and comprehensive, on which some non-socialist and non-liberal Plaid Cymru supporters could comfortably attach themselves.

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<sup>114</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies as Communal Resources*, p.413

## **Socialism and Nationalism: An Uneasy Mix**

Returning to Karl Davies' view of the party's ideology, it is interesting that he maintained that this 'thread of socialism', that he implied is extant, has been identifiable for some time by people outside of the party. In his view "from the 1960's onwards people have been attracted to Plaid Cymru not just because of our nationalist agenda"<sup>115</sup>. The 1960's appear to be a key decade for the intensification of socialist ideas within Plaid Cymru; as indeed the 1960's proved to be a fruitful period for socialist ideas throughout western liberal societies. With this in mind, this thesis would contend that there is possibly a case to be made here to claim that Plaid Cymru, rather than branching out into uncharted ideological territory with its espousal of a more socialistic programme, was merely reflecting, and pragmatically and vociferously embracing, the current political milieu. Possibly endorsing this line of argument, Charlotte Davies noted how one young man from Aberdare who joined Plaid Cymru during this era explained how he and his friends suspected that, on ideological grounds, Labour were "not a true socialist party... we chose nationalism as the best way to pursue socialist ideals"<sup>116</sup>. Supporting this statement, there were clearly signs of socialist activity within the party at this time, although these were not always elucidated. At the 1968 Annual Conference at Aberystwyth, the Ebbw Vale branch, in a motion that failed to get fully debated by the assembled delegates, complained about the lack of definite policy within the party. An amendment to this motion, proposed by West Monmouth *Rhanbarth* (District), added "and in particular to urge the party to publish and explain its socialist policies"<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid*

<sup>116</sup> Charlotte Davies, *Ethnic Nationalism in Wales*, p.207.

<sup>117</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Annual Conference*, 1968, p.55

This linking of socialism and nationalism requires a Freedenite analysis as the ease with which many people within Plaid Cymru skip, almost inadvertently, from the language of nationalism to the language of socialism would, to the casual observer, appear to show that the party is a 'socialist nationalist' or a 'nationalistic socialist' political organisation; despite the fact, as has already been established earlier in this chapter, that Dafydd Elis-Thomas has already introduced green ideology, and aspects of postmodernism, into the debate and Karl Davies has highlighted the liberal aspects of the party's thinking. That these labels – socialist and nationalist – are interchangeable and so easily banded about may prove that they are superficial in their ideological content and that they are ultimately shallow when put into application by Plaid Cymru's elected politicians (i.e. by the party's local councillors who do, or have, administered county councils such as Gwynedd and Caerphilly). It may also be evidenced that one, or both, of their components, socialism and nationalism, are ultimately incompatible with the overall ideology of the party; the description 'overall ideology' is used here as this thesis is contending that there is no one set, or customary, ideology at work within Plaid Cymru, rather there are plural 'ideologies'. Hence, it is the task of this thesis to identify and examine those very ideologies and their components to find the set, or sets, of ideas at work within the party's 'thought-practices'.

There is clearly some unease about the use of the term socialist within the party. The following insights from Karl Davies may offer some guidance on the reluctance of certain people within Plaid Cymru to admit to their inclination towards advancing socialist policies. This is because they perceive of Plaid Cymru as being in fierce competition with the Labour Party for the hearts and minds of the Welsh electorate;

this is down to the fact that it is the Labour Party who have traditionally been portrayed as being the flag bearers for socialism within Welsh politics. With this in mind, it is perhaps understandable to see why, when it came to policy formation and the writing of party literature, as Karl Davies has commented, “Dafydd Wigley was against including the word socialist, although Dafydd was far to the left of Labour on most things”<sup>118</sup>. This view of Wigley is backed up by Laura McAllister who contended that though Wigley “was concerned that Plaid attached too much importance to its socialist label.....his own nationalism was firmly ‘centre-left’”<sup>119</sup>. Similarly, Karl Davies recalled that “Gwynfor Evans said that he would not classify himself as a socialist because, to him, socialism would always be associated with the Labour Party”<sup>120</sup>.

Inclusion or exclusion of words in any given statement, or through some third party perception or interpretation of your political opinions, does not mean that you are, or are not, an advocate of a certain ideology. The litmus test comes with the policies and how they are ordered within your total political philosophy. Nevertheless, the fact that two former party leaders, Evans and Wigley, were reluctant to openly admit that some of their principles could be described as socialist means that either Evans and Wigley made a strategic decision not to enter the perceived ideological arena of the Labour Party, for fear of alienating some of their supporters or, perhaps, because Evans and Wigley did not see themselves, the policies they advocated, and the party’s ideological base as socialist. In an interview for this thesis, Wigley fell short of describing his opinions as socialist but, talking about the ideological climate in the 1980’s, he claimed that Plaid Cymru “were on a fairly far left part of the

<sup>118</sup> Karl Davies, Interview, 09.10.01

<sup>119</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.169

<sup>120</sup> Karl Davies, Interview, 09.10.01



political spectrum at that time. We still are. It is just that the whole pattern has moved. I find myself now regarded as a raging left-winger”<sup>121</sup>. As Wigley was regarded by many members and observers, certainly during the 1980’s, as being to the right of the party, it would appear to position the party, in its modern semblance, in a broadly leftist slot.

To see how far back this modern left-of-centre positioning actually goes – whether it is a constant, as McAllister believes it to be or whether it stems from a 1940’s realignment of the party ideology, as Karl Davies maintains – should enable a better understanding of how important socialism is within the party’s ‘thought-practices’ to emerge. If socialism does appear to have a salient role in the private and public language of the party, then the question can be proposed as to whether this implies that a kind of leftist nationalism has emerged as the foremost ideological strand within the party or whether, in actual fact, Plaid Cymru, despite all the indications towards nationalist thought, is, at the end of the day, a socialist political party.

### **Tracing the Socialist line**

It is prudent to remember when considering arguments over a political party’s ideational development that the purpose of any party’s existence is to attain power; be it through democratic or revolutionary methods. Plaid Cymru, as an avowedly democratic political party, need to convince enough people to vote for the party’s political programme through conveying a message to the electorate that they could ‘do the best for Wales’. Hence, as has been alluded to earlier in this thesis, there are

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<sup>121</sup> Dafydd Wigley, Interview, 25.02.02

cultural constraints for Plaid Cymru to adhere to when formulating its political manifestos and, more crucially, when working through the ideology of the party. With this in mind, it is clear to see why, as Hywel Davies has observed, one ‘early’ Plaid Cymru member, Dafydd Jenkins, who “believed that the Nationalist Party’s social philosophy was ‘essentially socialist’”<sup>122</sup>, argued that the party “should make a direct approach to Welsh socialists whom he believed might respond to the case for national self-determination”<sup>123</sup>. In a response from the party that appears to be cyclical, if the caution shown by Dafydd Wigley and Gwynfor Evans over the term ‘socialist’ are recalled, Dafydd Jenkins was “told that his description of the party as ‘essentially socialist’ was not correct”<sup>124</sup>. The line of denial appears, therefore, to parallel the ‘thread of socialism’ that Karl Davies maintains has been a continuum for the last six decades.

The denial of socialist ideology by the party leadership can be accounted for on two fronts. First, any acceptance that socialism is at work within Plaid Cymru could give the impression that the party are merely attempting to replicate the Labour Party in Wales; in other words Plaid Cymru are seen as a substitute political force if people become disillusioned with Labour. Alternatively, the denial of socialism as part of Plaid Cymru’s ideological fabric could be down to the belief that socialism is an extrinsic ideology that should have little appeal to the indigenous population. This point of view is much misguided if the Welsh socialist Robert Owen is brought into the frame, as indeed he and Aneurin Bevan were when, under the leadership of Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Plaid Cymru’s programme for the 1990’s *Wales in Europe: A Community of Communities* was launched in 1989. The document claimed that

<sup>122</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945* p.104

<sup>123</sup> *ibid*; p.105

<sup>124</sup> *ibid*.

“‘cymhortha’ represents a set of values deeply rooted in our history, where the young protect the old and the strong defend the weak. These are the values that Robert Owen taught the world under the label ‘socialism’”<sup>125</sup>.

Nevertheless, despite this statement of intent by Plaid Cymru in 1989, that thesis would maintain that it is fair to claim that from the time of Plaid Cymru’s formation – 1925 – up into the radical era of the 1960’s and, arguably, even up as far as the 1990’s, when the collapse of the ‘state socialism’ personified by the Soviet Union and its satellites finally put an end to the paranoia in some quarters about ‘the red menace’, there was a sense in society at large that the word socialism had many negative connotations. Dafydd Jenkins identified this type of paranoia as far back as 1938. Writing in Plaid Cymru’s journal, *Welsh Nationalist*, Jenkins claimed that “members of the party are far too ready to attack ‘socialism’, usually meaning by that either the English Labour Party, or the philosophy of Karl Marx”<sup>126</sup>.

This fear of misinterpretation appears to be a *leitmotif* when an analysis of Plaid Cymru is conducted. Even Karl Davies, at the heart of Plaid Cymru’s political machinery for many years, shies away from a deep investigation of what constitutes socialism within the party. Davies’ response when he hears the term socialism applied to Plaid Cymru is to immediately distance the party from the monolithic, old Eastern bloc representation of ‘socialism’. Citing ‘decentralist socialism’, which will be scrutinised in the ensuing chapter, and searching for new interpretations of socialist ideology within the party, Davies is adamant that he would argue against anybody

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<sup>125</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Wales in Europe: A Community of Communities*, 1989, p.3

<sup>126</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.105.

trying to attach the label of ‘state socialism’ onto Plaid Cymru. What he termed “1970’s socialism”<sup>127</sup> was, in his words, “meaningless”<sup>128</sup>.

In similar vein, Lila Haines, dismissing the imperious state socialism of the past, advocated Plaid Cymru encouraging “people-led socialism”<sup>129</sup>. However, if, to the eyes of the political analyst, ‘1970’s socialism’ equates with policies such as the state control of industry through nationalisation or the advancement of an equalitarian and comprehensive education system, then those are widely held, and widely accepted, socialist policies. Is it a case, therefore, that Karl Davies and others within Plaid Cymru who use the terminology of socialism, are merely paying lip service to the actual process of implementing socialism, and its corresponding aims, objectives and outcomes, or are they attempting to forge policies that may have peripheral attachments to socialism but, when considered in minutiae, have no real relationship with the Freedinite core concepts of socialism. To further evaluate some of these contentions, it is worth considering some of the political literature disseminated by Plaid Cymru. This thesis would contend that a good way to examine this literature would be through an analysis of the party’s manifestos. Hence, three election manifestos from the ‘modern’ era have been chosen to observe how the party use ideological language, overtly or covertly, consciously or subconsciously, in an attempt to persuade the Welsh electorate to embrace the party’s ideological position.

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<sup>127</sup> Karl Davies, Interview, 09.10.01

<sup>128</sup> ibid

<sup>129</sup> Lila Haines, Interview, 04.03.03

## **Plaid Cymru's Manifestos: Signs of Ideological Variations**

It should be stressed at this point in time that while it is not the task of this thesis to offer an exegesis of Plaid Cymru's policies on an individual basis, as the focus of the thesis is the ideological debate and the identification of ideologies within the party, a scan of party election manifestos from 1974, 1984, and 2001 could prove insightful as to the content presented, and the direction indicated, by the party in these years. It should be noted here that these manifestos were carefully chosen as they should prove indicative of Plaid Cymru's thinking during the past thirty years. They are also fairly evenly spaced thus allowing for evolutionary policy change to occur. Furthermore, it is notable that three party leaders are covered by these dates: Gwynfor Evans in 1974, Dafydd Wigley during his first term in office in 1984, and Ieuan Wyn Jones in 2001. As each party leader, of whatever political party, invariably leaves their marks on policy pronouncements, the entire gamut of personal and party direction under three 'modern' Plaid Cymru leaders should be in evidence. The exception to the post-war leaders under scrutiny is Dafydd Elis-Thomas, whose political philosophy has been covered in some depth and whose time in office could, this thesis would argue, be presented as a parenthesis due to the fact that he was the most openly and forthright user of socialist language among all of Plaid Cymru's leaders. As this section of the thesis is paying attention to socialist ideas within Plaid Cymru's thought-practices', particular attention will be given to searching for any socialist content within the three manifestos.

### **1974: Analysing Power for Wales**

First up, the 1974 manifesto was written at a time when the world, the capitalist western world in particular, was in the grips of a significant economic recession as the

OPEC oil crisis that began in 1973 was still sending out aftershocks. *Power for Wales*<sup>130</sup>, Plaid Cymru's election manifesto for the November 1974 General Election, the second that year, reflected the economic themes of the age. In terms of the document's content that could be labelled socialist, several left-of-centre themes emerge. Nationalisation, an idea associated with socialist thought and practice in Britain since the post-war settlement of the 1945 Labour Government, takes pride of place with a section to itself. The section begins with the statement that Plaid Cymru "has consistently advocated industrial democracy – co-ownership of firms in a Welsh framework – for more than 40 years"<sup>131</sup>. There is undoubtedly evidence that the party, or at least certain individuals within the party, had indeed proposed the concept of 'industrial democracy' for many years prior to 1974. Where the interesting aspect of the statement arises, however, is in locating where the concept of 'co-ownership of firms in a Welsh framework' would lead, and how it would be operated.

What Plaid Cymru's policy amounts to, in effect, is an attack on the post-war Labour Party. However, on closer inspection, it may be possible to ask whether this attack on Labour is really a criticism of their policies, remembering that their policies are habitually 'left-of-centre', or is it a condemnation on their position – geographically and psychologically – as a London-based party. If the policy aspect alone is examined, then the manifesto offers some explanation to this question in that it states that "Nationalisation, although changing the nominal ownership of industry, has increased rather than decreased the power of existing vested interests"<sup>132</sup>. So who, for Plaid Cymru, would these 'vested interests' be? While the party's long-held disdain for capitalism and the plutocracy is well documented, the real object of hate is

<sup>130</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Power for Wales*, November 1974

<sup>131</sup> *ibid*; p.5.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*

reserved for the final passage of the section. By advocating “the decentralist control of Welsh industry by Welsh people”<sup>133</sup>, Plaid Cymru show that one of the real ‘vested interests’ is the British state and its accepted hegemony, as Plaid Cymru see it, over Welsh political and economic matters. The ‘Welsh’ solution is thus offered by Plaid Cymru through ensuring that in future Welsh workers themselves “must have much more of a say in the running of industry, leading towards a system of co-ownership”<sup>134</sup>.

The concepts of co-operativism and decentralisation will be addressed in the following chapter. Nevertheless, it is fair to put on record at this juncture that both are concepts that may be found on the periphery of socialist ideology. To this extent, therefore, it would be feasible to contend that *Power for Wales* has socialism in its make-up. However, the emphasis on ‘industrial democracy’ is consistently referred to in the context of Wales and Wales alone. There is no internationalist perspective to this policy and the sense of socialist solidarity, even with workers just across the border in England, is conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, Welsh workers are given priority and, moreover, they are imbued with special qualities. In a section subtitled ‘*Working Class solidarity*’, the manifesto argued against the expansion of pan-European ‘uninterrupted links’ among members of the working class. This opposition comes about because Plaid Cymru claimed that it is a fact that “ordinary people have a bigger say in smaller communities”<sup>135</sup>. To substantiate this, and to add a particularistic element, *Power for Wales* contended that “as far as Wales is concerned we are more likely to achieve social justice here than anywhere else in Britain because

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<sup>133</sup> *ibid*

<sup>134</sup> *ibid*

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*, p.13

we are a united homogeneous society”<sup>136</sup>. In this statement there is a clear avenue of romanticism regarding Wales’ supposed solidarity and homogeneity. Likewise, there is evidence of Plaid Cymru favouring one community within the British Isles over another. What the manifesto also claimed was that if socialist enactment was undertaken in Wales, the eventual outcome would be that “Wales would shame England into promoting equality”<sup>137</sup>. This thesis contends, therefore, that there is little doubt, given this evidence, that this section of the 1974 manifesto still has nationalistic overtones. This is the case despite the fact that the social policy content of the manifesto does, in ideological terms, lean towards a socialist programme of intent.

As the above evidence attests, attacks on the notion of ‘the Other’ – England and the English in this instance – continue to pervade Plaid Cymru’s literature at this time. Countries such as Norway and France are praised, along with West Germany for its devolved system of *Lander*, while England, and the whole edifice of the British state system, are consistently disparaged. Profligate defence spending and the development of Concorde, a prestigious project at the time, are derided as being components parts of the “British Imperial myth”<sup>138</sup>. Nationalism is never far from the surface and this may be testament to several things. First of all, Plaid Cymru was still riding high on the election victory of Gwynfor Evans at Carmarthen in 1966; albeit that this was eight years on from that moment. Second, nationalism was on the rise in both Scotland and Wales at the time as the Scottish National Party championed the reality of Scotland’s oil boom; a boom the SNP believed would act as a catalyst that would persuade and inspire the Scottish people to demand the establishment of an

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<sup>136</sup> *ibid*

<sup>137</sup> *ibid*

<sup>138</sup> *ibid*; p.12



independent Scottish state. In Wales, language issues and the backlash against the investiture of Prince Charles at Caernarfon in 1969 had succeeded in introducing a new generation of radical activists into Plaid Cymru.

Third, and probably most important of all in the long term, Britain was coming to the end of its 'post-war consensus' and both the major parties – Labour and the Conservatives – were beginning to flirt with new, and more radical, ideological strands. This breakdown in the ideological accord – though overstressed by many political commentators – succeeded in creating 'windows of opportunity' that, when added to the economic crisis gripping the UK, gave heart to Plaid Cymru. Ultimately, this newfound confidence helped to convince the party that it would achieve electoral gains on the road to self-government. Hence, *Power for Wales* sees Plaid Cymru displaying a rhetorical force and a feeling of self-assurance that captures the mood and spirit of the times. It may be a fair assessment, in this instance, to contend that the November 1974 manifesto is a reaction to events that occurred around that time; as, it may well be argued, are all political manifestoes. A certain amount of political expediency is to be expected, therefore, and that is what is delivered in *Power for Wales*.

In an ideological sense, both socialist and nationalist ideological concepts are on offer within the body of the manifesto. What is missing, somewhat surprisingly, is the distinctive tone of the New Left, whose indisputable influence helped to shape a generation of young radicals in Wales and beyond. In *Power for Wales* socialism is evident, but Plaid Cymru's socialism is interwoven with the language of 'nation' and national virility. While other nations are praised in the manifesto there is no talk of

forging links. The document reads like a call for protectionism, both economic and cultural. Undeniably, after reading *Power for Wales*, there is little doubt that Gwynfor Evans' political philosophy still managed to cast its shadow over Plaid Cymru's policy development, and its 'thought-practices', almost three decades after he had first acquired the party presidency. The disdain for Imperialism echoes throughout the manifesto, as does Evans' belief that the Welsh are perpetually struggling to maintain their identity in light of the social, political, cultural and economic excesses perpetrated by their neighbours to the east. The battle for Wales' future is a significant part of this document and this thesis would conclude that its nationalistic underpinning comes across as being more significant than its socialist objectives.

A Freedinite assessment of the manifesto would show how nationalism in this context has been padded out by socialist peripheral concepts – such as 'industrial democracy' or 'workers co-operativism' – as nationalism alone would prove insufficient for a political party election manifesto in which social policies have to come to the fore. Nationalism proves itself, yet again, to be a thin ideology that requires its 'host-vessels' to broaden it. Would it be more apt, therefore, to read *Power for Wales* as a manifesto that is socialistic in its ideational context but one that nevertheless uses the language of nationalism as a veneer to differentiate it from other political manifestos? If this is so, then the work that nationalism does in this circumstance is to contextualise the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru and provide them with a signifier; namely 'Wales' or 'the nation'. The shallowness of this, however, is likely to prove a stumbling block whenever anybody, this thesis included, seeks to conduct an exegetical analysis of Plaid Cymru's ideology.

## **1984: Protectionism and a Conservative Approach**

Plaid Cymru's manifesto for the European Election in 1984, *A Voice for Wales in Europe*<sup>139</sup>, inevitably saw the party turning its attention to matters beyond the borders of Wales. As the notions of 'regionalism' and 'the region' were the fashionable language within European cultural, economic and political discourse at the time, it is not therefore surprising that this regionalist rhetoric is used within the manifesto. Nowhere is this more evident than in the juxtaposition of calls for regional identification, played upon by the party in what could be identified as nationalistic rather than purely regionalistic tones, and the linking of socio-economic concerns that the party wanted addressed. The document, therefore, has a certain feel of reluctance about it as it seeks to emphasise what Wales, especially an autonomous Wales, could gain from the European Economic Community, as it then was, rather than clarifying what role the Welsh contribution to Europe's political and economic development could take. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in a passage summed up by an attack on Thatcherite monetarist economics. In an appeal for the implementation of a degree of economic protectionism – a recurring theme, so it appears, within the economic discourse of Plaid Cymru – *A Voice for Wales in Europe* called for the abandonment of "the principle of uncontrolled movement of capital...so that protection can be given to disadvantaged areas"<sup>140</sup>.

Furthermore, this protectionism is emphasised by the party when the manifesto contended that "if Wales had full national status in the Community then our minister would be totally justified in using the veto to defend what remains of the Welsh steel

<sup>139</sup> Plaid Cymru, *A Voice for Wales in Europe*, 1984

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*; p.10

industry”<sup>141</sup>. In economic and also, arguably, in politically ideological terms, this is a conservative measure that would seemingly go against the notion of an adherence to any form of unified, common European practice. What can be gathered from this, this thesis would imply, is that the party were not really thinking of matters beyond Wales, and Welsh interests, in any pro-active or inclusive sense. Despite the ‘Welsh European’ element, noted by Laura McAllister<sup>142</sup>, and cited below, Plaid Cymru was still holding onto the concept of ‘the nation’ as a core ideological concept of the party; this narrowing of the arguments back to the focus on ‘the nation’ coming despite all of the rhetoric at the time about ‘regionalism’ and the responsibility that Wales, and the Welsh people, had to act as constructive and inclusive Europeans.

All in all, little is made of socialism in the 1984 manifesto. In terms of content and description, there is only modest use of socialist language. This thesis would proffer the argument that this possibly proves that socialism is a fluctuating fascination for the party rather than a constant ideological stance. The positioning of socialism as a core within the party could therefore be imprudent as it is played down at times within both the party’s structural history and within its ideological development. Writing in 1978, Charlotte Davies observed that while socialist pronouncements were becoming more prevalent within Plaid Cymru, “the more doctrinaire positions are moderated and made more acceptable to conservative members”<sup>143</sup>. Judging by *A Voice for Wales in Europe*, it would appear that by 1984, six years after Davies wrote those words, that the socialist tone had been modulated to such an extent that it is feasible to argue that *A Voice for Wales in Europe* has little, or no, overtly socialist content. This is very surprising as the party was radicalised

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<sup>141</sup> *ibid*; p.14

<sup>142</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.18

<sup>143</sup> Charlotte Davies, *Ethnic Nationalism in Wales*, p.217

during this period in which British politics was rapidly becoming more centralised under the stewardship of Margaret Thatcher; run, as it invariably was, by a politico-economic elite based in London. A period of sustained economic recession also focussed minds across the oppositional parties in Wales on protecting the Welsh economy and, in conjunction, safeguarding Wales' manufacturing and industrial communities. To these ends, it is noteworthy to recall that, in 1983, Plaid Cymru had financed the launch of a journal, *Radical Wales*, to instigate debate in relation to socialist and nationalist issues within Wales<sup>144</sup>. However, it would appear from reading *A Voice for Wales in Europe* that, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, little of the socialist message emanating from the pages of *Radical Wales* appeared to have registered in the minds of the party's policy-makers. Consequently, this thesis would contend that socialism was peripheral to Plaid Cymru's persona – its public persona at least – at the time.

With socialism seemingly put to one side, other ideological strands must have come to the fore. Whether it can be identified as political ideology, or more accurately, what is a conceptual or theoretical viewpoint, what 1984 did mark, as mentioned above, was the recognition of Plaid Cymru's position within the political arena as a party advocating the 'Welsh European' perspective. *A Voice for Wales in Europe* expresses this 'Welsh European' view in all its detail. What the 'Welsh European' angle argues is that the locus for power in the years ahead should be seen to be the Cardiff-Brussels axis. Efforts would be made to encourage links and partnerships on a Wales / Europe level with the knowledge, or hope, that Westminster

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<sup>144</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.78

would play an increasingly diminishing role in the everyday decision-making affecting Wales.

The problem for Plaid Cymru with this ‘Welsh European’ approach is that, in Freeddenite terms, the ideology of nationalism has to concentrate on the “exceptional worth of a nation”<sup>145</sup>. If Plaid Cymru was now contending a dual approach to governance, and, it must be added, a dual approach to loyalty and identity, through the ‘Welsh European’ system of thought and practice, then one of nationalism’s core concepts is being fundamentally challenged. Unless a major transference of allegiance occurred, and a radically different structural approach was adopted, then the ‘Welsh European’ option would seem an unlikely choice for Plaid Cymru to endorse. This is because any endorsement of this two-headed dual model would weaken ‘the nation’ and place that particular nationalism – in this case the nationalism claimed by some members of Plaid Cymru – in a precarious position. It could be concluded, therefore, that ideological bilateralism – be it in a governmental or in an emotional and devotional sense – is not a viable option for adherents of nationalism.

However, this thesis would agree that the ‘Welsh European’ angle sits far more comfortably with socialist ideology. Socialists, be they inside or outside of Plaid Cymru, could envisage the ‘Welsh European’ position as acceptable and mutually compatible as socialism’s belief in the vitality of communities, and the escalation of human contentment through fraternity, are recognisable on both the Welsh and European layers. Socialism, unlike nationalism, does not ask the individual to differentiate between these layers, as socialist ideology does not grace ‘the nation’,

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<sup>145</sup> Freedden, *Ideology*, p.98

and specifically the ‘positive valorisation’ of that nation, with any preferential treatment. Socialism, therefore, allows the channels to remain open so that multi-layering can take place. Nationalism, even when its adjacent concept of ‘internationalism’ is brought into the reckoning, still finds great difficulty operating fully at the supra- and sub-national levels, as its focus remains the core concept of ‘the nation’. Some of these difficulties will arise later in this thesis when the concept of decentralisation is offered for examination.

### **2001: A Comprehensive Ideological Position?**

The straightforwardly titled, *Manifesto 2001*<sup>146</sup>, was Plaid Cymru’s political manifesto for the 2001 UK General Election. The attack on the Conservative Party that featured in the 1984 manifesto reappears here in a substantial section entitled ‘The Tory Legacy’<sup>147</sup>. One of the major criticisms levelled at the Thatcherite revolution was its attack, as Plaid Cymru saw it, on the “essentials of a civilised society, such as people’s mutual dependence on their community and the welfare state”<sup>148</sup>. This mutualism was a growing theme in Plaid Cymru thinking that is reflected in the way that the party advocates ‘communityism’, ‘co-operativism’, and ‘decentralist socialism’; concepts that will be addressed in the following chapter. While it is arguable whether this mutualism places Plaid Cymru’s thought in the socialist camp, there is little doubt, this thesis would claim, that the party’s perpetual denigration of New Right principles proves categorically that Plaid Cymru eschew the *laissez-faire* capitalist individualism promoted by the likes of the former Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

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<sup>146</sup> Plaid Cymru, Manifesto 2001

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*; pp. 5-6

<sup>148</sup> *ibid*; p.6

By 2001 devolution had begun to firmly embed itself, in the Welsh political psyche at least, and the manifesto positioned devolution in the context of Wales' place in the British state system; in other words, its 'constitutional concerns' were put under the spotlight. Though the document appeals for parity with Scotland in legislative terms – at a time, incidentally, when the SNP were unequivocally championing 'independence'<sup>149</sup> – it displays the party's historical nationalist roots when it welcomes the setting up of the National Assembly for Wales citing it as "the first national governing body since Glyndwr's parliament"<sup>150</sup>.

While this championing of Wales in order to gain additional powers in a devolved setting was to be expected from Plaid Cymru, when the debate moves on to Wales' place in Europe the *2001 Manifesto* appears to muddy the waters. This is because the manifesto refers to Wales as a "nation-region"<sup>151</sup>. The downgrading of Wales, even in its application in a European context, by a party who were vigorously and vociferously presenting themselves by this time as Plaid Cymru – the Party of Wales seems mystifying. In the most telling passage of the manifesto, the reader is informed that "in discussing the future of Europe, it is crucial that nation-regions like Wales, Scotland, Euskadi and Catalunya will be able to play their part side-by-side with small states such as Ireland and the Scandinavian countries"<sup>152</sup>. Of the aforementioned countries and regions, Wales has by far the weakest form of legislative political power. Hence, it could be contended that Wales is the entity that is most likely of all those named to be considered, in the eyes of the casual observer, a region rather than a

<sup>149</sup> Marcus Hoppe, *Nationalist Parties and Europeanisation*, pp.13-16.

<sup>150</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Manifesto 2001*, p.9.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*; p.11

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*; p.11



nation. If ‘full-national status’ is a nationalist demand – indeed the securing of “*politico-institutional expression*”<sup>153</sup> for that particular nation is, after all, a Freedinite core concept of nationalism – then classifying Wales in this ‘nation-region’ paradigm could be counterproductive for Plaid Cymru. This is because it merely demotes Wales into a third category behind the confirmed nation-state (Denmark, for instance) and the aspiring, or impending, nation-state (such as Scotland). It also testifies that Wales is still no nearer reaching constitutional parity with the Republic of Ireland, the role model for generations of nationalists. Overall, therefore, this thesis would contend that it is fair to summarise this approach by stating that Plaid Cymru’s featuring of this passage on Wales’ seemingly unambitious constitutional objectives was not a bold statement of nationalist intent. If nationalism had been diluted over the course of the 1980’s and 1990’s, as the *2001 Manifesto* may well indicate, the question must be asked, therefore, as to whether a socialist or even, as Dafydd Elis-Thomas would propose, a ‘post-nationalist’ position had become implanted in the party by 2001.

While the term ‘socialism’ may be absent from *Manifesto 2001*, socialist themes are evident in the text of the document. To illustrate this, one of the key recommendations highlighted in the manifesto is the introduction of “a substantial increase in public spending to improve services and redistribute wealth”<sup>154</sup>. This line of, hopefully persuasive, reasoning can be found throughout socialist, and indeed other ideological, discourse. Hence, socialist rhetoric, in this context, is “addressing the critically aware in a society, and proffering ideas meant to convince rationally”<sup>155</sup>. Backing this up, a contemporary Plaid Cymru politician, the Assembly Member Rhodri Glyn Thomas, arguing in favour of the societal pooling of resources, has

<sup>153</sup> Freedden, *Is Nationalism A Distinct Ideology*, p.752

<sup>154</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Manifesto 2001*, p.20

<sup>155</sup> Freedden, *Ideology*, p.69

contended that Plaid Cymru “is the only party that now believes in the redistribution of wealth. We are the only party that believes that you should contribute what you can afford to society and people should get what they need out of society”<sup>156</sup>.

Though not in any way involved in the policy-making process within the party, it is nevertheless interesting to note the views of Richard Williams, a former Plaid Cymru councillor and the party’s Assembly candidate for the constituency of Blaenau Gwent in 1999. Williams is another party activist who persistently uses the language of socialism and has argued passionately for massive investment in public services to be financed through progressive taxation. In public meetings throughout Wales, Williams has cogently argued against any form of privatisation and in favour of free meals for all schoolchildren in Wales. Concurrently, he has consistently referred to Plaid Cymru’s socialist principles “that are at the heart of our socialist programme”<sup>157</sup>. Williams’ rationale for this propagation and application of socialism within Wales is to re-invigorate and ultimately, as he sees it, to ‘save’ Welsh communities. Explaining the need for this process of re-invigoration through a flow of resources, Williams has contended that “the capitalist system keeps money for itself, socialists re-invest”<sup>158</sup>.

Williams’ language echoes the words of many grassroots ‘Old Labour’ supporters in Wales and, though mentioned briefly at the beginning of the thesis, it may be significant to comment at this point on the similarities between the ideological positions adopting by many activists in both political parties. Common cause can be found on issues of welfare, social justice and redistribution throughout society; in

<sup>156</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Interview, 14.05.01

<sup>157</sup> Richard Williams, Hustings Meeting, 26.10.02

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*

other words on traditional socialist grounds. Problems arise, not surprisingly, when concepts such as ‘political autonomy’ or ‘patriotism’ enter the political arena. The issues of Welsh language and culture can also engender much debate as the Labour Party line on matters of identification is less particularistic, as identification on a British level, and sometimes on a broader internationalist level, tends to be fairly settled within Labour Party discourse. Therefore, should both parties ever seek some form of consensus or compromise, ideological concepts that are more identifiably nationalistic than socialist in their content would be, somewhat predictably, less likely to appeal to the common ground.

Returning to the manifestos, it can be observed that, though arguably less philosophically dynamic than a commitment to the redistribution of wealth, it is nevertheless the case that another socialist staple, nationalisation – a centralising concept, as noted in the section on the party’s 1974 manifesto – is also featured in *Manifesto 2001*, as the document pleaded for the return of Railtrack from private to public hands. Responsibility for the railways in Wales, the manifesto argued, should be placed in the hands of the National Assembly<sup>159</sup>. It could also be asserted that socialism featured in *Manifesto 2001* in the section entitled ‘*One World*’<sup>160</sup>. Recalling the core socialist concept, as enunciated by Michael Freeden, of “human welfare as a desirable objective”<sup>161</sup>, Plaid Cymru stated that, “The Party of Wales is totally committed to the principle of world citizenship”<sup>162</sup>. Furthermore, the manifesto

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<sup>159</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Manifesto 2001*, p.18

<sup>160</sup> *ibid*; p.34

<sup>161</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.425

<sup>162</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Manifesto, 2001*, p.35

contended that, using this principle, “the eradication of poverty must be at the heart of all international policy”<sup>163</sup>.

If a Freedenite analysis is brought in at this point, his contention that socialism “cherishes an ideal of human welfare or flourishing based in the short run on the elimination of poverty”<sup>164</sup> would appear to match up with Plaid Cymru’s objectives in the ‘*One World*’ section of *Manifesto 2001*. The language of equality, another of Freeden’s core concepts of socialism, is also featured. In an attempt to foster social justice and to create what Plaid Cymru term ‘a fairer world’, there is a need, the manifesto claims, for equality “between individuals, communities, countries and also generations”<sup>165</sup>. From a reading of *Manifesto 2001*, a global redistribution of wealth, resources and educational material – a demand incidentally that is replicated by environmentalists and Green parties world-wide – would appear to be Plaid Cymru’s solution to the problem of global inequalities.

### **The ‘Depth’ of Socialism within Plaid Cymru**

While it has been established that the term socialism certainly materialises at frequent intervals within Plaid Cymru’s literature and rhetoric, a question that this thesis must take into account is whether there is sufficient evidence offered to account for any claims that there is a genuine, and cogent, socialist project at work. Consideration must be given as to whether the party’s apparent lack of a distinctive and unified political ideology – namely one of the normally identifiable macro-ideologies – allow some within the party, like Kate Roberts and D.J and Noelle

<sup>163</sup> *ibid*, p.35

<sup>164</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, pp.83-4

<sup>165</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Manifesto 2001*, p.35

Davies in the early days and, more recently people like Jill Evans, Syd Morgan and Dafydd Elis-Thomas, to use the party as a vehicle for forwarding socialist ideas. One thing that has to be calculated when an analysis of Plaid Cymru is undertaken is whether all of this talk of socialism within the party is a tacit recognition that the party requires a more comprehensive political agenda; hence, it may be a plea made by some individuals that Plaid Cymru must have a *full* ideology, in the Freedenite sense, for it to be seen as a creditable political party. Furthermore, the acknowledgment that socialism itself is an ideology, as opposed to merely being a core concept of an ideology, must come into this debate. Thus, if Plaid Cymru claims to be a socialist party, or at least some members of Plaid Cymru claim that they are members of a party that espouses, practically and theoretically, a set of socialist principles, then why is it, and why are they, selective, rather than comprehensive, in its, and their, adoption of socialist ideology? This thesis would argue that this is clearly a stumbling block for those within the party, and indeed those observers outside of the party, who seek to identify Plaid Cymru, be it in a positive or a negative light, as a socialist party.

### **Freeden, Socialism and the 'decontested' nation**

Having sought to identify ideologies and ideological strands within three of Plaid Cymru's manifestos, and having traced nationalism and socialism in the 'thought-practices' of 'modern' Plaid Cymru the thesis will now examine, using Freeden's model, some of the differences between these two ideologies that have reared up within Plaid Cymru's literature and pronouncements. The issue of 'decontestation' also requires some explanation at this juncture.

Michael Freeden has remarked that “all socialisms assert the equality of human beings”<sup>166</sup>. If this is so, then the ideology of Plaid Cymru, if it has socialist concepts, should equate with this tenet of socialism that promotes equality. Nationalism can be presented as an ideology that seeks to divide rather than unite groups of people due to its promotion of one set of people – be they ethnically, linguistically, or geographically located or generated – over what is generically termed ‘the Other’. Socialism, on the other hand, is designed to rise above, or at least put to one side, ethnic or national concerns, as they are not core concepts of socialism; indeed the only group concerns that socialism advocates is the removal of the inequalities attached to class divisions within society in an idealistic attempt to promote social and, it is important to remember, racial harmony. So, although there would be some losers under socialism – though strange bedfellows, the affluent and the racist appear the most obvious examples – socialism is designed to encourage social inclusion over social exclusion.

Nationalism, it could be argued, has to have a degree of social, cultural, political or economic exclusion, or a mix of these facets, if it is to champion one particular cause or set of grievances; built as they invariably are on either a national or ethnic basis. To give an example of what this entails, it is plausible to contend that socialists would encourage the redistribution of wealth above, for instance, their providing any support for the Freedenite core nationalist concept of the ‘positive valorisation of the nation’. Where there is difficulty for Plaid Cymru in rationalising some of these beliefs, knowing that many within the party still adhere to the description of themselves as nationalists who valorise the concept of the Welsh nation, is in trying to

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<sup>166</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.430

examine whether the decontesting of the nation, using Freeden's model, places the views of the party into a position wherein socialist concepts, core or peripheral, are totally incompatible. This thesis would maintain that there is clearly a problem here for Plaid Cymru, as the party, if held under this close scrutiny, has to identify its ideological standpoint in a far clearer and more decisive manner than previously exhibited.

Decontesting can prove problematic for political parties as it requires that they address concepts and arrive at settled interpretations. On the other hand, it can also prove informative for those going through the decontesting process. To show how decontesting the subject can offer two varying conclusions it is worth noting the following example. As Freeden has recorded, the concept of the nation could be decontested as "one of many identity-constituting groups"<sup>167</sup> that could be surrounded by the adjacent concept of "citizenship (decontested as the recognition of individual membership as a complex of duties and rights)"<sup>168</sup>. To this Freeden adds his view that there could be the perimeter practice of "the accessibility and development of shared cultural artefacts"<sup>169</sup>. Into this potentially open and pluralistic version of nationalism, socialist practice could feasibly find an entry. Alternatively, however, Freeden also offers an account that would make that entry nigh on impossible. According to Freeden, the other ideological position under consideration "could decontest the nation as inherently superior to its members...with the adjacent concept of community (decontested as a homogeneous ascriptive group whose membership features are involuntary and natural)...we could then add the perimeter practice

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<sup>167</sup> Freeden, *Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology*, p. 755

<sup>168</sup> *ibid*

<sup>169</sup> *ibid*

of...the development of rituals in which emotional ties are given priority over other bonds”<sup>170</sup>.

This interpretation is vastly different as, even before the concepts can be individually assessed, its very tone eschews openness and plurality. The operation of socialism within this political climate would prove problematic. The coming together of the categorically nationalistic values put out by Freeden’s latter description and any form of socialist ideology would appear to be unimaginable, as it seems unlikely that there could be any natural alliances or synthesis between the core or peripheral concepts. Therefore, this thesis would conclude, the prime theoretical challenge for Plaid Cymru, because its followers claim the party’s ideology has both nationalist and socialist morphologies, is not only in identifying one specific ideology that the party can claim as its ‘core system of beliefs’, but also facing up to the fact that the party may encounter considerable difficulties in trying to fuse these two ideologies into a practicable and lucid ideological standpoint; taking on board the assumption that these two ideologies would appear to offer varying teleologies.

## **Liberalism**

The third ideology that requires assessment in this chapter is liberalism. Notions of freedom – be they centred on an individual, a national, or an international basis – are all visible within Plaid Cymru’s literature and rhetoric. While freedom, characterized by one of Freeden’s core concepts of liberalism as “an insistence on *liberty* of thought and, within some limits, action”<sup>171</sup>, is an often used expression within the language of the party, it is Plaid Cymru’s adaptation of the expression

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<sup>170</sup> *ibid*

<sup>171</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.81



‘freedom’, and its application in terms of Wales’ structures of government and national identity, that requires examination. Furthermore, another of Freedom’s stated core concepts of liberalism entails what he conveys as “an appeal to the *general interest* rather than to particular loyalties”<sup>172</sup>. Before any detailed evaluation takes place, it is realistic to assume that this could prove problematic to a party pushing a ‘national’ agenda, as, in those circumstances, that party would appear to be duty bound to promote particularistic, as opposed to ‘general’, concerns. This could well prove to be the case with Plaid Cymru and this could, therefore, seriously attenuate any claims the party may have to be adherents of liberal ideology.

In relation to ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru, Laura McAllister has observed how, post-1945, Gwynfor Evans led the way in expressing liberal values. The phrase McAllister used in relation to Evans’ reasoning on this matter, “individual fulfilment”<sup>173</sup>, has obvious connotations with liberty and the maximisation of one’s own abilities in an unfettered society. This thesis would contend, however, that there are difficulties in the way that Evans’ thinking has evolved, as reflected by McAllister. The caveat in McAllister’s wording comes about when she reports that Gwynfor Evans would like to see this ‘individual fulfilment’ being “conditional upon the establishment of full nationhood”<sup>174</sup>. The implications of this interpretation by McAllister are that, given Evans’ insistence on the attainment of ‘full nationhood’, any form of ‘individual fulfilment’ or any expression of human liberty is lacking in its totality unless Plaid Cymru’s objective of political autonomy has been realised. Consequently, it could be argued that what is presented here is a case of Gwynfor Evans and the party seeking to put an obstacle in the way of people in Wales who wish to attain individual

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid*

<sup>173</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.65

<sup>174</sup> *ibid*

flourishing but who are not necessarily attracted to the notion that societal flourishing – seen by Plaid Cymru as only achievable through the implementation of self-government and a strong sense of national awareness – is a prerequisite. Plaid Cymru, therefore, could be presented as a party that was placing a nationalistic constraint in the way of liberal enactment.

In addition, it is worth noting in this context how Gwynfor Evans prefers the term ‘national freedom’ when expounding on matters of liberty; the prefix ‘national’ being an essential part of Evans’ outlook. To illustrate this, it is perceptible that in his coda to *Fighting for Wales*, Evans saw communal and not individual action as the only way to progress. To these ends he stated that, “national freedom is the condition of Welsh national survival. If we don’t put an end to our servitude, our servitude will put an end to us”<sup>175</sup>. Taking this line of argument forward, and relating it to Plaid Cymru’s stated aims and intentions, it is evident that any form of individual flourishing, and freedom of action and expression, would invariably weaken the attachment between the individual and his / her reliance on the abstract notions of community or nation. For someone striving for the liberal objective of unfettered living, allegiance to one of these abstract notions could be portrayed as a denial of individualism and a relapse into life under hegemonic control; merely a case, in the eyes of a liberal, of the suppression under ‘English’ rule being replaced by suppression under ‘Welsh’ rule.

So the nationalistic intentions of Plaid Cymru are seemingly at odds with liberalism’s advancing of the individual’s right to flourish in a society with minimal constriction. Likewise, those advocating liberalism would object to the placing of ‘the

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<sup>175</sup> Gwynfor Evans, *Fighting for Wales*, p.221

nation', rather than the individual, at the centre of human existence and identification. Similarly, commenting on liberalism and liberal values within the party, Dafydd Trystan has observed that Plaid Cymru has to strike a balance in its views, and in the presentation of those views, that lies somewhere "between individualism and communitarianism"<sup>176</sup>. Therefore, taking all of these points together, problems clearly exist if Plaid Cymru, as Karl Davies has already claimed, is attempting to conceptualise itself as a party that incorporates liberalism into its overall political ideology.

If liberalism was conspicuous in only a few isolated instances within the party then there may be a case to dismiss it as a fringe ideology or as the personal flirtations of a few members. However, it is not only Gwynfor Evans and Karl Davies who use the language of liberalism within Plaid Cymru. Most notable, from a collective point of view, was the composite motion presented by the Rhanbarths of Bedwellty and Neath – two heavily industrialised districts, it is interesting to note – to Plaid Cymru's Annual Conference at Aberystwyth in 1970. Praising the continuation of *perchentyaeth* (home ownership) as an integral principle and component of the party's agenda, the motion claimed that this liberal approach to the right to individual possession equates with "the whole idea of man and society from which Plaid Cymru's political aims derive; and recognised by Conference resolutions in 1932, 1938, 1943, 1945, 1949, and 1959"<sup>177</sup>. Furthermore, in language that could have been borrowed from liberationist thought, the motion added that "we reaffirm our rejection of all systems, whether capitalistic or socialistic, which erode the rights of the individual, and we look forward to the establishment in Wales of a social, political

<sup>176</sup> Dafydd Trystan, Interview, 08.03.03

<sup>177</sup> Plaid Cymru, Annual Conference, 1970, p.23

and economic democracy which will liberate the individual from economic exploitation whilst strengthening his freedom and dignity”<sup>178</sup>.

“Moving from group allegiances to individual opinions, it is evident that Eurig Wyn is one of several prominent members to incorporate liberal concepts into their own worldviews. Wyn, jumping effortlessly from one ideological description to another in his depiction of the party’s political perspectives, introduced a liberal element when, in an interview for this thesis, he remarked how Plaid Cymru “are a nationalist party and also a socialist party. Look at the party’s commitment to human rights as an example”<sup>179</sup>. Leaving aside the claims, that have been previously revealed, that Plaid Cymru embraces both nationalist and socialist ideologies, Wyn’s estimation that a commitment to human rights is a trait of both nationalism and socialism and hence, correspondingly, this commitment can be registered as an attribute of Plaid Cymru’s political approach, requires scrutiny. In historical terms alone, given that the ‘human rights issue’ does not feature regularly in Plaid Cymru’s pronouncements – though a subsection entitled ‘*Human Rights and Equality*’ with its demand for “a comprehensive review of all equality legislation and... a civilised attitude towards refugees”<sup>180</sup> did feature in *Manifesto 2001* – this thesis would argue that it may be fair to conclude that the ‘human rights issue’, as emphasised by Eurig Wyn, is a synchronic concept within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’. The synchronic argument could be said to be a diachronic feature if Plaid Cymru’s internationalism, with its concern for the attainment of self-government by liberationist groups worldwide, is taken into account. However, this line of reasoning could be countered if the argument is elaborated to explain how the traditional

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid*

<sup>179</sup> Eurig Wyn, *Interview*, 22.10.02

<sup>180</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Manifesto 2001*, p.29

concerns within Plaid Cymru have been with the self-development and political expression of communities and national groups as opposed to the specific issue of the welfare of individuals. Again, this thesis would contend that it would appear to be the case that within Plaid Cymru what can be accurately ascribed nationalist ideology, or certainly collectivist ideology, has taken precedence over liberal ideology. Regardless of this, the language of liberalism, and interpretations of the liberal concepts themselves, are scattered throughout the party's pronouncements; although the construal of these concepts of liberal ideology by members of Plaid Cymru may differ somewhat from accepted usage.

While human rights can be dealt with, in philosophical terms at least, through the spreading of respect for individuality by individuals themselves acting in an individual capacity, it is when it comes to supporting the concept of a nation-state, being as it is a structure of government that has to deal with other structures of government around the world, that problems of interpretation and operation can arise. As noted throughout this thesis, Plaid Cymru supports the implementation of a distinctively 'Welsh' structure of government. If human rights issues (i.e. concerns over racial or sexual discrimination) are to be addressed within Wales – Wales being the immediate politico-geographical unit that Plaid Cymru seek to operate within – then the issue of perfectionism has to enter the arena. As Freeden has noted, perfectionism indicates “the active intervention of political authorities in creating conditions that permit citizens to lead valuable lives”<sup>181</sup>. The direction in which a society turns can therefore be manipulated by the ideology of the ruling political and judicial elite. Unless Eurig Wyn and Plaid Cymru wish to keep their concerns for

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<sup>181</sup> Michael Freeden, *Understanding Liberalism: Between Ideology and Philosophy*, (Manchester, PSA Conference, April 2001), p.21

human rights on a purely theoretical basis, then, logically, a model of perfectionism, entailing as it does some form of governmental diktat, has to follow. If Plaid Cymru was to enact this perfectionism in law, then “constrained power”<sup>182</sup>, another core concept of liberalism, as Freedden perceived it, would be stretched. Plaid Cymru’s championing of ‘the nation’, with its subsequent national characteristics in regard to governance and power structures, would appear to be incompatible with some of liberalism’s core concepts; if not completely then it may be fair to say that there would be difficulties in interpretation and application. All of this, this thesis maintains, would appear to militate against liberalism comprising a substantial component of Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’.

### **A Coalition with the Liberals: Ideology or Practicality?**

Putting aside some of the conceptual arguments for one moment, and addressing the issue in purely concrete party political terms, some congruency between Plaid Cymru and political liberalism may be evident in Phil Williams’ explanation of the attempted establishing of links between Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Party in 1969. In that year, Williams, a leading member along with Dafydd Wigley of the Policy and Research Group that had been established in 1966, wrote to the Liberal Party magazine, *New Outlook*, claiming that “there is a very substantial degree of agreement between the Liberal Party and the Nationalist Parties”<sup>183</sup>. In an interview conducted for this thesis, Williams admitted that some prominent Plaid Cymru members, himself included, did indeed conduct clandestine meetings at that period in time with Emlyn Hooson and others within the Welsh Liberal Party. Williams’ justification for these encounters hinged on the Plaid Cymru hierarchy’s belief that the two parties were

<sup>182</sup> *ibid*; p.23

<sup>183</sup> Liberal Party, *New Outlook*, Spring 1969, p.7

“both committed to a very high degree of self-government for Wales and were also in fair agreement over quite a range of policies”<sup>184</sup>.

In terms of policy, with regard to constitutional matters, what the Liberal Party had proposed at that point in time was a federal system of government for the United Kingdom. Phil Williams remarked that “although this was short of what we would have wished, in terms of the day to day running of Wales, and tackling the problems of Wales, it would have been a massive step forward”<sup>185</sup>. Interestingly, according to Williams, the talks were discontinued not because Plaid Cymru saw no merit in progressing with them but because of internal disputes among the Liberals. As Williams commented about the Liberal Party, and subsequently the Liberal Democrats, “the leadership often have policies which I feel very close to...the actual voters for the Liberal Democrats are very different”<sup>186</sup>.

While Williams’ views about the internal friction within Liberal politics could be challenged at length, of particular interest to this thesis is the apparent aligning and similarity, as Williams and the Policy and Research Group saw it, between Plaid Cymru and Liberal Party policies and ideology. Although lack of space, and the nature of this thesis, does not allow for a comprehensive assessment of the rationale of both parties during this period of time, it is worth noting that devolution, or the attainment of some degree of self-government, appears to be the sole policy that Williams highlights. Moreover, the administering of some semblance of political autonomy is probably the one area of policy, embryonic as it undoubtedly would have been in its nature, that both Liberal and Plaid Cymru members, if there were to have

<sup>184</sup> Phil Williams, *Interview*, 25.09.01

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*

been a coalition of the 'third parties' in Wales, could have reached a general consensus upon. If an agreement would have been struck during the era under consideration, then any subsequent differences in ideological direction or interpretation may well have come about if the definitive focal point for identification and attachment – the Wales versus Britain. or Cardiff versus London, conundrum – had to be resolved.

On the above point, Charlotte Davies' views on the historical differences between Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Party are worthy of consideration. Writing about the period of Plaid Cymru's incarnation in the 1920's, Davies commented on how Plaid Cymru "projected a very different nationalist image: instead of the former Liberal nationalists' eagerness to secure a place for Welsh culture within the British imperial tradition, the new party sought positive valuation for a separate Welsh cultural tradition, to be supported by Welsh political institutions"<sup>187</sup>. So a British-centric politics, represented by the Liberals, would have to be estimated against a Welsh-centric politics, as favoured by Plaid Cymru. However, as the coalition under discussion in the 1960's did not emerge, then this predicament did not have to be overcome.

Nevertheless, this contemplating of liberal values by some within Plaid Cymru – values that were generally, though not exclusively, represented in their political form in the era under discussion by the Liberal Party – appears somewhat out of kilter with the other ideological roads that the party was heading down in the late 1960's. While R.C. Collins' 1967 view of Plaid Cymru's ideology as 'libertarian socialist' has

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<sup>187</sup> Charlotte Davies, Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century, p.83



already been addressed, Phil Williams also remarked on the party's evolving ideology in this period. Commenting on two by-elections that Plaid Cymru narrowly failed to gain, Rhondda West in 1967 and his own at Caerphilly in 1968, Williams put the party's encouraging showing in the Rhondda down to a large protest vote against the sitting Labour Government. However, as Williams was to claim, "by 1968 we'd got a lot further in developing our economic strategies and the 1968 by-election had far more emphasis on Wales as a self-governing country"<sup>188</sup>. While it is true that the Liberal Party also shared the vision of a more autonomous Welsh political system, the more overtly nationalistic message that Plaid Cymru was disseminating throughout the Caerphilly by-election campaign, as indeed the party was throughout the latter years of the 1960's and the early 1970's, cannot go unregistered. On this point, therefore, this thesis would assert that this more overtly nationalistic message cannot just be put down to the level of political expediency expected of a political party in an attempt to achieve instant electoral success. It should also be juxtaposed to some extent with the ascendancy of Scottish nationalism in the guise of the SNP. It could be contended, therefore, that a fresh impetus for the absorption of nationalist ideas had come about in both Wales and Scotland in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

### **The Concept of Liberty: Individual or Collective?**

Assessing all of these aforementioned conceptual and ideological shifts, it is feasible to conclude that liberalism has been, and remains, part of the ideational make-up of Plaid Cymru. This is evidenced in the Freedomite core liberal concepts of "the postulation of *sociability*... and *reservations about power* unless it is constrained

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<sup>188</sup> Phil Williams, Interview, 25.09.01

and made accountable”<sup>189</sup>. For Plaid Cymru, ‘sociability’ is paramount as the individual finds nourishment and meaning not as an atomistic being but within his / her relevant community. This concept will be further examined when the notion of community is addressed in the next chapter. The central liberal principle, as Freeden perceived it, of ‘reservations about power’ is conspicuous in ‘early’ Plaid Cymru’s misgivings about unrestrained capitalism and industrialisation. Also, a perennial concern of Plaid Cymru’s has been the substantial amount of power held outside of Wales – predominantly in London – that is then administered on Wales in a ‘top down’ manner. Therefore, it is of little surprise that these various liberal ideological concepts found echoes of support from within Plaid Cymru and ultimately, if a model of Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ is to be constructed, these concepts could prove to be a significant part of Plaid Cymru’s morphology.

Where there are clear signs of disparity between liberalism and Plaid Cymru, however, is when, as noted previously, the liberal assumption “that the *individual* is the prime social unit”<sup>190</sup>, as Freeden has observed, comes into contention with Plaid Cymru’s adherence to ‘the nation’ as the supreme nucleus. While liberty is the guiding light, or at least the backdrop, for the liberal and Plaid Cymru assertions, the units that are to be imbued with this conception of freedom – the individual and the communal notion of ‘the nation’ – are diametrically opposed. If it is liberalism’s contention that it is the individual who must be the specific focal point for freedom of thought and action, then Plaid Cymru cannot possibly follow this interpretation because a collective praxis, in the guise of national activism, remains central to the ‘thought-practices’ of the party. This concept of liberalism, therefore, is at variance

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<sup>189</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.81

<sup>190</sup> *ibid*

with Plaid Cymru's ideology. Nevertheless, this has not stopped Plaid Cymru from publishing a liberal statement on the party's website<sup>191</sup> and, in so doing, this thesis would contend that it could be argued that the party is claiming liberal concepts as part of its specific political intentions.

The third aim (of five) that the party promulgates, according to the website, is to "build a national community based on equal citizenship, respect for different traditions and cultures and the equal worth of all individuals, whatever their race, nationality, gender, colour, creed, sexuality, age, ability or social background"<sup>192</sup>. Liberalism shines through in this written aim of Plaid Cymru. Where nationalism enters the debate is over the first part of the statement wherein the desire to 'build a national community' is proposed. Liberals would favour the replacement of the term 'national community' with either 'world-wide community' or, alternatively, simply 'community'. Indeed, Plaid Cymru use both terms from time to time. Nevertheless, the fact that the party has settled on the 'national' framework, for these liberal concepts to hopefully flourish within, brings the debate back once more to how members of Plaid Cymru see themselves and their roles as members of the party. Furthermore, it also focuses on how, whatever issue the members are taking into consideration, they primarily relate their political *Weltanschauung* in terms of a 'national' or Welsh scale. Therefore, it appears that as far as Plaid Cymru is concerned, and despite the liberal undercurrent that is clearly visible and that even becomes embedded in one of the party's five published political aims, nationalism is never far from the surface. To these ends, this thesis would also maintain that nationalism appears to act as a fallback or counterbalance for the party. Hence, the

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<sup>191</sup> Plaid Cymru, [www.plaidcymru.org.uk](http://www.plaidcymru.org.uk)

<sup>192</sup> *ibid*

envisaged effect that any ideas and policies may have on the primacy of ‘the nation’ remains the benchmark for judging all of the political concepts and theories that Plaid Cymru encounter.

## **Feminism**

The fourth ideology to be considered within this chapter is feminism. Even though, when a trawl of Plaid Cymru’s more prominent literature and pronouncements is made, feminist thought and discourse may not immediately come into view, there is, nevertheless, sufficient evidence available, to initiate an assessment of feminism’s role within Plaid Cymru’s ideology. To undertake this task, a brief empirical examination of the role of women within Plaid Cymru will be presented. Subsequently, in order to reveal feminism’s morphology, this thesis will introduce Michael Freeden’s analysis of feminism’s corpus. Having seen how Freeden observes the nucleus of feminism, it may then be possible to interweave Freeden’s conceptual analysis into Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’.

## **The Historical Role of Women in Plaid Cymru**

When Plaid Cymru was established in 1925 the originators were generally perceived to be a collection of men who, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, were active in fields such as academia and the Church. Deirdre Beddoe noted this reading of events when she stated that, “it is a group of six men who are officially recognised as the party’s founders”<sup>193</sup>. As a result, the image of Plaid Cymru as a male-dominated political party was activated. Nevertheless, as Charlotte Davies has stated,

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<sup>193</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, Out of the Shadows: A History of Women in Twentieth Century Wales, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2000), p.193.

it was Mai Roberts, one of the party's earliest female campaigners, who was actually the "prime mover in arranging the 1925 meeting between the two nationalist groups whose merger created the Welsh Nationalist Party"<sup>194</sup>. Though seemingly airbrushed out of the picture of the party's formative process, Mai Roberts, and other female members, were not totally inconspicuous. Charlotte Davies, for instance, has commented on how a "formal photograph of those in attendance at the Inaugural Summer School held at Machynlleth in 1926 showed 26 per cent women of the fifty-three adults in the picture"<sup>195</sup>. It was not the fact that women were not in existence, or were in any way exempt from membership of the party, that was at issue, it was merely the case that the predominant thought and practice of the early years of Plaid Cymru's history centred on what were commonly seen as the mainstream, and arguably male-centric, matters of the day. Women, and any consideration of what may be deemed to be a feminist position, were therefore peripheralised from the outset.

The Second World War invariably changed some of the aforementioned perceptions; and not just because, as explained earlier in this thesis, this period coincided with some ideological alterations to Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. During the war some women within Plaid Cymru objected to the transference of labour from Wales to England. In 1943, one of those women, Kathleen Foley from Swansea, refused to move across the border from Wales. In her defence she cited nationalist grounds. This was dismissed, however, and she was fined £25<sup>196</sup>. Nevertheless, Foley's act of defiance, though evidently small when juxtaposed with other wartime events, did reflect a growing confidence amongst some of Plaid

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<sup>194</sup> Charlotte Davies: 'Women, Nationalism and Feminism', in Jane Aaron et al (eds.), *Our Sister's Land* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1994), p.243.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid*; p.245.

<sup>196</sup> Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows*, p. 116-117.

Cymru's women members to engage more directly in political matters. Hence, though women were still relatively marginalised when it came to the public persona of Plaid Cymru, women were seemingly making their mark in other, less formal ways.

In the 1950's and 1960's, alas, very little real progress was made when it came to the elevation of women into positions of real political power within the party. This was despite the fact that Plaid Cymru was engaged in a developmental move to the left of the political spectrum, in terms of its social and public policies, whilst, concurrently, making considerable efforts to adopt a more inclusive and decentralised style of politics. However, with little signs of movement with regard to women rising through the party's ranks, it was not a total shock to activists, in 1974, to hear Plaid Cymru's President, Gwynfor Evans, affirm that "women had not taken a leading role in the party"<sup>197</sup>. This apparent lack of high-level involvement by women in the party has been accounted for, by writers such as Laura McAllister and Charlotte Davies, in several ways. Without re-iterating the in-depth analysis provided on this matter by the aforementioned scholars, this thesis would contend that over the years many male members would have felt a certain unease when it came to encouraging the advancement of women within the party. Hence, some 'attitudinal barriers' that must have seriously inhibited the progression of female political talent within the party have undoubtedly existed. To these ends, it is understandable how, for decades during the middle of the Twentieth Century, the role of women within Plaid Cymru was seen as secondary to the role of men. This must invariably have had a psychological effect on the ambitions of women within the party. This may account for why, as Charlotte Davies has commented, the Women's Section, rather than pushing feminist issues,

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<sup>197</sup> Davies, 'Women, Nationalism and Feminism', p.243.

and the cause of women in Wales, seemed confined to taking charge of ‘auxiliary services’ at party conferences<sup>198</sup>. With these barriers in place, therefore, it is not surprising that women’s issues were sidelined within the pecking order of party matters. As a consequence, it was as late as 1978 that Plaid Cymru’s membership were to witness “the first straightforwardly feminist motion to reach the conference....when the party adopted a stance in favour of women’s rights”<sup>199</sup>.

After the ‘breakthrough’ of 1978, the early 1980’s saw a variety of female-focussed motions at Plaid Cymru’s conferences. This thesis would maintain that it is fair to concur with Charlotte Davies’ assertion that, by this stage in its history, the Women’s Section – the main driver behind the ever-increasing presence of women on party platforms, and the forum for debating women’s issues in general – had moved from being the “fundraiser and provider of support services”<sup>200</sup> in the 1960’s and 1970’s to a more hard-nosed and forward-looking political grouping by the 1980’s. In supporting this assertion, Sian Edwards has commented on how, by 1980, there was “a bunch of energetic and committed women such as Carmel Gahan, Eirian Llwyd, and Rosanne Reeves, amongst others....fighting to modernise and energise Plaid Cymru by rejuvenating the moribund Women’s Section and forcing Plaid Cymru to take women’s rights and equality issues more seriously”<sup>201</sup>.

By the early to mid 1980’s debates concerning gender equality and impartiality were beginning to move centre stage within Plaid Cymru’s policy arena. The case of female representation at an electoral level was a key battleground within the party; as,

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<sup>198</sup> *ibid*; p.246.

<sup>199</sup> *ibid*; p.247.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid*; p.249.

<sup>201</sup> Sian Edwards, ‘*Danger – Revolution in Progress*’, in Deirdre Beddoe (ed.), *Changing Times: Welsh Women Writing in the 1950’s and 1960’s*, (Dinas Powys, Honno, 2003), p.273.

indeed, it proved to be within other political parties in Wales. By the time of the 1992 General Election seven women candidates were selected by the party and, as Charlotte Davies has observed, all seven women were given a high profile during the Election campaign<sup>202</sup>. Though nowhere near a 50:50 male / female split, the fielding of seven women candidates was a clear improvement from the time, in the General Election of February 1974, when the party put forward just one woman candidate in the 36 seats that Plaid Cymru was contesting. Moreover, as Laura McAllister has observed, it was during the 1990's that Plaid Cymru saw, "its first women national chairs and several women joining the party's policy cabinet"<sup>203</sup>. By the 1990's, therefore, more women were becoming clearly visible within the party as a whole and, importantly, women were becoming more involved within the party's policy-making arena. There is no doubt, as Charlotte Davies has argued, that some of these activists had had their interest in Plaid Cymru sparked by the "more stereotypically women's concerns"<sup>204</sup> that would have acted as a counterweight to some of the more traditional, nationalistically-inclined, concerns of the party. It was, however, the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1997, and its subsequent elections, that enabled women within Plaid Cymru to gain a substantial electoral foothold on all-Wales level. The party policy at this time was at last attempting to redress some of the iniquities of the past by offering women within Plaid Cymru adequate opportunities in order that they may attain political office; both within the party and, more importantly, through the ballot box. With regard to the latter, as Fiona Mackay has indicated, when it came to selecting candidates for its Assembly campaign, the party "used the additional member lists to attempt to partially correct under representation in constituencies by selecting a woman to head up each of the

<sup>202</sup> Charlotte Davies, 'Women, Nationalism and Feminism', p.250.

<sup>203</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.186.

<sup>204</sup> Davies, 'Women, Nationalism and Feminism', p. 249.



five regional lists”<sup>205</sup>. These movements, throughout the 1990’s and in the early years of the new Millennium, appear to have settled the debate about the institutionalised sidelining of women within Plaid Cymru.

As the party begins its process of selecting candidates to fight the 2007 election for the National Assembly it is evident that women feature prominently on the party’s list of candidates. For the South West Wales constituency, for example, four of the six candidates seeking approval onto the regional list are women. Interestingly, however, there is no mention of what could be labelled ‘women’s issues’ on any of the electoral messages put out by these female candidates. Statements condemning the war in Iraq, calling for a new Welsh Language Act, and emphasising, as one candidate Sian Caiach asserted, “the very real human misery which generations of misgovernment have brought to many people in Wales”<sup>206</sup>, appear to have replaced the language of equal rights and representation, and anything perceptibly feminist in tone or content, within the election addresses. This thesis would contend, therefore, that the position of women within contemporary Plaid Cymru – certainly when compared with the position of women with the party in 1925, 1955, or even 1985 – appears to be one of parity; certainly in terms of equality of opportunity, and a lack of visible discrimination or overtly sexist attitudes.

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<sup>205</sup> Fiona Mackay, *Love and Politics: Women, Politicians and the Ethics of Care*, (London, Continuum, 2001), p. 42.

<sup>206</sup> Plaid Cymru, *South West Wales Election Package*, April 2006.

## **Freeden and Feminism's Core Concepts**

Turning to Michael Freeden's reading of feminism and its conceptual make-up, Freeden has stated that there are three core concepts to the ideology of feminism<sup>207</sup>. He contends that these are: a) the centrality of the role of women; b) the relationship between men and women is a key problematic in social organization and practices; and c) the male-female relationship is a power nexus in which women are dominated, exploited, or oppressed by men, a relationship that has to be transformed or integrated.

The first core concept, concerning the 'centrality of the role of women', is, arguably, the key to understanding feminism and feminist arguments. It also provides the basis of any consideration as to where to situate the role of the female within the world of political ideologies and practical political decision-making. Whilst feminism holds to universal standards and principles, it is nevertheless feasible, for the purposes of this thesis, to decentralise the argument; to create a more exact, possibly less utopian, position from which to attempt an understanding of the precise position of women in any given society. For example, if Shulamith Firestone's conception of women regaining "ownership of their own bodies"<sup>208</sup> – a universal feminist demand – is transposed onto a geographical tableau, it could be argued that feminists are engaged in an attempt to re-establish 'ownership over their own territory'; whatever that particular territory happens to be. If interpreted from this angle, a link could be established between those seeking feminist values and practice as a universal goal and those who hold that autonomy, in a geo-political sense as opposed to a broadly

<sup>207</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.491

<sup>208</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: the case for feminist revolution*, (London, Women's Press, 1979), p.19.

gender-based sense, may be acquired through adopting a feminist nationalist approach.

In opposition to this, however, and in an attempt to formulate an understanding about these positions of overlap and attachment, Graham Day and Andrew Thompson have observed how “nationalism and feminism seem to be drawn into unavoidable opposition: claims for the emancipation of women threaten to undermine the avowed unity of the nation, whereas national differences weaken the proclaimed commonality of conditions among women across the world”<sup>209</sup>. Furthermore, on the matter of the general relationship between nationalism and feminism, Day and Thompson have observed how “nationalist movements rarely, if ever, take women’s situation as their point of departure. On the contrary, nationalism often suppresses women’s concerns, or puts them aside until the ‘more important’ issue of the nation’s fate is decided”<sup>210</sup>. While there is no reason to doubt the validity of Day and Thompson’s findings, it is imperative to remember that this thesis contends that Plaid Cymru is not a party that can be easily boxed in ideological terms – nationalist or otherwise – and hence feminism may not unduly suffer within the ‘thought-practices’ of Plaid Cymru.

Similarly, the fact that other nationalist political organisations, and indeed other ideologies besides nationalism, appear to have been unable to accommodate feminist concerns may be signs, on their behalf, of ideological fragility, conventional machismo practice or structural intransigence, and may not necessarily indicate any weakness within feminism itself. Indeed, to give an example, Michelle Lazar has

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<sup>209</sup> Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism*, (London, Palgrave, 2004), p.115

<sup>210</sup> Day and Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism*, p.108

contended that although the concept of ‘strategic egalitarianism’<sup>211</sup> has been adopted by certain states around the world – most notably Singapore – in response to increasing feminist demands, it is nevertheless evident that the ‘grand narratives’, and the everyday social and political discourse, of the societies that introduce schemes that attempt to rebalance society remain unswervingly patriarchal. Therefore, in an effort to tie this in with Freeden’s first core concept, and in attempting to position feminism in its entirety, it may be fair to assume that a question that must arise from this is that when the notion of their ‘centrality’ is placed under the spotlight do women see themselves addressing this on an individual, a local (i.e. a regional or national), or a universal basis. Or, alternatively, are all of these merely overlapping layers that are interlinked and are ultimately at the mercy of the question as to whether women view their ‘centrality’ on an individual or on a universal gender basis? As interesting as it appears, these questions, and any plausible answers, nevertheless remain outside of the remit of this thesis.

The second core concept that Freeden introduces – ‘the relationship between men and women is a key problematic in social organization and practices’ – assesses the techniques used to establish equality within relationships. Looked at in the context of the debate within this thesis, it could be argued that the problem of equality arises when universal feminist demands for an essentially equal world – the ‘each counts as one’ notion – are juxtaposed with the establishment of a ‘nationalistic’ society – Wales in this case – in which ‘positive valorisation of the nation’ appear to go against universalist feminist political philosophy. The dilemma remains, as Freeden has observed, that equality at times “intersects with the concept of difference. The result

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<sup>211</sup> Michelle Lazar, ‘Strategic egalitarianism’ in the Singapore context’ in Nations and Nationalism, vol. 7, no. 1, January 2001, pp. 59-74

is a range of decontestations reflecting a spectrum of cultural positions within a broad logical network”<sup>212</sup>. This thesis would contend that this could be the circumstance that Plaid Cymru is faced with as the party attempts to reconcile both universalist (feminism) and particularistic (self-government) concerns.

Reflecting on matters of placement and identity, Cynthia Enloe<sup>213</sup> has contended that women engage in certain culturally or traditionally assigned roles within nationalist movements. Examining any culturally assigned roles for women in Wales may appear a little inconsequential at times to the general focus of this thesis but, if Enloe is correct, and this thesis would contend that there is undoubtedly some substance to her views, then women, attempting to campaign on either ‘first wave’ – political representation – or ‘second wave’ – gender representation – feminist issues, face considerable structural difficulties. If facing up to some of these challenges is not tough enough already, given that, as John Morrow has commented, “political values and modes of behaviour...are generally construed in male terms”,<sup>214</sup> feminists who also embrace a position that could be seen as being nationalistic – such as Plaid Cymru’s, for instance – encounter further difficulties in both conceptual and practical terms. This is because ‘feminist nationalism’, or ‘nationalist feminism’, is, debatably, somewhat contradictory due to the fact that feminism’s foremost allegiance is to women as a whole while nationalism’s is to a particular nation. These allegiances have to override all other concerns, therefore, in order for ideological attachment to continue. This thesis would maintain that feminists within Plaid Cymru, therefore,

<sup>212</sup> Freedon, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.492

<sup>213</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000)

<sup>214</sup> John Morrow, *History of Western Political Thought: A Thematic Introduction*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), p.375

cannot opt out of their commitment to female allegiance, in a universal sense, in favour of their preference for commitment to the Welsh nation.

Michael Freeden's third core concept of feminism – 'the male-female relationship is a power nexus' – concerns the perceived use of structures and networks of power, by men, in order to dominate women within society. This could, arguably, be seen by feminists within Plaid Cymru, who may wish to interweave feminist concepts with Plaid Cymru's principles, as being akin to the Britain / Wales relationship in terms of its power structure and its use of hegemonic values. This thesis believes that it is feasible to proffer that both the male / female and Britain / Wales roles are socially constructed in terms of their values, duties, and norms. However, it is important to acknowledge that these relationships and power structures are fluidic in their nature, and any feminist contentions that accompany them, likewise, may well be reshaped and re-evaluated over time.

On this theme of reshaping and re-evaluation, it could be possible to contend that the objectives of 'first wave feminism' (circa 1890-1920) – namely the various campaigns for political rights for women – were, or plausibly still are, more in tune with feminist notions circulating within Plaid Cymru than were the ambitions of 'second wave feminism' (circa 1960 onwards). This may be because, as Freeden has argued, 'second wave feminists' peripheralised the state; that is they moved it "from adjacent to marginal positions in their ideological constructs"<sup>215</sup>. So, from 1960 onwards, any move from feminists within Plaid Cymru to emphasise female emancipation through the attainment of state power could, arguably, have appeared to

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<sup>215</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.495.

be somewhat inconsistent; certainly given the desire to create a 'nation-state' that was a central aim of the policies of the political party to which they belonged. It would, however, have run against the contemporary feminist thinking of the time. This is because 'second wave feminism', certainly in its 'radical feminist' guise, had other agendas that needed addressing before that of state politics and the realization of power through parliamentary and democratic means.

Debates over the nature and content of the state, in a practical political sense, would appear, therefore, not to have been of primary concern to feminists in the 'second wave' period. If this is so, then feminism within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' may have been faced with something of an ideational dilemma if other lines of feminist discourse – debates over reproduction, pornography, etc – were highlighted before traditional 'first wave' concerns, such as the advancement, in legislative and electoral terms, of women's political rights.

Here, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, this thesis would maintain that feminism, in its 'second wave' guise at least, could be seen as being at odds with the nationalist, liberal and socialist ideologies at work in Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. This is because each of these three ideologies have very firm conceptions of the state and its power structures. As Plaid Cymru is a party that desires fundamental structural change to occur on social, political and cultural levels, it would seem to be natural that any particular ideology, or any individual ideological concept, operating within the party should incorporate some clear notion of how these power structures are to be administered. Looked at in this respect, therefore, this thesis would contend that there could be difficulties in pursuing a feminist line of argument within Plaid Cymru, or at

least for granting feminism too much space within the party's ideological set up, as Plaid Cymru's overall vision of an equalitarian Wales, with an internal dialectic that seeks to re-arrange the structures of Welsh society along the aforementioned multifarious levels, may actually prove to be incompatible with feminism's wider, universal *raison d'être*.

### **The Feminist Tradition within Plaid Cymru**

Women, as noted earlier, have always featured within the ranks of Plaid Cymru as grassroots members, elected representatives, policy-makers and party theorists; though, admittedly, their influence on the party's ideological positioning, and their organisational involvement, has varied over the years. In the party's formative period, for instance, activists such as Kate Roberts were prominent. Roberts' position within the party is noticeable not only because she was a routine contributor to *Y Fanner* and *Y Ddraig Goch*, the party's regular publications, but also through her championing of women's issues within the party in general. Nevertheless, although the setting up of a Women's Section was discussed and accepted at the party's inaugural summer school at Machynlleth in 1926, with Kate Roberts elected as Chair, Hywel Davies has commented on how the Women's Section "never became a prominent feature of party organisation"<sup>216</sup>. This may be a consequence of the perceived priorities of the party – cultural and linguistic protection and advancement – overriding other issues, such as the role of women in Welsh society. Alternatively, if seen from a wider ideological and historical perspective, it could be posited that feminism was destined to play a minor role within Plaid Cymru as the party was formed at what was both the end of the 'first wave' of feminism and the beginning of the era that saw the ideologies of

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<sup>216</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945, p.70.



mass activism (communism, fascism, etc) rise to the fore. Furthermore, politics remained, at this time, a predominantly male-orientated arena. This would no doubt have affected the cause of feminism within Plaid Cymru because, as will be explored later, Welsh politics and society has a strong cultural and ideological identity that prioritises what are perceived to be 'male interests'.

As Laura McAllister has observed, in a chapter from her book on Plaid Cymru entitled '*A Woman's Perspective: From the Outside Looking In*', women's status within the party was "almost consistently invisible"<sup>217</sup>. McAllister has maintained that whenever women within the party have displayed any radical or mould-breaking intentions, this has been construed by sections of Plaid Cymru's male membership as being akin to feminism. Moreover, in the eyes of many men within the party, any signs of feminist activity was perceived to be akin to promoting an alien ideology, when juxtaposed with the brand of 'Welshness' or 'Welsh political culture' that the overwhelming majority of the male membership sought to encourage. Hence, whenever they attempted to advance feminist issues, the well-known figures cited by McAllister, ranging from Mai Roberts and Mallt Williams in the early days to more contemporary figures such as Pauline Jarman and Helen Mary Jones<sup>218</sup>, were, within the party as a whole, largely either emasculated or submerged within the dominant ideologies such as socialism and nationalism. To this extent, and this thesis would concur with McAllister's overall observations, it would appear that, in general terms, women within Plaid Cymru, be they either committed feminists or simply active members of the party, have been faced with an arduous task in their attempt to achieve full recognition.

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<sup>217</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.187.

<sup>218</sup> *ibid*; p.186

When assessing the arduousness of this task, one matter that cannot go unstated, and one that undoubtedly impinges on the discussion about feminism within Plaid Cymru, is the fact that Plaid Cymru is neither a female-only party nor is it a party focussing on equality matters alone. Hence, it is not clear-cut that feminism would be influential or vital to the ideational set-up of Plaid Cymru, as it almost certainly would be, for example, if an organisation such as the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition was under the analytical spotlight.

### **Feminism, Symbolism and Plaid Cymru**

Further to the areas mentioned to date, one field that this thesis would argue requires specific attention, whenever an evaluation of how ideologies are viewed within a particular setting occurs, is that of the symbolism which may be apparent. Symbolism, without a doubt, plays a part within all social, cultural and political movements, as well as within all of the societies that they feed off and contribute to. Symbols evident within Plaid Cymru include the triban (the party's emblem with a representation of the mountains of Wales in the background) and the Welsh national flag (*Y Ddraig Goch*). It is the imagery associated with Wales as a whole, however, that provides for greater interest when any assessment of feminism is considered. Despite folklore in Wales featuring the allegorical symbol of the 'Welsh Mam', which will be considered shortly, it is the more perceivably masculine imagery of coal, slate, steel, rugby and male voice choirs that people, both inside and outside of the country, routinely associate with Wales. Added to this, the dragon symbol itself, along with the Gorsedd of Bards and the poetic tradition, are steeped in male-orientated institutional

practice; although a process of feminisation in some of these domains is slowly but surely transpiring.

Whilst acknowledging that male symbolism in Wales is a potent force, this thesis would contend that one facet of Welsh symbolism whose importance is often downplayed is the concept within Welsh society of the 'Welsh Mam'. Whilst portrayed in popular culture and mythology as a stabilising role within a strictly domestic setting, it should be noted that the values and ideals of 'Welsh Mam(ism)' have also permeated life in Wales outside of the family home. This thesis would contend, therefore, that the 'Welsh Mam' image could be portrayed as a strong and vibrant image and, consequentially, could be used as a model for feminists within Plaid Cymru to follow.

The 'Welsh Mam', as previously stated, can achieve recognition from advocates of feminism in terms of the power wielded by the mother or grandmother figures within certain locations. Two aspects of the 'Welsh Mam' that are notable, and worthy of analysis, are the notions of *parch* (respect) and being *duwiol* (pious, or God-fearing). *Parch* signifies the respect shown by all members of the family to the senior female figure. This respect can also have a communal meaning as the 'Mam' is recognised, and respected, by others outside of her immediate family domain. *Duwiol* refers to the 'Welsh Mam's' unstinting support for religious practice and religious values, which would be interpreted as being essential in order for *parch* to flourish. The 'Welsh Mam', though based on the 'real-life' examples of our own mothers and grandmothers, and the love and respect evident within family units, is nevertheless an allegorical, and indeed a reified, figure within Welsh social and culture history and

Welsh identity. For feminists within Plaid Cymru, therefore, the question remains as to how they see, or interpret, the significance of the 'Welsh Mam' in a political sense.

On the subject of interpretation and usage, writers like Nira Yuval-Davis draw attention to the link between allegorical and political representation. This is because, according to Yuval-Davis, "it is women who reproduce nations, biologically, culturally and symbolically"<sup>219</sup>. Though Yuval-Davis' remark is an intriguing one and, debatably, a prescient one, the fact nevertheless remains that the predominant symbols that are apparent within everyday Welsh society are seen as being more conventionally masculine in origin and content. Similarly, and to exemplify the fact that this is not a Welsh predicament alone, Begona Echeverria has also highlighted similar difficulties in the Basque country, wherein feminist attempts to dismantle male symbolism have met with little success. As Echeverria has noted, this is down to the fact that "Basque nationalist pedagogy foregrounds male contributions to Basque language and culture by erasing the efforts of their female counterparts"<sup>220</sup>. Hence, it would appear that feminist efforts to alter these embedded signs of particularism, be they Welsh or otherwise, face an uphill struggle.

### **Feminism and the Universalism / Particularism Debate**

Comparing and contrasting debates on feminism in Wales, and within Plaid Cymru in particular, with other examples of feminist conduct elsewhere is apposite. This is because it must always be remembered that feminism is a universal ideology. Its universalism is apparent in the sense that its conception of female emancipation is

<sup>219</sup> Day and Thompson, p.121.

<sup>220</sup> Begona Echeverria, 'Privileging masculinity in the social construction of Basque identity', in *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 7, no. 3, July 2001, p.349.

not spatially limited. Nationalism advocates particularism with a geographically or ethnically confined agenda under consideration. Therefore, this thesis would contend that the question for those wishing to label themselves ‘nationalist feminist’ or ‘feminist nationalist’ must be ‘what is the ultimate aim of their endeavours?’ Is it sisterhood – in a universal sense – or nationhood – in a geographical and political sense? If sisterhood is the ideal ending then the particularistic claims of the nation – a nation that may not pursue the objective of sisterhood as rigorously as feminists would like – would appear to be somewhat at odds with universalist female demands. Similarly, if nationhood was to take precedence, then feminists may encounter occasions in which they are asked to drop their universalist desires for female emancipation and amelioration in order that national, or nationalistic, requirements are pursued.

Another consideration in this line of reasoning is the role of ‘host-vessels’. If nationalism, or any of nationalism’s concepts, are allowed to enter the ‘host-vessel’ of feminism then particularistic statements and values could soon dominate and play down the feminist core concepts; concepts that are non-particularistic in a national or ethnical sense.

### **‘Left-liberalism’ and Plaid Cymru’s Feminism**

One of the questions that this thesis judges to be of interest, at this juncture, is whether feminists within Plaid Cymru subscribe to what Michael Freeden has termed the “left-liberalism”<sup>221</sup> within feminism’s ‘thought-practices’? This ‘left-liberalism’, as Freeden has interpreted it, employs “a perimeter concept to flesh out equality:

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<sup>221</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.510.

affirmative action, not as a transformation of human relationships, but as a compensation for the disadvantages suffered by women within existing political systems”<sup>222</sup>. If the feminists within Plaid Cymru adopted this Freedenite notion of ‘left-liberalism’, with its commitment to redressing the balance in regard to small-scale or localised, as opposed to universal, structural disadvantage, then the universal / particularistic dilemma may be partly avoided. Nevertheless, this thesis would wish to emphasise that the main argument remains; that is that feminism attempts to liberate women from the oppression that has been engendered through sexual classification and characterisation, while nationalism is designed to unshackle a certain geographically or ethnically based group of people from unwanted hegemonic political or cultural systems.

### **Plaid Cymru and Feminism: Ideological and Historical Context**

Whilst Freeden’s observation of the role that the perimeter concept of ‘left-liberalism’ could play in forwarding an equality agenda continues to be an interesting avenue for theoretical discussion, ‘real’ political events often force the hand in terms of how promoters of feminism, or any other ideology for that matter, approach rapidly changing political situations. This has occurred within Plaid Cymru on several occasions throughout its history; the onset of war in the late 1930’s is arguably one, just as the party’s re-evaluation of itself in the 1960’s is another. However, this thesis would contend that one of the most fascinating, and most relevant in terms of the feminist response, was during the ‘end of consensus’ / ‘end of Butskellism’ period of British politics, from around 1975 onwards. The radicalisation of Plaid Cymru in the early 1980’s had been facilitated by a series of concurrent events; the disappointment

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<sup>222</sup> *ibid*; p.511.

of the 1979 Devolution Referendum result, the perceived ‘anti-Welshness’ and *laissez-faire* doctrine of Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative administration, and the coming to power within Plaid Cymru of the leftward leaning Dafydd Elis-Thomas, an advocate of fringe ideological positions. Laura McAllister has acknowledged that throughout this period there was, within Plaid Cymru, some “overlap between the discussions on ideology and the pressure for increased representation for women”<sup>223</sup>. Accepting McAllister’s observation, it is useful to contemplate how big a role feminism actually played within the party’s ideological re-assessment in this era. Also of interest is whether the drive for equality within Plaid Cymru was really feminist inspired alone or whether it was part of a more conspicuous left wing politics that the party was forging in response to the events of the time?

Looking at these questions in an historical context it is interesting to assess whether feminist arguments were to the fore not only in the radicalising years of the 1960’s and 1980’s but also at key formative times within the party’s history, such as the time of the publication of the major pre-war political pamphlets and the time of the conferences in the late 1950’s, in which the party’s ideology moved leftwards with talk of equality and cooperation to the fore. Whilst feminism has a tradition within the party that cannot be denied, this thesis would argue that its part in the ‘thought-practices’ of the party at the aforementioned periods of time would have been more as a background pressure than as a main driver. What feminism did, it is fair to conclude, is to create within the internal dialectic, a framework for discussing issues of gender equality and female advancement. This would have allowed certain avenues to be explored in far greater ideological depth than ever before. For example, it would be

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<sup>223</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.192.

accurate to assert that feminism, and the emancipatory discussion as a whole, would have been a key player, if not entirely instrumental, in influencing the development of socialist thought within the party, certainly in the post-1950's era. The extensive New Left agenda, forwarded within Plaid Cymru by people like Dafydd Elis-Thomas and Aled Eurig, would have been open to, and supportive of, feminist ideas. It must be remembered, however, that followers of the New Left, due to their support of 'adversarial politics', would have been receptive to any ideas of a dissenting of transformative nature, and not just those from a feminist perspective. Feminism, therefore, would not have been wholly unique as a component part of the New Left ideology. This thesis would contend that this is certainly true of feminism's part in shaping leftward ideological thought within Plaid Cymru as well.

One alternative aspect of the developing feminist ideological debate becomes apparent if there are signs of eco-feminism within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. Eco-feminism would be representative of a different ideological battle line, the human versus nature 'counterbalance' argument, which has been evolving throughout the last few decades. This eco-feminism would also tie in with Plaid Cymru's 'greening' as a political party. This has taken place specifically from the 1980's onwards, although environmentalist and 'back to the land' themes have been conspicuous, as shown earlier in this thesis, throughout the party's history. For women within Plaid Cymru, one possible link with this 'eco-feminist' position is arguably visible through female involvement, as Laura McAllister has noted<sup>224</sup>, in the anti-nuclear and peace movements that had their heydays in the 1980's. Here the issue of 'counterbalance' would have been placed under the spotlight and an ideological climate may have

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<sup>224</sup> *ibid*; p.189.



arisen in which socialist, feminist, green and nationalist ideologies could have fermented and interspersed. Nevertheless, at that time, and it remains so today, this was occurring within a restricted socio-cultural and political arena within Plaid Cymru, and within Welsh politics in general. This restricted arena, as noted earlier, marginalised feminist ideology through either subsuming issues of sexual politics within other dominant ideologies or dismissing it through ant-feminist rhetoric and practice. Thus, almost inevitably, any signs of a developing 'eco-feminist' position within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' appear destined to inhabit the party's ideological peripheries.

### **Plaid Cymru and Feminism: Conclusion**

Despite the case put primarily by Laura McAllister for the inclusion of feminism as an understated motivating factor within Plaid Cymru, and one that has been deliberately marginalised by a male-dominated party machinery, this thesis would nevertheless maintain, that in terms of its ideological importance to the party, and as a motivating force and launchpad for the party's policies, it would be fair to conclude that the role of feminism within Plaid Cymru is no more imperative than the role of pacifism and non-violence. As a fully-fledged ideology rather than a specific ideological concept, feminism's grip should be far more powerful than it actually is – if it were to be a core ideology of the party morphology – because as an ideology it should, by its very nature, be more comprehensive and pervading than an individual ideological concept; such as non-violence, for example. The fact that feminism hasn't dominated, or radically reshaped, the party's 'thought-practices' shows that it does not play a very significant role within Plaid Cymru's ideational make-up.

Using this rationale, therefore, this thesis will not linger on feminism as a prime ideological driver within Plaid Cymru. Whilst acknowledging that there have undoubtedly been feminists within the party from its inception, it is the opinion of this thesis that it would be fair to conclude that, taken as a whole, it is the three major ideologies of nationalism, socialism and liberalism, and not the ideology of feminism, whose concepts have most permeated Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. The conclusion, therefore, must be that this thesis acknowledges that feminism is a peripheral conceptual driver within Plaid Cymru's morphology.

### **Summary and Evaluation of 'Modern' Plaid Cymru's Ideologies**

As stated at the commencement of this chapter, and as witnessed in the previous chapter, the four ideologies that have been under consideration in this chapter are not the only ideologies that feature within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. However, of the four covered here – nationalism, socialism, liberalism and feminism – the first three could each stake a claim to be representative of mainstream Plaid Cymru thinking. The same cannot be said for other ideologies; although, as mentioned earlier there are remnants of conservatism on view and, if the net is spread wide enough, there are instances, albeit very few and far between, of both extremes of the political spectrum, communism and fascism, making an appearance within the opinions of Plaid Cymru's membership.

Of the two poles of political opinion, it is the far left who are the most conspicuous and who have, this thesis would contend, contributed the most to the party's 'thought-practices' over the years. In the albeit limited pool of individuals covered in this thesis to date, this mode of thinking is exemplified by Dafydd Elis-

Thomas' penchant for Marxist rhetoric, Keith Morgan's former membership of the Communist Party, and Dafydd Trystan's admission that he was a member of the Young Communist League until he decided to join Plaid Cymru because he "thought Plaid Cymru were a better bet for moving forward a left wing agenda in Wales than fringe left wing politics"<sup>225</sup>. It must be stressed, however, that, in an assessment of the history and evolution of the party's 'thought-practices', these are primarily fringe elements and the views of the policy-making elite within the party have tended overwhelmingly to fall within three of the four ideologies – nationalism, socialism and liberalism – that have been covered at some length in this chapter. This is not to claim, however, that some or all of the concepts that will be examined in the following chapter fit neatly within, and are constitutive of, these three ideologies.

Nevertheless, what nationalism, socialism, and liberalism represent, this thesis contends, are the major ideologies whose concepts and general ideas find daily usage within Plaid Cymru; certainly since 1945 in Plaid Cymru's 'modern' guise and, it would be fair to claim, since the party's inception in 1925. While nationalism has been the principal ideology, as its Freedomite core concept of the 'positive valorisation of the nation' has been a constant and, it could be argued, a major component of the party's *raison d'être* since the first meeting of Plaid Cymru eight decades ago, the language and values represented by socialism and liberalism both feature in the everyday 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru.

Therefore, nationalism, socialism, and liberalism, this thesis proposes, are the major ideological schools out of which Plaid Cymru's ideology has evolved. As to the

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<sup>225</sup> Dafydd Trystan, Interview, 08.03.03

exact composition and face of that ideology, a clearer picture should emerge after

some of the ideological concepts that are attributed to Plaid Cymru are evaluated.

After this task is undertaken, it should be possible, in the concluding chapter of this

thesis to construct a model of Plaid Cymru's ideology. Whether that model can then

slot into one of the three ideologies outlined here remains to be seen. Alternatively, a

hybrid ideology may emerge. Before this thesis reaches that stage, however, a

Freedinite assessment of concepts arising in Plaid Cymru's rhetoric and literature

needs to be undertaken. The ensuing chapter will do just that.

## **Chapter 5: Identifying and Analysing Concepts within Plaid**

### **Cymru's Ideology**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will concentrate on evaluating some of the most prominent ideological concepts that arise within Plaid Cymru's literature and within the pronouncements of the party's members. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of each and every concept and idea that has emanated from within the party's ranks since 1925; not least of all because space would not allow an assessment of the entire breadth of concepts that have arisen over time to be discussed. Moreover, some concepts have only been raised by an individual, or a handful of people, who may be in no real positions of importance within the party, and are therefore so marginal to the policy-making processes within Plaid Cymru and, subsequently, to the ideology of the party as a whole, that they do not require any extensive assessment. Nonetheless, it is essential to state that this thesis does not consider these minority views as unimportant or irrelevant. It is simply a fact that 'lone voices', unless they are able to garner a substantial degree of support for their points of view, are bound by their very nature to remain, in any significantly sized organisation, tangential to the overall thinking of that organisation.

The 'major' conceptual themes to be explored in this chapter, however, are essential components and motivators within the party's 'thought-practices'. They are crucial to any understanding of the party's *modus vivendi* because they not only appear at frequent intervals, some, incontrovertibly, being perennial features, but also

because this thesis, being a Freedinite assessment of Plaid Cymru's ideology, requires a scrutiny of core and peripheral concepts to be undertaken. By doing so, a clearer picture of the party's true ideological constitution should ensue. To commence, therefore, the concept of religion, or metaphysical concerns in general, will be analysed because, in chronological terms, it has proven to be evident within the language of Plaid Cymru since the party's inception.

## **Religion**

If Charlotte Davies' citing of religion as an important building block for Plaid Cymru is true – and it is evident that there is a stream of religious opinion on record – then this thesis would contend that it should be seen as a synchronic, as opposed to a diachronic, construction. It is worth remembering that Plaid Cymru was formed a mere two decades after the great Religious Revival of 1904-5. Many 'early' Plaid Cymru members were active participants in this resurgence of faith and this was an episode that had an enormous influence on not only religious matters in Wales but also on Welsh political and social life in general. As noted earlier in this thesis by Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Plaid Cymru, in its formative stage, attracted a great deal of support from clerics across Wales and the cross fertilisation of ideas across professions was conspicuous. Elfyn Llwyd has agreed with Thomas on these points and, furthermore, has commented that “in the early days of Plaid Cymru you could rely on two individuals in every village being a member of Plaid Cymru: the Schoolmaster and the Minister. Maybe it did play a major role – look at the Reverend Lewis Valentine for example – after all we had pledges to God and so forth”<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Elfyn Llwyd, Interview, 21.10.02

This politico-religious synthesis, however, seems to have faded with time. So much so, it would appear, that when the Plaid Cymru Assembly Member Elin Jones was asked about the part religion plays in the ‘thought-practices’ of the party today she started to laugh. Her response was then unequivocal. Jones commented, “not as far as I’m concerned. As a Plaid Cymru member for ten years...it has no play whatsoever”<sup>2</sup>. To prove that there may well be a generational gap, which would account for the synchronic nature of religious adherence within Plaid Cymru, Jones then added, “perhaps older members would be more influenced by religion”<sup>3</sup>. Religious foundationalism has not completely vanished from the mindsets of younger members, however. Darren Price, a former Chair of Plaid Cymru’s Student Federation and now leader of the Plaid Cymru group on Swansea City Council, tied his religious values in with his nationalist convictions. In Price’s opinion, “people should be proud of where they come from and they should have Christian beliefs to help those around them”<sup>4</sup>. Before going down the route towards a particularist perspective, however, Price contended that these views were personal and that Plaid Cymru “is no more influenced by religious ideals than any other party”<sup>5</sup>, adding that “there is a range of religious views within the party, some non-Christian”<sup>6</sup>.

So is there a culture of religious ideas within Plaid Cymru that occasionally emerge within party policy? Laura McAllister, amongst others, would appear affirmative on this point. McAllister has claimed of the party that “from Saunders Lewis to Gwynfor Evans, and even Dafydd Elis-Thomas, religion has strongly

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<sup>2</sup> Elin Jones, Interview, 16.10.02

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Darren Price, Interview, 11.06.02

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

influenced their political vision for Wales”<sup>7</sup>. McAllister may be correct in her analysis of the religious convictions of these individuals, but personal belief-systems, even if held by party leaders, do not necessarily infuse the political ideology of that leader’s particular party. With this in mind, therefore, this thesis would contend that support for a variety of religious beliefs, as opposed to a singular belief-system, is evident amongst Plaid Cymru’s membership. Furthermore, Plaid Cymru’s ideology in its collective guise, as opposed to any individual or factional ideology that may emerge from party members, remains, first and foremost, a ‘political’, rather than a ‘politico-religious’, ideology.

It is of interest, nevertheless, to compare the arrangement of religion within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ with Michael Freeden’s description of one of the core concepts of conservatism. By Freeden’s reckoning, “over time, and as explanatory paradigms of order have altered, different *extra-human origins of a permanent social order* have been invoked”<sup>8</sup>. Applying this interpretation to Plaid Cymru could prove somewhat problematic as ‘extra-human origins’ could, for example, be summoned, by some within the party, as justification for the party’s social and moral philosophy. Where the awkward component of this concept arises, though, is in the reliance on adherence to a ‘permanent social order’. If this were an order to be created – leading to some futuristic ideal state, maybe – then the championing of its permanency would be understandable. However, as Plaid Cymru is a political party whose ambition it is to radically alter all of the layers of the existing order – social, political, economic, and cultural – then a campaign in favour of perpetuating the existing social structures, sustained by an appeal to some metaphysical body, would appear nonsensical.

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<sup>7</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.44

<sup>8</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.88



Using Freeden's model, therefore, religious practice, as traditionally experienced in Wales through the Christian churches, and viewed by critics and practitioners alike as the upholder of a set of values, past or present, could be interpreted as being at variance with Plaid Cymru's stated aims; those stated aims being a change in the socio-political and cultural dynamic within Wales. Obviously, in contrast to Freeden's model, new paradigms offering religion as a core concept can be presented within ideologies; the most notable cases of this being the emergence, from time to time, of fundamentalist political parties for whom politics and religion materialise in dualistic fashion. As for Plaid Cymru, however, if religion is to be considered as a core concept then further clarification and enunciation is required. What the party does not offer in any of its pronouncements to date is some strategic reasoning why religion should be a core concept of the party's ideology. Furthermore, what religious convictions exist within the party cannot even be identified and classified as a coherent, unified system of beliefs. Therefore, religion, as far as this thesis is concerned, loses credibility if cited by members of Plaid Cymru as one of the primary stimuli driving the party's 'thought-practices'. This conclusion has been arrived at because religion has no explicit impact on the field of social policy, as presented by the party, and, in the manner that Plaid Cymru employs it, religion does not "attempt to influence the social arrangements of the entire political community"<sup>9</sup>.

### **Various Faiths and Directions**

While there is evidence that religion – chiefly in the guise of nonconformism – did influence some within the party, others, notably Saunders Lewis, arguably the

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid*; p.101

party's prime theoretician in its 'early' phase, advocated Catholicism. As a matter of fact, such was the apparent association between Lewis' political outlook and his religious beliefs, that, in a scathing attack on the political and religious 'thought-practices' of the party as a whole, Gwilym Davies, writing in the quarterly magazine *Y Traethodydd* in 1942, claimed that Plaid Cymru was a "crypto-Catholic party, indebted for its social programme *solely* to the Papal Encyclicals"<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, attempting to cast Plaid Cymru as right-wing organisation, Davies went on to argue that, in political terms alone, Plaid Cymru was "the child of *Action Francaise*"<sup>11</sup>. In the pamphlet *The Party for Wales*, co-authored by Saunders Lewis and J.E. Daniel, Lewis responded to Gwilym Davies' condemnation of the party by stating that, "his 'Christian Nationalism' is not the same as the 'nationalism integral' of the atheist Maurras"<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, through his defence of both the Catholic faith and religious observance in general, Saunders Lewis contended that both Plaid Cymru as a party, and the Welsh people as a whole, have a lot to learn from Catholicism and its correlation with political and social enhancement. From Catholic social reformers, Lewis affirmed, comes "the certainty that our development – our emphasis on the family, the neighbourhood and locality, co-operation and trade unions, and agriculture as the foundation, opposition to the rule of finance in the life of society, opposition to the oppressive state, opposition to one-sided profiteering industrialism – was all consistent with the general principles of the Christian Faith"<sup>13</sup>. The interweaving of religious, social and political principles is certainly conspicuous in this adaptation of

<sup>10</sup> Saunders Lewis and J.E. Daniel, *The Party for Wales*, 1942, p.2

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*; p.5

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*; p.10

the party's political philosophy and, by taking into account the authority and presence of Saunders Lewis as leader and chief theoretician at that specific point in time, then, evidently, a case could be presented for religion to be attributed as one of the core concepts within the ideology of 'early' Plaid Cymru.

It would be wrong of this thesis, however, to concentrate too much on this period in which religion was undoubtedly a major source of inspiration for many within the party; possibly even forcing its way as a core concept within the party's ideology. Likewise, it would be inaccurate to just view Plaid Cymru's theological direction as emanating from Catholic social and religious teachings. To highlight this, in a discussion regarding the influence of religion on the party, Derek Hearne has pointed out the differing nature of religious convictions among Plaid Cymru members<sup>14</sup>. Hearne has commented, for instance, on how Gwynfor Evans' religious opinions were "nonconformist, pragmatic, teetotal, egalitarian and pacifist. Saunders Lewis' convictions, on the other hand, led him down a pathway to Catholicism, dogmatism, xenophilia and traditionalism"<sup>15</sup>. Hence, despite what Saunders Lewis may have written about Plaid Cymru's debt to Catholicism, when taken overall there is no one religious line that could be said to supply the party with a firm politico-religious basis. To these ends, this thesis would argue that it could be fair to conclude that there is no stringent or fundamentalist religious line operating within the party as a whole; although that is not to dismiss the possibility that certain individuals may hold fundamental views and may, secretly at least, desire the introduction of more religiously-based content within the party's 'thought-practices'.

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<sup>14</sup> Derrick Hearne, *The Rise of the Welsh Republic*, (Talybont, Y Lolfa, 1975), p.51

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

## **Plaid Cymru: Religion as a Core Concept?**

In summing up, therefore, this thesis maintains that Charlotte Davies' argument that religion provides Plaid Cymru with one of its core concepts – a concept that gives the party a vital spiritual constituent – can, on reflection, and if the entire timeline of the party rather than a specific era is taken into account, be refuted. Additionally, if religion had been a core concept throughout Plaid Cymru's eighty year existence, and if it was still a prime source of inspiration for the party today, this could have led Plaid Cymru on the pathway to a theocratic style of presentation and, ultimately, a politico-religious style of governance. In this instance, the role of religion within Welsh politics, and within Plaid Cymru's morphology, would be akin to an Althusserian 'ideological state apparatus'<sup>16</sup>. As far as this thesis is aware, no single Plaid Cymru member has ever publicly advocated that the religious convictions held by people within Wales should be manipulated into an uncompromising politico-religious option. Hence, while religious faith is visible, and while a sense of spirituality that could be translated as a 'theory of concern' is conceivable – not only as an individual belief but also, as will be explained later in this thesis, as a collective political aim – there is no irresistible justification for placing religion, as a generic principle, as a core concept within Plaid Cymru's ideology. There is a case, nevertheless, as will be argued later in this thesis, for placing the notion of 'spirituality', and the adoption of a non-materialistic view of what Welsh society is and what it could become, at the centre of the party's 'thought-practices'.

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<sup>16</sup> Freedon, *Ideology*, p.25

On a practical note, having considered religion as part of a particular political party's make-up, it would be fair to add that apart from the justification required for mixing religion and politics in a political setting, then any appeals to metaphysical bodies, as opposed to corporeal bodies, may also appear to be a sign of weakness in a predominantly secular society, and in an almost totally secular polity. Criticism could be forwarded that 'appeals to higher beings' to help solve earthly problems are tantamount to antediluvian attitudes; neither, it may be suggested, offers a great deal towards the solving of contemporary socio-economic and political dilemmas. Therefore, religion, when looked at in the realm of British politics as a whole, tends to be kept out of the public domain with politicians and political activists conducting their religious adherences within the private rather the public sphere.

Given these circumstances, this thesis would contend that religion could prove an uncomfortable concept for Plaid Cymru to proclaim as a core belief, should it so wish, on two important counts; namely that there is no one resolute religious line within the party with which, if proclaimed as a core concept, the overwhelming majority of Plaid Cymru's membership would feel comfortable, and also because the pragmatism, and the acknowledgement of reality, evident within contemporary politics in the Welsh, British and European settings does not sit comfortably with the dedication required by any political grouping intent on maintaining an overtly religious political stance. Hence, this thesis believes that the conclusion to be made is that, certainly in terms of the party's everyday public persona and pronouncements, religion is not a core concept as far as Plaid Cymru is concerned. However, it may be accurate to register it as a peripheral, but waning, concept within the party's ideology.

## **Pacifism / Non-Violence**

In this assessment of the concepts of pacifism and non-violence the two individual concepts have been placed together not because they are tautological but because people within Plaid Cymru frequently address their convictions regarding non-belligerence by interweaving the two concepts into their general ideological language. When it comes to scrutinising these two concepts, however, it may become evident that whereas the notion of non-violence – and the accompanying preference to resolve disputes through negotiated settlements – can be seen as a peripheral concept within Plaid Cymru, the absorption of pacifist ideals appears to have been confined to the consciences of certain individuals rather than being a core concept within the party.

## **Pacifism and the ‘pacifist spirit’**

If this thesis scrutinises the attachment between pacifism, non-violence and the perceived nationalism of Plaid Cymru, then it may be true to claim that pacifism, and the strand of non-violence that is visible within Plaid Cymru’s pronouncements, are, once again, attributes that are not normally associated with the morphology of nationalism. A specific example such as Gandhian nationalism in India, however, may be seen as the exception to this rule. Nonetheless, it could well be an exception that may be relevant to this thesis’ understanding of Plaid Cymru’s ideology. Indeed, Hywel Davies has commented on how, in the run up to World War Two, and at the same time that Plaid Cymru was objecting to the locating of an RAF base at Penyberth on the Llyn Peninsula through, amongst other ways, the use of non-violent-

direct-action by three of the party's leading figures, Saunders Lewis, D.J. Williams and Lewis Valentine<sup>17</sup>, the party had "an increasingly pacifist spirit"<sup>18</sup>. This was a brand of pacifism, Davies has noted, that was "often couched in nationalist phraseology"<sup>19</sup>. Pacifism and a representation of Welsh nationalism appear to have coalesced in this era as Plaid Cymru's staunch opposition to World War Two was steeped in rhetoric that was deliberately poignant. In a section of the pamphlet *Wales and the War* – emotively entitled *Welsh Mothers and Children Sacrificed* – Plaid Cymru blamed the British state machinery for bringing war to Wales' doorstep. In an arguably xenophobic and uncompassionate paragraph, the party contended that "without any consideration for the welfare of the Welsh nation, its language, culture and health, the Government moved scores of thousands of English evacuees into Wales"<sup>20</sup>.

Though never openly declaring himself a pacifist, Saunders Lewis also voiced his concern over wartime activities in what amounted to an often emotionally charged, and sometimes incautious, manner. Commenting on the extension of the Cadet Movement to include boys of fourteen, Lewis claimed that there was "a strong tendency towards the Nazification of the State"<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, bringing nationalistic concerns into his area of thought, Lewis argued that "these measures are killing loyalty to Welsh habits and traditions"<sup>22</sup>. Hence, an assessment could be made that any non-violent sentiments expressed by Lewis, and the party as a whole, throughout the period of World War Two tended to be encircled by rhetoric that was both anti-

<sup>17</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>18</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.167

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> J.E. Jones, *Wales and the War*, (Caernarfon, Swyddfa'r Blaid 1940), p.8

<sup>21</sup> Saunders Lewis, *To the Electors of the University of Wales*, (Denbigh, Gee and Son), 1942, p.4

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

state and anti-Westminster, while concurrently favouring anything of an indigenous nature. From the viewpoint of the overall ideological position of the party, therefore, it is evident that some of the traits of nationalism are conspicuous when an examination of Plaid Cymru's ideology during this epoch is undertaken.

Whatever shades of opinion may have entered Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' at this period in time, the ironic thing about the 'pacifist spirit' mentioned above is that it shone through during an era in which, as has been noted previously in this thesis, Plaid Cymru was being attacked from several quarters for allegedly succouring fascism. Although the imagery of 'English evacuees' cited above may appear objectionable to many, the contrast between the doctrine of fascist expansionism and the type of pacifist defiance proffered by Plaid Cymru is immense. Hence, it appears incalculable that these two opposing concepts – one a visceral approach to increasing power, the other a cerebral approach designed to dampen excessive power – could be interlinked within the ideology of a political party; that party, in this instance, being Plaid Cymru. This thesis would contend that it is overwhelmingly the latter, pacifism and its appendage of non-violence, which is the approach that forms part of, and provides an accurate précis of, Plaid Cymru's political identity.

### **Freeden, Pacifism and Green issues**

Despite the above reference to Gandhian nationalism, and the implication that Plaid Cymru was, and still is to a certain extent, linking pacifist concerns, and non-violence in general, in with a nationalistic agenda, when Michael Freeden's model is looked at it becomes evident that in his view pacifism does not feature as a core concept within nationalism. Then again, as it must be recalled from time to time, this



verdict of Freeden's does not exclude this thesis from placing pacifism as a concept – core, peripheral or adjacent – within Plaid Cymru's ideology. This is because Plaid Cymru's ideology may not be wholly reflective of nationalist ideology, as this thesis is discovering. Having stated that, nevertheless, it is important to recognise and identify the ideological concept of pacifism. Inside the realm of political ideas, according to Freeden, the role that pacifism plays is, generally, that of a perimeter concern that rises to the surface whenever there is “the outburst or threat of war”<sup>23</sup>. In historical terms, although he viewed it as a part of the evolution of Green ideology, Freeden commented that pacifism has “united many greens with other dissenting or radical ideologies”<sup>24</sup>.

A fairly recent example of this Green link with other ‘radical or dissenting ideologies’ that can be analysed is the 1992 parliamentary by-election victory of Cynog Dafis at Ceredigion on a Plaid Cymru / Green ticket. What was striking about this achievement, as Jane Aaron has claimed, is that it was remarkable that the two parties worked together because “in some ways there are quite fundamental differences”<sup>25</sup>. Aaron continued by asserting her view that “...independence, that's not going to appeal to the Green people...If you don't have someone who feels strongly about green ideas in the Plaid, the political connection isn't obvious...but it was totally sincere because the Green ideas were important to Cynog and to some of the people working with him. But it's not important to everyone in the Plaid”<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.544

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*; p.544-5

<sup>25</sup> Carwyn Fowler and Rhys Jones, *Locating and Scaling the Welsh nation*, (PSA Paper, 2004) p.12

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

Although Aaron claimed that Green ideas, including pacifism if Freeden's model is to be followed, did not have universal approval from Plaid Cymru in 1992, overall it would appear to be reasonable to accept that Freeden's linking of pacifism, as a component of green ideology, with other progressive ideologies could prove insightful. This is because, this thesis would argue, many within Plaid Cymru would see themselves a part of that radical, dissenting tradition that encapsulated an anti-war stance without, it must be acknowledged, necessarily being attracted to pacifism as a first option or core concept in their own individual ideologies. Hence, given the above, pacifism and non-violence may be a concept that can be seen as having permeability; that is it features as a concept in different ideologies. If this is the case then Plaid Cymru's link with the Green Party becomes even more relevant, in ideological rather than simply expedient electoral terms, if the concept of pacifism and non-violence appear as components of 'green ideology' as well as being part of the ideological formation of Plaid Cymru.

### **Some Perceptions within Plaid Cymru on Pacifism and Non-violence**

On broaching the subject of pacifism and pacifist identification within the party, Elin Jones AM, in an interview for this thesis, maintained that most members of Plaid Cymru were not, in her words, "strict pacifist"<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, Jones qualified this by stating that Plaid Cymru's opposition to recent conflicts in the Middle East proved that "the idea of war is not an idea that is attractive to members of Plaid Cymru"<sup>28</sup>. Jones then made a bold statement of what she sees as her party's political philosophy. She claimed, "because we don't subscribe to a lot of the hypocrisy of politics we are

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<sup>27</sup> Elin Jones, Interview, 16.10.02

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

more detached from the state and we see things from the point of view of minorities and from the innocents' perspective"<sup>29</sup>.

Whilst remembering that Jones is voicing her own opinion, as opposed to stating established Plaid Cymru policy on these matters, this claim of Jones' remains of interest on two levels. First, she seems to want to break away from a state-centric position. Second, she appeared to be claiming that, when considered against other political parties, Plaid Cymru is more in touch with the feelings and sentiments of people who may be described as being 'socially excluded'; be they in Wales, Zimbabwe or Afghanistan. Both positions, however, may prove to be contrary to the political aims and intentions of Plaid Cymru.

If Plaid Cymru envisages Cardiff, as the capital of Wales, as being the prime location for political power and political decision-making on matters relating to Wales, then the mission for any autonomous Welsh government being established would seemingly be to build upon, and strengthen, the existing state machinery. In simple terms, 'the Welsh nation', and the existing institutions and organisations therein, would be transformed under a Plaid Cymru government into 'the Welsh nation-state'. Jones, at a later point during the interview, actually called for Wales to become "a full member *state* of the European Union"<sup>30</sup>. Thus, it is the considered opinion of this thesis that a certain degree of confusion appears to have arisen in Jones' linking of pacifism with a 'state sceptical' agenda; given that she advocates a 'national future' for Wales. Again, it must be confirmed that these are purely Elin

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

Jones' opinions and, hence, they do not necessarily reflect any lack of coherence within Plaid Cymru's policy agenda in regard to these matters.

The second point made by Jones, that this thesis deems worthy of further discussion, is her view that Plaid Cymru's attachment to the notion of grassroots activism and identification enables the party to empathise with 'minorities and the innocent'. This, if correct, is also a major claim on the party's behalf. Taking a critical line on this empathising, it could be asserted that Plaid Cymru's recognition of minority claims, and the enhancement of the positions of minority groupings, is somewhat inevitable as a minority within Wales supports the party's views on self-government at present. Also, under the current socio-political structures, Plaid Cymru has had to be realistic enough to acknowledge that the configuration of Wales and the characteristic of 'Welshness', though prioritised by the party, are perceived as minor aspects within the contemporary British, European, and supra-national governmental processes. Nevertheless, the party seek to be in the position wherein Wales and 'Welshness' would be in the ascendant. If this ever happened the minority tag would be removed.

As the concept of 'minority rights' is not embedded within Plaid Cymru's manifesto declarations then it is difficult to present a case, as Elin Jones would apparently wish to do, for the party having a prominent 'minority rights' component to their ideological basis. On the matter of representation on behalf of, and sympathy for the plights of, innocent people caught up in war and turmoil, Jones' views are admirable. However, it should be acknowledged that the concept of humanitarian concern has permeability, in that it is a concept that, fascism aside, pervades virtually

every ideology. Thus, no one party or ideological tradition can claim sole possession of humanitarian concern. Nevertheless, if Plaid Cymru, as Jones claimed, is on the same theoretical wavelength as the dispossessed and the innocent victims throughout the world, as well as the minority liberationist organisations bodies and ethno-cultural groupings, then ideological concepts such as emotionalism and altruism must feature in the party's morphology; indeed, in these circumstances, Plaid Cymru's *Weltanschauung* comes back into focus as attention passes from matters confined to Wales, in a purely geographical sense, to a view of an interconnected world system. Plaid Cymru's *Weltanschauung* is thus extending the spatial boundaries beyond the scope of conventional nationalist opinion. Again, this thesis would contend that this could be cited as an example of Plaid Cymru's disaffiliation from the straightjacket of restrictive nationalist ideology.

Pacifism within the party can be separated from the debate over the role of the state if the position of the most prominent pacifist within Plaid Cymru, Gwynfor Evans, is assessed. Evans' pacifism should be viewed in a reflective moral and philosophical context, rather than in the sense of it being part of a natural human aversion to aggressive confrontation. While most people would support the idea that it is better to live in a peaceful world rather than a violent one, Evans took the idea of repudiating acts of violence one stage further. Evans' view of living in a non-violent society – a non-violent Welsh society primarily but also one that is inextricably linked to the rest of the world – is a decontested concept. His pacifism was comprehensive in its scope and it constituted a great part of Evans' personal moral conduct; in an ideal scenario, and in his measured reasoning on behalf of Plaid Cymru, Evans, indubitably, would have longed to have pacifism regarded as being a collective and not just a

personal moral position. Despite his ardent desire for Wales to attain political autonomy as soon as it is feasible, Evans totally refused to countenance any armed insurrection in Wales or civil war on mainland Britain. Hence, in attempting to create a collective moral position for Plaid Cymru through pacifism, he is on record as stating, “as a party we completely reject war as a means of achieving self-government”<sup>31</sup>.

### **Plaid Cymru’s employment of non-violent-direct-action**

While pacifism is a more philosophically-based statement of intent against any promotion of, or adherence to, bellicose tactics, the concept of non-violent-direct-action is a more practical political manoeuvre that is often designed to alter a political position through steadfast, though firmly passive, opposition. The concept of non-violent-direct-action has been an instrument of political activism for centuries. From the martyrs who refused to change their religious or political views in the face of Hobbesian-style autocracy through to the Suffragettes and up to the civil rights rhetoric and deeds adopted by leaders like Martin Luther King, non-violent-direct-action has been an effective tool against repressive regimes. For Plaid Cymru, it has proved to be a useful form of obstructionism and has been used with varying effect since the party’s inception. Acts as straightforward as painting the word *rhyddid* (freedom) on public buildings and in open spaces was one early example of defiance that implicated no physical damage to individuals or any loss of life.

Notably, the party’s campaign against the drowning of Cwm Tryweryn in order to create a reservoir to serve the people of Liverpool in the late 1950’s involved sit-down

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<sup>31</sup> Hywel Davies, The Welsh Nationalist Party, 1925-1945, p.167

protests and mass rallies. While some protests against the drowning did involve a degree of confrontation these, generally, did not occur during those events that were organised and staged by the party. On the occasions that they did take place, the Plaid Cymru leadership were quick to distance themselves from these isolated actions. This distancing was important because Plaid Cymru, being a political party, had to preserve an air of respectability as it attempted to build an electoral base in the 1950's and 1960's. Dave Adamson has remarked upon this state of affairs. Adamson has maintained that with regard to this era, "the dichotomy between Plaid Cymru's quest for electoral respectability and the direct action of other nationalist organizations characterized nationalist politics in Wales throughout the post-war period"<sup>32</sup>.

Despite the trepidation that may have been shown by some of the party's upper echelons towards non-violent-direct-action – in contradistinction to many grassroots activists who viewed it as a useful tool for political campaigning – acts of civil disobedience continued, albeit on a less frequent basis after the zenith of Tryweryn and the altercations across Wales with regard to the status of the Welsh language in the 1960's. Notwithstanding this, however, as far as the party's more recent history is concerned, the landmark example of non-violent-direct-action was set in 1980 by Gwynfor Evans' planned hunger strike. This was premeditated after the refusal by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to allow a Welsh-language television channel, *Sianel Pedwar Cymru* (S4C) to come into being. Evans announced that he would commence his hunger strike on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1980 unless the Conservatives rescinded their decision. However, on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1980 Willie Whitelaw, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party, said that the Government had changed its mind on this

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<sup>32</sup> Dave Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.127

issue. Evans, Plaid Cymru and, it must be noted, many ordinary people within Wales, saw this as a critical victory in the long-running battle for recognition of the Welsh language.

The use of non-violent-direct-action, and the championing of a pacifistic position, did not please everybody within the party, however. Former Plaid Cymru Councillor Keith Morgan was one party activist who was very critical of Evans' ideology and the direction in which he led the party. For Morgan, in policy terms, Evans had "no real vision and he was obsessed with his pacifist views"<sup>33</sup>. Morgan's criticism of Evans could be easily dismissed as just mere denigration of Evans' leadership style or his political philosophy, and again the 'lone voice' argument could be proffered.

Alternatively, however, Morgan's criticism is insightful if a critique of the pacifist position within Plaid Cymru's ideology is developed. A non-pacifist, though not necessarily aggressive, approach can be portrayed as the typical position adopted by most ideologies when it comes to matters of defence. This position could also be labelled as 'realist', in the Machiavellian or Hobbesian sense, because it recognises that we exist in a habitually violent world wherein the need to defend oneself, and one's homeland, is a practical consideration for everyone. However, it is especially so for those involved in party politics.

The pacifist position may theoretically place 'love over war' but the position of a political party, in this instance Plaid Cymru, that advocates the existence and continuation of a nation – the Welsh nation – and seeks to advance the quality of life for those within that geographical and political space, the refusal, be it on

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<sup>33</sup> Keith Morgan, Interview, 19.11.01



philosophical or practical grounds, to eschew the realist position would appear to be an aberrant stance to adopt. It is also one that certainly goes against any interpretation of Realpolitik. If a position is adopted that contends that Gwynfor Evans was ‘unreal’ in his views and leadership, and this is then taken to its logical conclusion, then Plaid Cymru’s ideology for the thirty-six years of Evans’ leadership could also be viewed in this light. This conclusion could be arrived at, this thesis would accept, due to the undeniable fact that pacifism was a Freedenite core concept within Gwynfor Evans’ ideology.

### **Hegemony and ‘Cultural Constraints’**

Allied to pacifism, the concept of hegemony must also be addressed because if Plaid Cymru has the intention of replacing one form of hegemony with another – assuming that some semblance of a unified ideological posture would emerge in an autonomous Wales – then the question to be asked is whether this hegemonic position could be achieved under a pacifist philosophical position. Michael Freeden has pointed out that the Gramscian notion of hegemony, and in particular the establishing of that hegemony, involved “the co-ordination of different interests and their ideological expressions, so that an all-embracing group, possibly society as a whole, would be engaged”<sup>34</sup>. If hegemony is to be established under a society influenced by, or controlled by, the ideology of Plaid Cymru, then pacifism has to fit into the ‘all-embracing group’. The problem that pacifism could come up against is not any specifically direct challenge from any particular ideology, although advocates of the ideology of fascism, for example, would find it virtually impossible to accept these conditions, and certainly it would be inconsistent with fascism’s morphology if those

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<sup>34</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.20

adherents were to embrace pacifism, the difficulty is likely to arise in the general field of what Freedon terms ‘cultural constraints’<sup>35</sup>. As pacifism falls outside accepted, or at least standardised, notions of defence, as they are practiced by nation-states, the pressure on Plaid Cymru’s pacifist stance to adapt and reconstitute itself would be enormous. Hence, any condemnation of Gwynfor Evans’ position as ‘unreal’ may not be merely hollow criticism from an anti-pacifist perspective but more a case of being a realistic assessment of the perceived view of Plaid Cymru’s concept of pacifism, as seen through the eyes of other political parties and adherents of other ideological traditions.

In contrast, non-violent-direct-action does not face the same degree of cultural constraint as pacifism because it is generally portrayed within the political arena as a pragmatic tactic of last resort, as opposed to a trenchant ideological or philosophical position. Moreover, a series of celebrated cases have proven the efficacy of non-violent-direct-action, as cited earlier, and the concept is now embedded in mainstream society. For Plaid Cymru, therefore, the advocating of non-violent-direct-action necessitates less of a negative response, and is undoubtedly less problematic to supporters and adversaries alike, when contrasted with the concept of pacifism. This could account for the mixed responses given by party activists to the question of whether Plaid Cymru should favour pacifism. However, this thesis would argue, when non-violent-direct-action is considered<sup>36</sup>, party members appear more willing to accept the liberal description and they then tend to envisage this form of protest as a constituent part of every person’s individual, and collective, ‘human right’ to freedom of expression and protest.

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid*; p.57

<sup>36</sup> In various interviews conducted with party members (see bibliography)

Further to this ease of acceptance for non-violent direct-action over pacifism, some contemporary Plaid Cymru leaders have acknowledged their debt to influential figures who have promoted the non-violent route to national or ethnic self-determination. Ieuan Wyn Jones, for example, in an interview for the party's left-leaning on-line discussion forum 'tribancoch.com', cited Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela as his personal political heroes. Jones claimed that he admired Gandhi's perseverance that led to the securing of independence for India and added that this was achieved "without compromising his moral position"<sup>37</sup>. Jones continued by stating that he thought that Gandhi "had even more than pacifism; he had great moral and personal courage to bring a nation forward"<sup>38</sup>.

Despite these acknowledgements, one self-confessed pacifist within the party, Rhodri Glyn Thomas, has stated, "I don't think Ieuan describes himself as a pacifist but certainly he is anti-war, and in that sense most of the party is anti-war"<sup>39</sup>. While 'anti-war' can be a flexible expression in the sense that 'anti-war' can cut across the left / right political continuum, as it is generally regarded that most people despise the idea of conflict and, in Plaid Cymru's case, the use of the phrase 'anti-war' certainly does not tie individuals or the party into a rigidly pacifist position, Rhodri Glyn Thomas also accredits Plaid Cymru's historical association with the concept of pacifism. Explaining how the concept has come to the fore at different periods in the past, and how it has acted against the party on a few occasions, Thomas commented of pacifism and a general non-violent approach, that "that line was very clear in

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<sup>37</sup> Ieuan Wyn Jones, Interview with tribancoch.com, 30.12.02

<sup>38</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Interview, 14.05.01

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

Gwynfor Evans' day, and he suffered hugely by being a conscientious objector during World War Two"<sup>40</sup>.

The Plaid Cymru Assembly Member Leanne Wood, an acknowledged radical voice within the party, goes even further than Ieuan Wyn Jones in her opposition to the entire concept of militarism. Wood has been a severe critic of Britain's close relationship with the United States, particularly in recent years, and has commented that Plaid Cymru, and other forces on the left who she seeks to ally Plaid Cymru with, "must oppose further military spending and the insidious arms trade that wields so much influence"<sup>41</sup>. Enunciating some of these concerns in its 2002 'alternative budget', *A Billion Ways to Build a New Wales*<sup>42</sup>, Plaid Cymru announced two measures in relation to defence. These were total nuclear disarmament, which, across the UK, the party equated with a saving of £650 million, and the ending of arms export subsidies, that the party calculated would amount to a saving of £800 million. When the raising of additional taxation, using socialistic measures to hit the wealthiest the hardest, is taken into account, Wales' share of the 'peace dividend', according to Plaid Cymru, would be £1 billion.

### **Pacifism and Non-violent direct action: Core or Peripheral?**

While all of these sentiments help to distance Plaid Cymru from the perceived pro-militarist stances of other political parties, it is interesting to note that any total abandonment of Britain's or Wales' defence forces and defence procurement has not been tabled by Plaid Cymru. Hence, pacifism, certainly in application, appears to have

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

<sup>41</sup> Leanne Wood, *US Dire Straits*, [tribancoch.com](http://tribancoch.com), 10.12.03

<sup>42</sup> Plaid Cymru, *A Billion Ways to Build a New Wales – Plaid Cymru's Alternative Budget*, 11. 04. 02

been rejected as a practical solution for creating a more peaceful environment. Over the years, certain members within Plaid Cymru may have envisaged pacifism as a core concept within the party's ideology and they may have envisaged it as a lead component in part of the ideological struggle that they were seemingly engaged in. But this impression that pacifism is a core concept of Plaid Cymru's ideology has thinness to it, as pacifism is all embracing in its condemnation of aggressive attitudes in society, not just in theory but also in practice. By summoning up the figures of Gandhi, Luther King and others, it could be argued that Plaid Cymru is presenting its political ambitions vicariously through these heroes of a non-violent or pacifist approach. It could be analysed as being the case that, in a purely idealistic sense, Plaid Cymru desire pacifism, and a sharing of non-violent methodologies, as a core concept but are realistic enough to accept that pacifism is not a viable option within contemporary global politics. Hence, this thesis will contend that pacifism is at best a peripheral concept that influences but does not exist as a main driver for the ideology of Plaid Cymru.

The same can be said of non-violent-direct-action. To place this as a core concept within Plaid Cymru's ideology would be inaccurate as non-violent-direct-action is an occasional tactical option for the party as opposed to a constant theme or form of expression. Despite the success of Gwynfor Evans' aforementioned act of defiance, non-violent-direct-action is on the margin of discussion whenever the party debates policy or philosophical matters. Unlike the tactics of certain Green or anarchist movements where non-violent-direct-action, it could be contended, is a core concept, Plaid Cymru's more established parliamentary approach to politics – gradually evolving since the 1960's but burgeoning in the last decade or so – tends to favour

conventional political discourse over direct action. Hence, non-violent-direct-action, like pacifism and religion, is an existing but slowly diminishing concept within the party's 'thought-practices'.

## **Decentralisation**

In his book *'Summer Meditations'*<sup>43</sup>, during a discussion on how different layers of power, and their distances from a central system, affect people's lives, Vaclav Havel talked of concentric circles that were diffuse in nature but, in an holistic sense, amalgamated to make up the whole. Plaid Cymru's linking of the party's conception of what constitutes the local community to, most prominently, the nation, and further beyond to global outlooks via Europeanism, could be viewed as corresponding to Havel's notion. As far as Plaid Cymru is concerned, what it clearly shows, when the party addresses these various 'concentric circles', is that the last thing that it could be accused of is isolationism or absconding from any engagement in dialogue at the multifarious levels of political administration. Where decentralisation equates with this notion is in the way that it offers plural identification and dialogue on many levels. Decentralisation can be taken down and adapted to suit plural concerns. For a party who put great emphasis on people engaging in decision-making in their localities, decentralisation could prove an invaluable concept. Gwynfor Evans favoured this decentralist approach as he maintained that centralisation "tends to lead to totalitarianism and the erosion of decision-making by individual persons and by communities"<sup>44</sup>. This theoretical, anti-totalitarian approach of Evans was to connect with his practical assessment that proper government, or at least the most effective form of government, could only be conducted on a small-scale and at a local level.

<sup>43</sup> Vaclav Havel, *Summer Meditations*, (London, Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 44

<sup>44</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p.47

## **Initiating Decentralisation**

Removing the perceived shackles of central authority was also a theme pondered on by other theoreticians within Plaid Cymru. In wording reminiscent of the Enlightenment thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, D.J. and Noelle Davies proffered the idea that Welsh society needed to be re-evaluated and liberated. In their view, “man is an organic being. He cannot move forward freely in education and culture while economically and politically he is in bondage”<sup>45</sup>. As Michael Freedon has noted<sup>46</sup>, this is a rational liberal approach that views the general interest of society as a whole in non-aggregative terms. This ‘freeing up’, therefore, could be achieved through decentralisation and an acceptance of a non-authoritarian, decentred “spirit of self-help and co-operation”<sup>47</sup>. This, it was envisaged by D.J. and Noelle Davies, would be the total opposite to the Keynesian prescription of “increased centralisation and bureaucratic control, increased concentration of industry and increased sacrifices by the people”<sup>48</sup>.

Here in its clearest form, this thesis would contend, is the difference between centralised state managed social democracy and the decentralised, community-based socialist alternatives proffered by Plaid Cymru. Tying in the administration over these forms of decentralisation with the aforementioned ‘concentric circles’ theory, it becomes evident that what is of importance to the party as a whole, if Plaid Cymru does indeed accept the hypothesis that ‘concentric circles’ presents, is the fact that the theory diminishes any notions of an ‘us’ and ‘them’ syndrome, wherein various

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<sup>45</sup> D.J. and Noelle Davies, Wales: The Land of Our Children, 1942, p.3

<sup>46</sup> Freedon, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.168

<sup>47</sup> D.J. and Noelle Davies, Wales: The Land of Our Children, 1942, p.3

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*

factors compete over resources and argue over authority. Discourse within concentric circles, therefore, is positive and inclusive and it would appear that decentralisation – especially Plaid Cymru’s version of it – is ultimately designed to foster the all-encompassing ideals that give strength to community and, correspondingly, national life.

With this linkage between the centre and the apparently decontested concept of decentralisation, as Plaid Cymru envisage it, in mind, what must be addressed when the concept of decentralisation is under scrutiny is whether there is likely to be any difficulty in portraying a decentralisation message if it is nationalism – with the idea of the nation to the fore – that your party is supposedly representative of. Cynics could argue that the language of decentralisation is used by Plaid Cymru merely as a descriptive slogan to entice supporters who are, or were, disillusioned with state-centred politics and economics. Furthermore, if decentralisation is not a core concept within nationalism, which, according to Freeden’s model, it is not, then why does Plaid Cymru attach such importance to it? This attachment could back up the contention that either Plaid Cymru is not an adherent to nationalism in its strictest Freedenite form, or it could act as an example of how nationalism, not being a *full* ideology, according to Freeden, does not furnish Plaid Cymru with a comprehensive enough agenda; hence, Plaid Cymru has to look outside of nationalism for concepts that appeal to the ideological viewpoints of its membership, or, being a political party, Plaid Cymru may be seeking alternative concepts and theories in a bid to compose a platform that would be capable of attracting a sufficient level of electoral support to produce a minimum winning margin at the polls.



This thesis contends that what Plaid Cymru is attempting to do through the use of decentralisation is seeking to apply a method of diversifying the debate on politico-economic expression away from, and what for some members may be in contradiction to, the centralised, nationalist viewpoint. Nevertheless, for decentralisation to mean anything, and to possibly justify this decentralist approach, given the fairly settled composition of the current British state system, it must have a 'higher context' to decentralise from. Ultimately, as Plaid Cymru visualise that 'higher context' as being Wales rather than Britain, then there has to be some notion of self-government for Wales underpinning this decentralisation.

The 'higher context' out of which decentralisation would ensue must be the political and geographical entity that is Wales, as this thesis would argue that nobody within Plaid Cymru would testify to the radical forms of decentralisation proposed by the party being attainable under the current UK governmental or socio-economic systems. In these circumstances, therefore, before decentralisation can occur in Wales, further decentralisation from London must come about; be that decentralisation in the form of bolstering the method of devolution currently in existence, as an absolute minimum, or, as is the preferred option for Plaid Cymru, through the establishment of a government in Wales that would be entirely autonomous from the British state system, and one that would administer the direction of the economy, as well as having control over the existing political functions. Theoretically, at least, Plaid Cymru could activate a decentralised structure if, under the present conditions set by the devolutionary settlement, they attained power in the National Assembly. However, to be realistic about the effectiveness of any extensive decentralisation for Wales, and

for that system to be thoroughly operational, substantial self-government for Wales would be required.

### **Decentralisation Policy in Practice**

In policy terms, one aspect of decentralisation that Plaid Cymru highlights is economic diffusion. In an article entitled *Spreading the Wealth*, Dai Lloyd AM described Plaid Cymru's economic policy proposals of 'regional targeting' as "a way of spreading the wealth. The economic needs of rural Wales are different from Swansea's. We are the only party to recognise these different priorities"<sup>49</sup>. Similarly, another Plaid Cymru Assembly Member, Elin Jones, issued a press release in November 2001 arguing the case for economic decentralisation from the capital outwards as a matter of urgency. Responding to announcements of job creation in south-east Wales, Jones, whilst welcoming more employment in general, noted that "creating 1000 jobs for Cardiff is no use to rural Meirionnydd where they are struggling to keep their young people in Wales and their economy thriving"<sup>50</sup>.

It is clear, therefore, that, just as much as communal identification and cultural and linguistic matters, economic concerns affect the debate on centralisation within the party. Hence, the state of the economy has had a noticeable effect on how the decentralisation concept has been handled and how it has progressed; recalling within this context that the Welsh economy on the whole has long been in desperate need of rejuvenation having suffered to a great extent with the demise of heavy industry and agriculture in the last twenty years or so. It must also be noted, however, that this message of social amelioration through economic decentralisation is not unique to

<sup>49</sup> Dai Lloyd, '*Spreading the Wealth*', in *Swansea West News*, Spring 2003, p.2

<sup>50</sup> Elin Jones, *More Jobs for Rural Wales*, Press Release, 29.11.01

Plaid Cymru's ideology as the emergence of a decentralised socio-economic agenda – often wrapped up in the concept known as subsidiarity – throughout the European Union, and indeed throughout the global trading arena in its entirety, has had a huge impact on regionalised and localised practice. In a sense, therefore, this thesis would support the argument that decentralisation is now accepted as customary rather than innovative practice. Thus, Plaid Cymru's championing of its policies on decentralisation as radical and inimitable may well be slightly fanciful.

### **Decentralisation: Locating outwards from Cardiff**

Looking at decentralisation on another front, some Plaid Cymru activists were contending, in the build up to the advent of the National Assembly, that the Assembly should actually be a peripatetic institution. If it became one, this line of argument developed, the Assembly would be more accountable to the people of Wales as it would not be seen as a centralised, Cardiff-based institution. John Ball, a former Plaid Cymru councillor and prospective Assembly and Parliamentary candidate, was one of those who proposed a radical decentralist solution. During an interview conducted for this thesis, Ball contended that, if in power, Plaid Cymru should “dump the Regional Committees, and the Assembly should meet in Caernarfon at some stage of the year, meet in Wrexham at another stage, and meet in Aberystwyth at another stage”<sup>51</sup>.

Ball's suggestion would seemingly offer a challenge to those within the party who side with nationalism as a centre-led political ideology, as this decentralisation would throw up locations of power. Nationalists within Plaid Cymru may see this as a challenge to the siting of Cardiff as the locus of power. Cardiff, as Wales' capital, also stands as a beacon for the representation of Wales at international level. In

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<sup>51</sup> John Ball, *Interview*, 16.03.99

nationalistic terms certainly, but also within nation-states generally, capital cities, which are customarily the seats of government, also offer a focus for unification. The type of decentralisation envisaged by Ball would invariably challenge that sense of unification as people are asked to display some allegiance to a fresh set of geographical entities. What should be taken into consideration by Ball, and others who advocate establishing new centres of political power, is the fact that many people already identify with an assortment of community, regional, national, UK-wide, European and global entities.

Another apparent problem, in the case of decentralisation within Wales itself, is that while John Ball cites Caernarfon, Wrexham and Aberystwyth as his centres out of which a new peripatetic Welsh Government could function, Phil Williams has observed how it is actually to Liverpool that many people in the north of Wales, and in particular those in the north-east of Wales, turn their attention<sup>52</sup>. This is because, as Williams noted, people in the north of Wales regard Liverpool as an large urban area that can provide for all of their economic, cultural, consumer and leisure needs. This is highly problematic for Plaid Cymru as Liverpool never has been, and never will be, within the ambit of any Welsh political administration. This thesis would contend that it would appear evident, given some of these examples, that decentralisation in practice would not necessarily facilitate a more 'Welsh' Wales; should that be what some people within Plaid Cymru are ultimately seeking from any implementation of a programme of decentralisation. Indeed, competition for resources and disputes over the locations for the seats of decentralised power, should proposals such as those

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<sup>52</sup> Phil Williams, The Psychology of Distance, p.8

offered by John Ball ever be put into practice, may actually induce a more diverse and fractious, as opposed to harmonious and pluralistic, body politic.

### **Rurbanisation and Green Ideology**

Phil Williams gave words of caution about how Plaid Cymru should proceed with decentralisation. Williams said that the party has to clarify its intentions and it has to be regularly reminded that “the ultimate decentralisers are the New Right in America”<sup>53</sup>. While this thesis accepts that Williams’ observations may be true, there is also a more common and more appropriate tendency to associate decentralisation with green ideology. Taking this on board, Freeden’s view of decentralisation opens up new areas for examination. For Freeden, decentralisation “may invoke simplicity, bioregionalism, and ‘back to the land’, but it can be put to work in complex technological urban settings”<sup>54</sup>. Assessing Freeden’s statement, it is intriguing to note how the ‘green’ values that Freeden is addressing could be translated into the ‘thought-practices’ of Plaid Cymru. ‘Simplicity’, for example, could be seen as an appeal for a less ‘dehumanised’ and more ‘face-to-face’ society where social interaction is centred primarily on an individual’s immediate environs. ‘Bioregionalism’ and ‘back to the land’, on the other hand, are evident within Plaid Cymru’s appeal for sustainable development at a local level. The party have advocated “redirecting support into agri-environmental programmes, integrated rural development, with special attention to the family farm and new entrants to the industry”<sup>55</sup>. If Plaid Cymru was to implement these policies it would undoubtedly foster a more localised economy in which family-run farms, and other small-scale

<sup>53</sup> Phil Williams, Interview, 25.09.01

<sup>54</sup> Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.533

<sup>55</sup> Plaid Cymru, Working for the New Wales, 1999, p.29

businesses, would become centres of production within a multitude of decentralised zones.

Furthermore, it is worth remembering that the ‘back to the land’ call was, as has been noted earlier in this thesis, a feature of ‘early’ Plaid Cymru and, in particular, it served to occupy much of the time given over by Saunders Lewis to his political thought. Hence, the notion of decentralisation could be adapted to relate to, and reflect, Saunders Lewis’ romantic, anti-industrial rhetoric. In this context, Plaid Cymru’s desire to achieve ‘rurbanisation’ requires some attention. Championing rurbanisation as part of a campaign to transfer land from the gentry to the peasantry, D.J. and Noelle Davies contended that rurbanisation meant “the diffusing through the countryside of the best amenities... enjoyed by the town while ensuring that, instead of a slowly urban cosmopolitanism, a living Welsh culture informs the life of town and country alike”<sup>56</sup>. Rurbanisation, in the thinking of D.J. and Noelle Davies, would be a natural path for Wales to proceed upon, and it would be the correct choice to adopt for Plaid Cymru’s social philosophy; indeed it is contended that this rurbanisation is actually rooted in a chain of values that exist in Wales and, therefore, it merely requires augmentation. This is because, they claimed, that in her history, Wales has stood for “individual liberty and initiative combined with co-operation, decentralisation as opposed to bureaucracy, and a genuinely democratic culture rooted in the homes and daily life of the whole people”<sup>57</sup>.

With this in mind, and in order to visualise the role played by the concept of decentralisation within Plaid Cymru’s ideology, the question to be asked of ‘modern’

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<sup>56</sup> D.J. and Noelle Davies, Wales: The Land of Our Children, p.25

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*; p.28

Plaid Cymru is whether the party's understanding of decentralisation as a concept owes its principles to the 'early' Plaid Cymru vision, as related above, or whether decentralisation, as the party understands it today, has taken on a new guise? The answer, this thesis contends, would appear to lie somewhere in between. There is little doubt that there is still a degree of romanticism in the party's celebration of the meticulousness attributed to the non-theoretical associationism that is evident within small-scale communities; communities and communityism being a concept that will be explored later in this chapter. Moreover, while anti-industrialisation does not feature in Plaid Cymru's contemporary pronouncements, there is, nevertheless, a sense of post-Fordism in the way that the party champions its vision of the localised production of goods and services and the primacy of communal transactions.

### **'Breaking down power': the polyarchic approach**

Apart from the geographical concerns mentioned earlier, another area where there may be problems for Plaid Cymru in favouring the language of decentralisation is in assessing how far down this decentralisation should go. Unless a cogent and unambiguous policy of subsidiarity is introduced, and it is taken right down to the level of each and every individual, then cases will inevitably arise where individuals will still be subservient to layers of socio-economic and political power; in other words, some form of polyarchic system of governance would undoubtedly have to be developed for decentralisation to be true to its name. In considering this polyarchic approach, Phil Williams claimed that he found a strong commitment within Plaid Cymru to the principles of the adjacent concept, as Freedman would interpret it, of 'direct democracy'. Plaid Cymru has a record of decentralist rhetoric and around about the time that Phil Williams was contemplating joining the party, in the early

1960's, Plaid Cymru was confirming its opposition to “the evils of centralised authority, which regards doctrines and the maintenance of its centralised power as more important than alleviating human and social distress”<sup>58</sup>.

Williams was clearly influenced by this talk – so much so indeed that, as Laura McAllister has observed<sup>59</sup>, he proposed a system of subsidiarity for Wales as far back as 1970 – and, in an apparent commitment to an anti-statist position, Williams once declared that “one of the things that attracted me to Plaid Cymru was its commitment to the breakdown of concentrations of power and it seemed that it applied as much to the industrial sector as to the political sector”<sup>60</sup>. However, should these theoretical dissections come to fruition, what may ultimately transpire, this thesis would contend, is a scenario in which, unless this ‘breakdown of the concentrations of power’ is provided for through legislation, this polyarchic system may occur *de facto*. If it does arise through *de facto* causes then the decentralisation may be uncontrollable as far as the central, or national, system of administration is concerned. This is because any decentralised pattern of governance may go against the edicts of the national government; irrespective of whatever party happened to be in control at the national level at the time. In the case of Plaid Cymru, for instance, if an example arose where a decentralised body went against Plaid Cymru policy – in rejecting bilingualism for instance – then Plaid Cymru may have created, in decentralisation, a monster over which they would have limited control. Unless, that is, they decided in those circumstances to use recourse to a centralised system and diktat from above; which, this thesis would argue, would be merely defeating the objective of decentralisation.

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<sup>58</sup> Plaid Cymru, Summer School and Conference, Llangefni 1959

<sup>59</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.48

<sup>60</sup> Phil Williams, Interview, 25.09.01



Giving the state-of-affairs mentioned above, therefore, rather than expanding a sense of freedom and bringing simplicity to the Welsh political system, decentralisation could rebound on Plaid Cymru if the new decentralised layers were seen to be petty bureaucratic, or flamboyantly free-thinking institutions, or, most alarmingly, if they were to become fractious and overly independent and thus disrupt governance within the overall political entity of Wales. In her ethnographic study of Welsh identity, Alison Griffiths observed that “postmodern accounts of subjectivity suggest ‘Welshness’ as fractured and multi-determined”<sup>61</sup>. Decentralisation, it could be argued, would only strengthen this ‘fractured and multi-determined’ pattern if Plaid Cymru was ever to introduce it.

It may be feasible to contend that for a perfect decentralised system of government and society to emerge a *tabula rasa* would be required. This is because any attempt to alter an existing system would be competing against norms, conventions and age-old prejudices and, hence, any cultural change could prove awkward to administer. If Plaid Cymru truly seeks decentralisation then the party must face up to these inherent weaknesses as opposed to embellishing the supposed strengths. Also, it would appear that there has to be an acknowledgement from within the party that the implications of overseeing a policy of decentralisation would prove to be a far more radical option for the structure and governance of society in Wales than previously envisaged.

Further to this, and connecting the concept of decentralisation with the concept of freedom, Plaid Cymru has to evaluate whether decentralisation broadens its

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<sup>61</sup> Alison Griffiths, ‘*Ethnography and popular memory: postmodern configurations of Welsh identities?*’, in *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media and Culture*, vol.7, no.2, 1994, p.1

conception of freedom and vice versa. Michael Freeden has observed that all forms of freedom “contain the notion of non-constraint”<sup>62</sup>. If this is so, then Plaid Cymru, if it accepts and endorses the concept of freedom, and the non-constraint notion that is a constituent part of that freedom, cannot feasibly prohibit the expression of political views that are antithetical to those of the party if, when the time arises, the party sanctions the system of decentralisation in which these oppositional voices are allowed articulation. Any deviation from this acceptance of the non-constraint principle would put into question the concept of liberty and its usage within Plaid Cymru. Consequently, a conflict of concepts within Plaid Cymru’s ideology may be evident, as the above variances demonstrate. If this discrepancy is accentuated, and potentially this thesis may be of use in this respect, then it would be up to the party’s theoreticians and policy-makers to adapt the party’s ideology to create equilibrium of opinion.

Nevertheless, despite some reservations about the extent to which the party has decontested the concept of decentralisation, and whether the application of the concept has been thoroughly and coherently reasoned, this thesis would support the idea that decentralisation is a Freedenite core concept within Plaid Cymru’s ideology. The contention that Wales needs a system of government that is ‘not totalitarian’, to paraphrase both Saunders Lewis and Gwynfor Evans, appears to be a leitmotif in the party’s ‘thought-practices’. The concept of decentralisation also engages in an ‘overlapping consensus’ with the concepts of decentralist socialism and communityism, as will be explored later in this chapter. Similarly, decentralisation also acts as an enveloper for the theories of rurbanisation and subsidiarity. Thus, the

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<sup>62</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.63

volume of evidence appears overwhelming to place decentralisation as a core concept within the party's ideology.

Without decentralisation as a core, or even if decentralisation was relegated to a peripheral status, many of Plaid Cymru's policy statements about the role and vibrancy of local communities and their distinctiveness in the holistic vision of Wales and 'Welshness' would appear too fragile to comprehend. Meanwhile, this insertion of decentralisation as a core concept leaves the perception of Plaid Cymru as a political party whose ideology is identifiable as nationalist in serious doubt. By positioning decentralisation at the heart of the party's 'thought-practices' Plaid Cymru's theoreticians may well have, albeit unwittingly, negated its nationalism.

### **Decentralist Socialism**

The concept of decentralist socialism within Plaid Cymru's ideology can be seen, and is seen by some within the party, and others outside of the party, in relation to the concept of decentralisation. But, significantly, it is also a concept that Plaid Cymru likes to maintain that it is developing as an alternative to state socialism. Hence, the message that emanates from Plaid Cymru circles is that decentralist socialism is not another manifestation of established state socialism; a state socialism that many in the party would equate with an oppressive politico-economic system that is akin to Big Brotherism. For Plaid Cymru, therefore, decentralist socialism represents the advocating of lively, small-scale communities with a green ethos.

When he was asked to define decentralist socialism for this thesis, Rhodri Glyn Thomas exclaimed that he viewed it as the promotion of a unique brand of socialism

that was not centralised. Introducing a liberal line of reasoning into the debate, Thomas affirmed that this rejection by Plaid Cymru of centralised socialism had come about because that particular strand of ‘top-down’ socialism “clearly had an effect on an individual’s freedom within society”<sup>63</sup>. Thomas also perceived Plaid Cymru’s version of decentralist socialism as developing organically. As he commented, “the idea of devolved or community socialism is that it comes out of the roots, it comes out of people’s lives and it is based on social justice”<sup>64</sup>. Furthermore, Thomas also added a moral angle to this decentralist socialism, whilst simultaneously justifying the decentred position, as he believed that decentralist socialism would incorporate a “responsibility to share things with other people who are not as privileged as us. But it is not something that is forced from the top. It is something that grows out of people’s everyday lives”<sup>65</sup>.

### **The Evolution of Decentralist Socialism**

The concept of decentralist socialism has been forwarded by certain individuals within the party who have championed its worth as a radical alternative to the *status quo*. However, its clarity as an ideological concept within the party remains unclear. One of the prime movers for decentralist socialism within the party, Phil Williams, admitting that he had been working on the theory of decentralist socialism since the 1960’s. Nevertheless, Williams is on record as candidly stating that he still remained uncertain as to its actual definition and he was unsure regarding decentralist socialism’s viability as a political and economic concept<sup>66</sup>. However, these uncertainties did not prevent decentralist socialist themes and pronouncements

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<sup>63</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Interview, 14.05.01

<sup>64</sup> ibid

<sup>65</sup> ibid

<sup>66</sup> Phil Williams, Interview, 25.09.01

intermittently appearing within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. These were often contentious and they did not go uncontested, as the party's records show. An example from the late 1960's proves this point. An official party document from 1967, *How Much Policy?*, argued that decentralist socialism was a side issue. The document pleaded with the party, "Why lose support over workers control in industry when there are already too few prepared to support self-government?"<sup>67</sup>.

Alternatively, a year later, at the party conference in 1968, the Conway Rhanbarth accentuated the definite application of the concept of decentralist socialism as they "called upon the National Council of Plaid Cymru to establish a committee to work out a detailed policy on worker control in industry"<sup>68</sup>. Whatever the level of debate over the perceived prominence of this matter within the party's set of principles, and whatever outcomes derived from the attempts to delineate the conceptual content of decentralist socialism, by the time of Dafydd Elis-Thomas' presidency in the 1980's the pursuance of decentralist socialist objectives, as Laura McAllister has identified, "had been placed on party membership cards"<sup>69</sup>.

Yet again, it could be proposed that this championing of concepts like decentralist socialism by a few key individuals and policy-makers within the party implies that individual voices within the party are attempting to explore avenues that the party could travel down. Even though the second aim of the party, as enunciated on Plaid Cymru's website, is "to ensure economic prosperity, social justice and the health of the natural environment based on decentralist socialism"<sup>70</sup>, this thesis is interested in

<sup>67</sup> Plaid Cymru, *How Much Policy?*, 1967, p. 1

<sup>68</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Annual Conference 1968*,

<sup>69</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, p. 78

<sup>70</sup> Plaid Cymru, [www.plaidcymru.org.uk](http://www.plaidcymru.org.uk)

the argument that key players are driving the party's 'thought-practices' and that, subsequently, the ideas stemming from these theoreticians find their way into party manifestos and appear in pronouncements on party websites. It could be viewed that as long as these innovative concepts and theoretical avenues are not too far removed from the general social philosophy shared by members of Plaid Cymru, then these conjectural explorations all add to the party's overall ideological position; although to what extent these concepts are put into practice by Plaid Cymru when it has a degree of power at community council and local authority levels remains questionable. Hence, this thesis would maintain, that all that this attempt to carve conceptual niches appears to do, even if a concept like decentralist socialism is enshrined in the party's written aims, is to back up the Freedenite argument with regard to what constitutes a *full* ideology.

### **Decentralist Socialism: a 'non-nationalist' concept**

Whatever the genealogy of this particular ideological concept may be, nonetheless, what is of interest to this thesis is the fact that decentralist socialism is, as Dave Adamson has noted, one of several "non-nationalist issues of concern to Plaid Cymru"<sup>71</sup>. It may be accurate to contend that this emphasis on decentralist socialism as a 'non-nationalist' issue further strengthens the claim made in this thesis that what is under consideration, when Plaid Cymru's ideology is scrutinised, is a set of political ideas and principles that may well have Wales as their focal point but, barring the element of location, is ultimately an ideology that does not fit comfortably into conventional nationalist frameworks. Moreover, as seen by the examination of decentralisation earlier in this chapter, many concepts to be found within the party's

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<sup>71</sup> Dave Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation*, p.135

'thought-practices' actually counter any association with the ideology of nationalism. To these ends, decentralist socialism should be seen as the infusion of socialist economic principles onto sub-national geographic units. In Plaid Cymru's eyes this would not have to be a revolutionary act as the party maintains that these socialistic principles are actually an innate feature in what is already, in many respects, a pluralistic and localised social order. What Plaid Cymru would like to see implemented, therefore, is a decentralised Welsh polity that is fine-tuned and able to augment the already existing social, and cultural and linguistic, framework.

In Freedenite terms, decentralist socialism is an ideological concept that is at the heart of Plaid Cymru's social philosophy. This thesis would contend that the fact that it is a developing concept, as opposed to a stagnant or waning concept, within the party suggests that decentralist socialism should be labelled as a core concept within the party's ideology. Added to the existence of decentralisation within the party's core concepts, the overarching ideological figure of socialism begins to play a greater part in the morphology of Plaid Cymru. Moreover, the next ideological concept under consideration may further enhance the claim that it is in fact socialism, as opposed to nationalism or liberalism, that is the predominant ideology at work within the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru.

### **Co-operativism**

Co-operativism, when fully operational, is, arguably, a perfect system of decentralist socialism. An excellent example of co-operativism in action in a Welsh context can be seen through the workings of Tower colliery at Hirwaun; functioning today as a result of a workers buy-out in the 1990's. Plaid Cymru, although very

supportive of the miners at Tower, cannot claim any direct influence on their decision to move into a co-operative scheme. However, Plaid Cymru has got a record of championing co-operativism in the coalfield, as well as being supportive of co-ownership within the general economy of Wales. Back in 1959, Gwynfor Evans led a Plaid Cymru delegation that held a meeting with mineworkers at a condemned pit at Cwmllynfell. Plaid Cymru proposed a scheme for co-operative working at the pit that was unanimously backed by the miners themselves. With considerable support from the party, the miners found a market for their coal in the Netherlands. Regardless of this action plan, however, the Conservative Government, the National Coal Board, with the backing of the National Union of Mineworkers, and the Labour Party all opposed the co-operative scheme. Cwmllynfell pit closed shortly afterwards<sup>72</sup>.

Despite the failure to secure a co-operativist future for Cwmllynfell colliery, Plaid Cymru was not put off from advocating the co-operativist line and the party committed itself to “abolishing stringent state control in favour of more real co-operative ownership and control”<sup>73</sup>, while enunciating that “the principles of a co-operative society should be taught at all schools”<sup>74</sup>. In actual fact, even before the saga of Cwmllynfell, co-operativism featured in Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’. Back in 1937, J.E. Daniel saw the attraction of co-operativism and envisaged its amalgamation with nationalist principles. Daniel adopted the perspective that this “co-operative nationalism is at the opposite pole from the state-idolatry of both Fascism and Socialism”<sup>75</sup>. A couple of years after J.E. Daniel’s proposals, the party attempted to broaden out the concept of co-operativism and give it a more functional

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<sup>72</sup> Plaid Cymru, Summer School and Conference 1959, Llangefni, p.17

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*; p.73

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*; p.87

<sup>75</sup> J.E. Daniel, Welsh Nationalism: What it stands for, p.61



appearance. Citing Belgium as an instance wherein forms of co-operativism were in operation, Plaid Cymru argued in favour of the introduction of Co-operative Boards in order to stimulate “co-operative control without government monopoly”<sup>76</sup>.

Further to this, Wynne Samuel, in a tract concerning the debilitating effects of World War Two on Wales, and in a search for an economic panacea to remodel Wales in the years ahead, commented on how “the principle of co-operative democracy is the basis for economic reconstruction in Wales”<sup>77</sup>. Although democracy and nationalism are advanced by Samuel and J.E. Daniel alike, this thesis would point out that it is the fact that both view co-operativism as an integral part of the party’s thinking at the time that is important to this assessment of the concepts that feature within Plaid Cymru’s ideology.

### **The Co-operativst Alternative**

On an operational front, it would be very difficult for Plaid Cymru to implement a comprehensive co-operativist arrangement in a society that has a culture of functioning, both politically and economically, through hierarchical systems. Any co-operativist arrangement would require horizontal linkages to be used to the maximum. The present capitalist mode of production, within Wales and elsewhere, operates through a hierarchical socio-economic system in which vertical linkages are imperative. The introduction of horizontal linkages on a nationwide scale would appear to be an impossible task without the creation of a more equalitarian society and, it could be argued, without, at the very least, a diminishing, if not a total obliteration, of the existing capitalist system. So, for Plaid Cymru’s co-operativism to

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<sup>76</sup> Plaid Cymru, The New Wales, (Caernarfon, Swyddfa’r Blaid, 1939) p.14

<sup>77</sup> Wynne Samuel, Transference Must Stop, (Caernarfon, Gwenlyn Evans 1943), p.11

succeed, it would appear that the adjacent concept of equalitarianism must come into play while the concept of capitalism, to be addressed later in this chapter, would have to be seen by party strategists as an incompatible concept. Whatever rhetoric Plaid Cymru adopts over these matters, it seems certain that a wholesale measure of co-operativism could not possibly come to fruition unless the networks and conditions for social and economic interaction on an egalitarian economic basis are met.

The problem in all of this for Plaid Cymru, this thesis contends, is that it has failed to decontest, in the Freedenite sense, the concept of co-operativism. Although, as Charlotte Davies has observed<sup>78</sup>, debates over the nature of industrial democracy did take place within the party in the 1970's, motions to party conferences on this subject tended to attract counteracting motions that sought compromise and invariably used language that was constructed in order to depoliticise rather than clarify the ideological content of these socialistic motions. If Plaid Cymru thinks that a co-operative system can come about whilst a capitalist mode of production remains in operation, then, as Freeden has noted<sup>79</sup>, there are 'logical inconsistencies' to this line of thought. This thesis would contend that Plaid Cymru's co-operativism, therefore, needs re-assessment and clarification as it is not, as presented by party members to date, and in terms of its capacity to instigate major structural changes, a logical concept. As to its place within the party's ideology, it can only be registered as a peripheral concept as co-operativism may influence Plaid Cymru's economic reasoning, but it certainly does not act as a prime motor or an integral feature of the party's 'thought-practices'.

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<sup>78</sup> Charlotte Davies, Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century, p.76

<sup>79</sup> Michael Freeden, Ideology, p.56

## Anarcho-Syndicalism

Both Laura McAllister and Dafydd Trystan allude to the influence of anarcho-syndicalism on Plaid Cymru's political thinking. McAllister has claimed that she sees anarcho-syndicalism influencing 'early' Plaid Cymru opinion – though, as she has argued, anarcho-syndicalism was “already a recent memory by 1925”<sup>80</sup>, and, therefore, even then it must have been viewed as a concept that could be revived rather than an ongoing set of principles – while Trystan has stated that he wants to reset anarcho-syndicalism in a contemporary context. On first sighting, it would appear strange that a party who traditionally have rejected any outright attachment to any one socio-economic class should find solace in the ideas put forward by anarcho-syndicalists; a group who clearly focussed their intentions and aspirations on raising revolutionary consciousness, and inducing insurrectionary activism, among the industrial working classes.

Anarcho-syndicalism requires a definite identification with the supposed political ideals of the working classes, or 'working class' as this body of opinion is generally referred. In this theoretical mode, therefore, ideas are class driven and the image of a united national consciousness, or a uniform stratification, is rejected by anarcho-syndicalists who view any attachments based around the concept of 'the nation' as an anathema. This is because, in the eyes of anarcho-syndicalists and contrary to the views of nationalists, the nation is more a tool of oppression than a beacon of solidarity. On top of this, the essentialism that comes to the fore in much of Plaid Cymru's pronouncements and policies contradict the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. To take one example, if the encouragement of the use of the Welsh

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<sup>80</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.50

language as the vernacular is favoured by Plaid Cymru, as will be investigated later in this chapter, anarcho-syndicalists would rebuff this on libertarian grounds alone. This is because, as Roger Griffin has pointed out, the construction and stability of nations and national languages are accidents of history and therefore “it would be wrong for an anarcho-syndicalist in Wales to insist that someone living in Wales speaks Welsh”<sup>81</sup>. This refusal to celebrate and promote things viewed by Plaid Cymru as component parts of the Welsh identity would appear to be going against the political and cultural positioning of most, if not all, Plaid Cymru members.

Further disparities could arise over the issue of how equality is perceived.

Anarcho-syndicalists maintain that equality is achievable only through collective will and action. If managed correctly, anarcho-syndicalists argue, liberation from capitalist and state tyranny will ensue. While elements of Plaid Cymru’s social and economic thinking could be aligned with this radical rejection of the base and superstructure of modern societies, and hence a realignment and creation of a new socio-economic order may well be welcomed in some quarters, it is the perceived replacement of the state in its entirety, as has been mentioned earlier in this thesis, that would inevitably incite the most fervent deliberation within Plaid Cymru’s ideational arena. Whatever the individual criticisms of the party’s political agenda may be, in the estimation of both the vast majority of its members and most neutral political observers, the salient features of Plaid Cymru’s ideology are all about building upon a distinctly Welsh structure of government and society, as opposed to collapsing what is already in place. Furthermore, this nation building by Plaid Cymru is to be achieved, as mentioned previously, through the propagation of non-violent praxis. This would

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<sup>81</sup> Roger Griffin, *Between politics and apoliteia: the New Right’s strategy for conserving the fascist vision in the ‘interregnum’*. [www.brokes.ac.uk/schools/humanities/](http://www.brokes.ac.uk/schools/humanities/)

appear to be at loggerheads to the views of some anarcho-syndicalists. As Georges Sorel wrote in *Reflections on Violence*, “the anarcho-syndicalists taught the workers that they need not be ashamed of acts of violence”<sup>82</sup>. Although Sorel had the links between Italian syndicalism and Italian fascism in mind, the imagery is nevertheless stark and the propensity towards belligerent action is a facet that would not find much solace within the non-revolutionary mindsets of many traditionalist, and arguably socially conservative and deferential, Plaid Cymru supporters.

### **Anarcho-Syndicalism, Plaid Cymru and the Trade Unions**

Anarcho-syndicalism relies on the trade unions as the motivating force for radical change. While this thesis would not seek to directly link Plaid Cymru’s recent appeals to trade unions in Wales with anarcho-syndicalism, the party have been pro-active in the last few years in reaching out for trade union support. The party’s trade union section ‘*Undeb*’ (Union) was set up in the late 1990’s “in order to raise the profile of Plaid Cymru within the trade union movement”<sup>83</sup>. This does not mean, however, that the party were inactive in establishing links before that, as Plaid Cymru has actively supported trade union causes for decades. To illustrate this, in an appeal to the party to ensure that workers’ interests and Plaid Cymru’s political ambitions were juxtaposed, there was a call in 1969 for trade union members within Plaid Cymru to push for a system through which trade union representatives, via direct election rather than nomination, could join the boards of state-controlled industries<sup>84</sup>. Nevertheless, the pragmatism involved for a political party such as Plaid Cymru to forge alliances with the trade union sector to build a democratic left-of-centre society with Wales

<sup>82</sup> Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, (New York, Collier Books, 1961), p.58

<sup>83</sup> Ian Titherington, ‘*Calling all Trade Unionists*’, in *Swansea West News*, Spring 2003, p.2

<sup>84</sup> Plaid Cymru, *The Peaceful Road to Self-Government*, p.22

falls far short of anarcho-syndicalist intentions with regard to the socio-economic structures of society. Organising the social order around a trade union configuration would pose enormous difficulties for a party such as Plaid Cymru who, unlike the Labour Party, are not immediately associated with trade union activity, or indeed have not been readily identifiable – certainly in historic terms – with working class political movements in general.

One figure that goes against this perception of Plaid Cymru as a party who only had a minimal level of contact with the trade union organisations – who are supposed to be the engine for societal change under anarcho-syndicalism – is R.C. Roberts from Rhosgadfen. Roberts was a District Secretary of the Quarrymen's Union and was a political activist who helped to organise soup kitchens throughout the 1930's. Importantly, as far as Plaid Cymru is concerned, Roberts was the only prominent trade unionist to support Saunders Lewis' bid to become an MP, the other signatories to a letter of commendation being either members of the clergy or academics<sup>85</sup>. The fact that trade union support for Plaid Cymru has always been a fringe element within the party's morphology means that the appearance of anyone attempting to promote anarcho-syndicalism within the party, and there is no evidence by the way to suggest that Roberts was imbued with anarcho-syndicalist sympathies, would have difficulty as there was not an obvious base from which anarcho-syndicalist principles could multiply.

Considering the above, and as so much of what anarcho-syndicalism represents would appear to be paradoxical to the ideological objectives of many Plaid Cymru

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<sup>85</sup> Wynne Samuel, Transference Must Stop, p.11

members, it may yet again be a case, and a pattern certainly appears to be emerging, that this re-invention by Dafydd Trystan of anarcho-syndicalism as a concept within Plaid Cymru's ideology, may just be another example of an individual attempting to implant a political concept within Plaid Cymru in order to chart a new course for the party. If this is an accurate claim, then again there are signs of 'logical inconsistencies' in the construction of some of these concepts within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'.

Michael Freeden has observed how anarcho-syndicalism operates in a political arena in which the state is no longer "the supreme social organization"<sup>86</sup>. As has been mentioned previously, Plaid Cymru's first objective upon reaching their goal of acquiring self-government for Wales would undoubtedly entail a form of state building, or national enhancement at least. In practical terms, therefore, the stripping of the state would be a long-term objective; if indeed it were to be an objective at all. Plaid Cymru's attempts to forge closer links to the trade unions have never involved any suggestions of creating a Plaid Cymru / Trades Union Congress alliance to proffer an anarcho-syndicalist agenda. Taken as a whole, therefore, this thesis maintains that anarcho-syndicalism is not a core concept within Plaid Cymru's ideology. It could feasibly be labelled as a peripheral concept but, importantly, it is not one of those peripheral concepts, as Freeden has remarked, "that add a vital gloss"<sup>87</sup> to the core concepts. Hence, anarcho-syndicalism, in the instance of Plaid Cymru's morphology, is a thin, or isolated, peripheral concept.

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<sup>86</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.222

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*; p.78

## **Cymdeithasiaeth / Communityism**

Michael Freeden has noted how the element of attachment encapsulated in the term ‘community’ acts to situate individuals “within anthropological-cultural and ideational contexts, thus meeting part of the desiderata of ideological analysis”<sup>88</sup>. There is a contraposition between community activity and endorsement, and liberal, or libertarian, individualism. It is a debate on structure and positioning. Where Plaid Cymru stands on this is important as it feeds into other ideological concepts and ideologies. One example of this perspective is related by Geraint H Jenkins who, in a passage looking at political ideologies in the 1980’s, has contrasted the differences between Plaid Cymru’s ideological approaches to that of the prevailing ‘thought-practices’ of the New Right. Bringing together some of the concepts assessed in this thesis, Jenkins wrote of how “Plaid Cymru’s sophisticated drive on behalf of cymdeithasiaeth and decentralised socialism was a robust counterweight to the cult of Britishness and free market values”<sup>89</sup>.

## **Cymdeithasiaeth and Communitarianism**

It is generally acknowledged, within Welsh political and literary circles at least, that the term *cymdeithasiaeth* is an old Welsh expression whose meaning broadly equates with the concept of ‘communityism’. It was used, in a tangible sense, by the socialist essayist R.J. Derfel to express the genuine, inherent bond that exists within a community, and the desire of the people within that community to assist one another. Another Welsh writer, the Marxist Raymond Williams, viewed *cymdeithasiaeth* as the

<sup>88</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.248

<sup>89</sup> Geraint H Jenkins, ‘Terminal Decline: The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century’, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, vol. 1, 2 (Summer 2001), p.63



“socialism of place”<sup>90</sup>; meaning, to interpret Williams, that socialism on a personal level – in a ‘place’ – is comprehensible, while large-scale socialism is unfeasible.

Whatever definition of this communityism is accepted, it remains clear that the social aspects of community – its sense of co-operation and bonding – are being encouraged.

Plaid Cymru’s use of the expression *cymdeithasiaeth*, and the party’s general support for community-based politics and activities would appear, therefore, to position the party in the ‘community socialist’ bracket that has arisen from the concept of communityism. Whether this is a fair reflection or not, there remains little doubt that the adjacent concept of ‘localism’ shines through as a positive socio-economic and political belief. The negative side of this for Plaid Cymru, however, may arise in the manner in which localism can breed parochialism and what can then emerge, if this is applied onto a geo-social map of Wales, is the concept that is pejoratively referred to as ‘villageism’. As this ‘villageism’, when it meets up with other ‘villageisms’ or other competing ‘thought-practices’, is generally reckoned to be divisive and the producer of social discord, the problem again arises for Plaid Cymru in that its desire – its *raison d’etre* – to promote the notion of a united and harmonious geographical and political space known as Wales would undoubtedly be harmed if each locality was engaged in internecine exchanges with their neighbouring locality. Once more, this thesis would wish to note that it could be indicated that if Plaid Cymru has core or peripheral concepts that are part of the nationalist morphology, then these concepts of localism, parochialism and villageism would inevitably appear contradictory to those nationalist ideological principles.

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<sup>90</sup> Jane Aaron, *Women in Search of a Welsh Identity*, in *Hard Times* (63), 1998, p.14

In considering the above, one area that needs to be explored is whether the emphasis on the concept of community can be seen as anything other than an attempt to foster a type of organic, predominantly rural, or at least non-urbanised, conservatism. If this promotion of organic conservatism does indeed prove to be the driving force behind the conceptualisation of 'community' values and solidarity, then this line of reasoning could be used to evaluate, and probably lay bare, the credibility of the socialist self-prescriptions that are forwarded by people within Plaid Cymru. Whether this is so or not, it is nevertheless evident that the idea of highlighting and nurturing community values is something that does appeal to Plaid Cymru.

Although the label communitarianism is one that Plaid Cymru has, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, distanced itself from, there are signs of an overlapping consensus between some aspects of communitarian thought and Plaid Cymru's ideology. As Laura McAllister's article *The Perils of Community as a Construct for the Political Ideology of Welsh Nationalism* has pointed out, "communitarianism criticizes the lack of a community focus in other political ideologies"<sup>91</sup>. If McAllister's analysis is accepted, then Plaid Cymru's community focus places it more comfortably within a communitarian-style ideological category than one that may be found elsewhere along the political spectrum. Furthermore, the language of communitarianism, especially the commitment, as proclaimed by Amitai Etzioni, to the "rebuilding of moral communities"<sup>92</sup>, would undoubtedly find support today, and would have found support in the past, from the Plaid Cymru leadership, in particular from Saunders Lewis and Gwynfor Evans. This is because Plaid Cymru's leadership and policy-making elite have consistently advocated a rejuvenated Welsh community-

<sup>91</sup> Laura McAllister, 'The Perils of Community as a Construct for the Political Ideology of Welsh Nationalism', p.501

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*; p.500

based society that would be established not only on concrete political lines that encompassed the symbols of nationhood but also, and quite significantly, on spiritual and philosophical foundations that would lay the basis for these ‘moral communities’ to emerge.

### **Freedom and Polyarchic Systems**

For Gwynfor Evans, the concepts of freedom and power are interlinked with the notion of community. In an attack on what he portrayed as the totalitarianism that is endured by the Welsh people, as they cope with life under conditions of alienation, Evans noted that “freedom has no meaning for Welsh workers unless it means being free in their home and family, amongst their friends, in the choir and the chapel in which they were reared, in the countryside which they loved as part of themselves”<sup>93</sup>. This is not just a political observation, according to Evans, but it is a reflection of a psychological bond in evidence amongst, what he deemed to be, certain innate Welsh characteristics. As he continued to affirm, in what this thesis would contend could certainly be construed as a communitarian interpretation, “so intimately bound is their personality with these things, that to sever them from them is the most cruel and damaging blow which could be dealt. *These are the very things which give meaning and richness to their lives*”<sup>94</sup>.

Gwynfor Evans’ vision of community – the space evolving from the family home outward – is that it acts as the source for the nature of freedom that Plaid Cymru sees evident in localised circumstances. However, the party find these favourable conditions for nurturing freedom lacking when it comes to observing centralised or

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<sup>93</sup> Gwynfor Evans, They Cry Wolf: Totalitarianism in Wales and the Way Out, 1944, p.5

<sup>94</sup> *ibid*

state-centric formations. The argument evolves, therefore, that politics, given these circumstances, is more likely to be democratic and inclusive on a smaller scale than it would be in a larger, more impersonal arena. Thus, to these ends, by allowing for the growth and extension of political activism within a community setting, there is the potential, arguably, to help forge a non-hierarchical system of politics; possibly one that could, if so desired, help to engender the anarcho-syndicalism mentioned earlier. Along these lines, Michael Freeden, using a Gramscian analogy, has noted how grassroots-engendered, or polyarchic, political systems allow for fragmentation; that is the process through which intellectual elites are replaced by mass democratisation that is brought about by “a change in the social distribution of ideological producers”<sup>95</sup>. This thesis would propose, therefore, that Plaid Cymru’s championing of the ideological concept of community could be construed as an extension of democracy away from elitist conceptions and limited practice.

Also, in the wake of this democratic diffusion, there would undoubtedly be a burgeoning of the layers through which the ideational process could flourish. Through the involvement of the masses a more potent political dialectic may emerge, and this would inevitably offer up challenges to both the current socio-political structures and the ways in which people perceive political power within their communities. While this may prove useful for encouraging political debate among the populace, it would appear that there cannot be any way of guaranteeing that this synthesis of political thought would ultimately favour, or even broadly concur with, the ideology and political ambitions of Plaid Cymru. Given this line of debate, therefore, McAllister’s

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<sup>95</sup> Michael Freeden, *Confronting the chimera of a 'post-ideological' era*, p.8

warning to Plaid Cymru of ‘the perils of community’ may yet prove to be an accurate supposition.

Similarly, with the McAllister warning in mind, like decentralisation before it, the onus on community to provide a set of answers to the multiplicity of problems encountered by people within Wales could also be interpreted as reactionary in the face of the onset of globalisation. From this there may emerge a growing realisation that isolationism – in the sense of parochialism or villageism – cannot operate within what is rapidly becoming a more socially interactive and multicultural world. So a case may be constructed, by Plaid Cymru’s political opponents or by party members seeking an alternative ideological direction, to oppose any plans to increase particularism within Wales; if that indeed is what communityism could lead to, or be representative of.

### **Community and Identification**

When community is under the spotlight, the idea of who belongs within a community, and who is perceived to be outside of that community, could also be linked in with who is absorbed and who is ‘the Other’ within a nation. There would appear to be an obvious connection, therefore, between the notions of ‘community’ and ‘nationhood’ in that both offer a home to certain convictions and dispositions, and both provide people with a sense of protection against outside interests. Community can be seen as a staging post for the individual’s commitment to his / her society; that society generally being regarded, certainly in global terms, as the nation or nation-state. Back in 1962, the Plaid Cymru activist Meic Stephens wrote that the community is the location through which the individual can experience “self-identification with a

group and a place”<sup>96</sup>. So, for some time now, Plaid Cymru has viewed the communal milieu as a more natural and instinctive setting for political action and solidarity than the more centralised and rigid authority of the nation or nation-state.

Given this expression, it would be easy to link Plaid Cymru’s attachment to the concept of decentralisation to this attraction towards communityism. However, one question that must be asked of a political grouping purporting to be nationalist, or at least being identifiable with nationalism, is why not self-identification through the nation alone? Why does a party that has a high level of regard for the construct of the nation, as Plaid Cymru clearly does, require a sub-division, or rather what would amount to a multitude of sub-divisions, through which values and political ambitions are channelled?

One line of argument on all of this could hold that Plaid Cymru is very loose in its use of terminology and its accompanying descriptions; in other words the party has failed to decontest these concepts to the extent that it should have. This may be observable, for instance, when the expression ‘community’ is used and assessed. Laura McAllister has commented that the concept of community, or communityism, appears at regular intervals throughout Plaid Cymru’s history. However, as McAllister has interpreted it, “there is little consistency within the party in its understanding or application”<sup>97</sup>. Some within the party, however, have attempted to elucidate the concept of communityism. Ioan Bowen Rees, for example, proposed a scheme of “government by community’ whereby government was organised on the basis of local

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<sup>96</sup> McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.44

<sup>97</sup> ibid; p.45

units which could ensure the identity of the community”<sup>98</sup>. Similarly, a composite motion by Cardiganshire and West Denbigh Rhanbarths, presented to the 1970 Plaid Cymru Conference, sought to “re-iterate Plaid Cymru’s belief in the value of the small town and the rural village as social units”<sup>99</sup>.

What arises for Plaid Cymru out of these ‘thought-practices’ is the conviction that the advocating of community, as a unit from which a certain degree of socio-economic and political power can evolve, would amount to the proliferation of diversity as a ‘value-in-itself’. Concurrently, if the augmentation of communityism was to be made a priority under a Plaid Cymru administration, Wales would then inevitably experience a radical movement towards a more localised and accountable network of government. The centralised state, on the other hand, would appear to offer little, as far as Plaid Cymru is concerned, apart from uniformity and inaccessibility. If the party followed this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion then the national, or nation-state, structures would appear surplus to requirement. As the party has yet to decontest what it understands communityism to mean, or even what it fully perceives decentralisation to be, then an assessment of whether or not Plaid Cymru positions these concepts above the concept of ‘the nation’ or national frameworks is difficult to measure. This, however, is not a task of this thesis but a task that the party needs to undertake if it is to further comprehend its own political ideology.

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<sup>98</sup> *ibid*; p.48

<sup>99</sup> Plaid Cymru, Annual Conference, 1970, p.31

## Community Socialism and ‘Serving the Community’

To complicate matters further, Plaid Cymru has on occasions brought the notion of ‘community socialism’ into its discourse on communityism. Community socialism was actually adopted into the formal aims of the party at the 1981 Conference<sup>100</sup>; during a period, interestingly, of intense ideological struggle within the party that will be discussed in the ensuing chapter. Over time, however, the references to ‘community socialism’ have faded, as a metamorphosis to ‘decentralist socialism’ seems to have occurred. One simplistic but useful example of ‘community socialism’ was forwarded by Dafydd Wigley, who called for a re-opening of railway lines to service small communities and “an increase in community taxis”<sup>101</sup>. Here is an example of localism in action as a community’s transport needs are met, in short-distance terms, by taxis and, when it comes to long-distance travel, by the introduction of a frequent train service. Noticeable in this context is the fact that the party does not see community as an environment in which individualist activity or a spirit of entrepreneurship arises; what would be perceived as a right wing view of community. Rather, community is all about creating situations in which people can help others and within which democratic authorities act as overseers to ensure societal stability. Emphasis, therefore, in Plaid Cymru’s rhetoric, is always on servicing the community; what may be perceived as being a left-of-centre, welfarist perception.

When it comes to production and resources within a communal setting, Plaid Cymru have placed an onus on employing, wherever possible, “local craftsmen”<sup>102</sup>; though this may be interpreted by critics of the party as a submission to a

<sup>100</sup> Plaid Cymru, [www.plaidcymru.org.uk](http://www.plaidcymru.org.uk)

<sup>101</sup> Dafydd Wigley, Speech at Theatr Gwynedd, Bangor, 18.01.99

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*



discriminatory, particularist position. To pay for the improvements that the party envisage occurring in localised services, Plaid Cymru has long been an advocate of widening the powers of local authorities to finance their own projects. Proposals along these lines featured prominently in Plaid Cymru's 1969 report that, given the party's commitment to non-violent methods, was fittingly entitled *The Peaceful Road to Self-Government*<sup>103</sup>. Therein, it was projected that a local income tax would be introduced for the purpose of funding community initiatives. However, in chronological terms, even earlier precedents of decentralisation can be witnessed if the 1939 document *The New Wales* is scrutinised. In this document Plaid Cymru emphasised its belief that the Welsh economy should be built on the principle of a "local market for local products"<sup>104</sup> in a Wales in which authority and responsibility would be subdivided.<sup>105</sup>

One contemporary advocate of this channel of thought is Jill Evans MEP. In her *Manifesto for the election of President of Plaid Cymru*, published in 2000, Evans incorporated sub-sections entitled 'rebuilding our communities' and 'community empowerment'<sup>106</sup>. Evans' proposals included plans for banks to "reinvest a percentage of their profits in the local community"<sup>107</sup>. Added to this, Evans called for "the creation of new mini-economies on housing estates based around repair, maintenance and energy efficiency schemes"<sup>108</sup>. These policy measures had a radical edge about them and the focus of attention hung upon the community. According to Jill Evans, the spatial concept known as 'community', although playing a constructive

<sup>103</sup> Plaid Cymru, *The Peaceful Road to Self-Government*, p.19

<sup>104</sup> Plaid Cymru, *The New Wales*, p.12

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*

<sup>106</sup> Jill Evans, *Manifesto for the election of President of Plaid Cymru*, 2000

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*; p.3

<sup>108</sup> *ibid*

role today, would increasingly become the source and the location for political action in the future.

Darren Price takes a similar approach to Evans, with regard to the concept of community, with his statement that “politics is all about getting the best possible deal for your community”<sup>109</sup>. This is a universal truth, according to Price, but it is also a particularistic identification. In the manner in which some members of Plaid Cymru use the expression ‘community’ it would appear to have no prescribed boundaries. However, the general supposition is that ‘community’ represents a limited geographical, and possibly linguistic or cultural, space. This thesis would maintain that the concept of ‘community’ within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ suffers from a lack of decontestation and, therefore, further intensive scrutiny and clarification would undoubtedly benefit party members and observers alike.

### **Communityism: Oppression or Solidarity?**

While, indisputably, there are some positive everyday aspects to having links with people in the vicinity of where you live or work, it could be claimed that communityism can be oppressive. The political theorist Will Kymlicka has proffered that groups or communities have sets of innate or constitutional rights<sup>110</sup>. If this group rights argument was to be applied to Plaid Cymru’s thinking, then a possible weakness in any assessment of the party’s adaptation of communityism is that the individual within any community, being a specific unit rather than being merely one of the collective, could be under represented. Then again, the individual may possibly

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<sup>109</sup> Darren Price, *Interview*, 11.06.02

<sup>110</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Oxford, OUP, 1996)

even be in a position whereby their opinions and actions could be repressed unless they are willing to see themselves as part of the community and, correspondingly, to give their consent to that community's norms, standards and regulations.

If Plaid Cymru champion communityism, therefore, it could be contended that the party would be going against one of the key principles of liberalism: namely the rights of the individual. If the lifestyle or viewpoint of that individual does not match up to notions of 'the common good', as indicated by the collective stance of the community, then the individual is likely to drift into alienation. If communityism allows this to take place, then utilitarian standards are being adopted wherein the person or persons outside of the collective have a sub-standard quality of life compared to those absorbed within the collective. If communityism appears to be following these conventions then it is a majoritarian, as opposed to an all-inclusive, concept. In terms of Plaid Cymru's ideology, this selected inclusivism by its nature cannot embrace all 'national' concerns. This thesis would conclude, therefore, that it is unrepresentative if it is being presented as a concept within a party for whom the idea of 'the nation' plays a considerable part.

Communityism, thus, further exemplifies some of the inherent contradictions within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. Michael Freeden has talked of ideologies that "when carried to their logical extremes, could lead to serious contradictions and to substantive absurdities"<sup>111</sup>. If this line of argument is developed for ideological concepts and not just ideologies, then it could be contended that this may apply to the concept of communityism. Whether there are 'serious contradictions' or not, there are

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<sup>111</sup> Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.39

clearly areas within Plaid Cymru's thinking about how the party uses this concept within its ideology that require greater clarity of definition and purpose.

Regardless of this, however, this thesis contends that the concept of community or communityism should be included amongst the core concepts of Plaid Cymru's ideology. This is because small-scale, invariably community-centred ideals have inspired the party's theoreticians, and the philosophy of community as a 'form of natural good' is embedded within the party's 'thought-practices'. Without this concept of communityism, Plaid Cymru's ideological base would be substantially weakened. This does again throw into question the alleged nationalist attachment, however, as the social, cultural, economic and linguistic replenishment that the members of Plaid Cymru seek appear to come from communal as opposed to national outlets. Likewise, in another blow to the identification of nationalism within Plaid Cymru's ideology, these communal outlets appear to offer broader scope for ideational development than does the rather narrowly defined theoretical and policy arena in which nationalist 'thought-practices' occur.

## **Language**

It could be contended, in some respects, that language is tied in with the aforementioned concept of communityism. This is because, as Freeden has observed, "language makes sense only as a group activity"<sup>112</sup>, and communityism, as noted previously, is very much centred on group, as opposed to individual, activity and affiliation. Plaid Cymru's entry into this debate on community and language can be seen by the proclamation on the party's website. Therein, a statement that reads that

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid*; p. 107

the fourth aim of the party is “to create a bilingual society by promoting the revival of the Welsh language”<sup>113</sup> takes pride of place. Therefore, in the case of Plaid Cymru’s ideology, it could be noted that communal bonding and communal advancement are being portrayed through the promotion and utilisation of the indigenous language.

What must be asked at this juncture, however, is why something like language – that is attributable to all human beings, and is something that would certainly not merit political campaigning in most instances – should feature as a concept within a political party’s ideology?

A possible answer may emerge from analysing Michael Freedden’s writings in this area. Freedden has noted that language is a “social product”<sup>114</sup>; indeed it is a product that has a great deal of power – political and cultural – attached to it and therefore is not just a medium through which social interaction can proceed. If Plaid Cymru seek linguistic enhancement, with regard to the Welsh language, then the power structures within Welsh society will inevitably be affected as the ‘minority’ language rises in political importance and is granted official status as the *lingua franca* of the entire geographical space of Wales. Language, therefore, is not in this instance, and arguably never is, ‘value-neutral’. This is especially so in the case of Wales as language has played a major role in defining Welsh history, and because socio-cultural and political discourse and identity go hand-in-hand within Wales.

The identification of someone as a first language Welsh-speaker from, for example, Llanddarog has stronger resonance in terms of identity, and what may follow in ideological terms, than the identification of someone as a monolingual

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<sup>113</sup> Plaid Cymru, [www.plaidcymru.org.uk](http://www.plaidcymru.org.uk)

<sup>114</sup> Freedden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.108

English speaker from Chepstow, for instance. There is no debate about the fact that both are Welsh in terms of the geographical space in which they were born. However, the linguistic, cultural, social, and, possibly, political environments in which these two people would have been raised, and in which they would operate as adults, are very different. Although, as rational human beings, either is free to choose their particular paths in life, the social, cultural and sub-regional geographical constraints levied on them are enormous. In terms of language, therefore, this thesis would agree that Welsh-speakers function differently, and have to react in a different way in the many culturally diverse parts of Wales, whereas English-speakers, being the majority, have virtually absolute spatial and linguistic freedom.

### **Language and Development**

Plaid Cymru's reaction to the matter of the Welsh language has played a prominent role within the party's history. However, it is not a stagnant view of a language in aspic but more a case of an interpretation of the value and vibrancy of the language that has evolved over time. Plaid Cymru, in its 'modern guise' in particular, has recognised the positive features of the Welsh language and the enhanced standing of bilingualism within Welsh and European society. To these ends, the party has accepted, as Colin Williams has noted, "the division of Wales geographically on the basis of language alone would undermine the objective of Plaid Cymru to create a bilingual Wales"<sup>115</sup>. Hence, the rejection by the party of the establishment of what would amount to a very distinctive 'language zone'. Referring to the setting up of a 'Bro Gymraeg' on the lines of the Irish Gaeltacht, Plaid Cymru has acknowledged that "one of the dangers of a Gaeltacht style designation would be a reduction in the

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<sup>115</sup> Colin Williams, Revival of the Welsh Language: Economy, Planning and Territory, Plaid Cymru Discussion Paper, 2003

momentum of extending the borders of the territory of the Welsh language and the creation of a preservationist- protectionist rather than dynamic mindset”<sup>116</sup>. Here, this thesis would note, the differences between the ideologies of ‘early’ Plaid Cymru and ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru are most noticeable. It is also worth noting, at this stage, how this debate on the Welsh language affects Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ to a vastly greater extent than the Gaelic language debate in Scotland interposes itself into the policies and pronouncements of the SNP.

### **The evolution of the language debate**

For ‘early’ Plaid Cymru the language was sacrosanct and it was, without doubt, a Freedenite core concept that went unchallenged as linguistic and cultural concerns dominated the party’s ‘thought-practices’. Perhaps this is evidenced most clearly when the case of the attack on the RAF bombing school at Penyberth, as noted earlier in this chapter, is assessed. As Geraint H Jenkins’ essay on the Welsh language has noted<sup>117</sup>, when the trial of the three arsonists involved – Saunders Lewis, the Reverend Lewis Valentine and D.J. Williams – was transferred to the Old Bailey, the defendants steadfastly refused to speak English. In the minds of not only the British Establishment, who the ‘Penyberth Three’ had challenged, but also in the minds of the general public, this act further highlighted the contention that Plaid Cymru was inextricably linked with the promotion and usage of the Welsh language and, in most people’s eyes, it could be forwarded that advancing the Welsh language was seen as the responsibility of Plaid Cymru.

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid*

<sup>117</sup> Geraint H Jenkins, ‘*Terminal Decline: The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century*’, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, vol. 1, 2 (Summer 2001), p.61

As Carwyn Fowler and Rhys Jones have observed of this period in time, “Plaid Cymru, during its early years, was far more concerned with securing the linguistic and moral future of the Welsh nation than it was with electoral success or political independence for Wales”<sup>118</sup>. Thus, language played a particularistic role in these ‘thought-practices’ and could, therefore, be viewed as being very much in the ‘preservationist-protectionist’ style. The 1939 synopsis of party policy, *The New Wales*, exemplified this approach. In this document the party proclaimed, “the keystone of the Welsh Nationalist Party’s policy is that the Welsh language should have precedence over all other languages on its soil”<sup>119</sup>.

‘Modern’ Plaid Cymru embraced bilingualism in the 1950’s as the realisation that the Welsh language cannot be enforced as the *lingua franca*, even in its perceived heartlands, became apparent to progressive thinkers within the party. Acknowledging the ever changing nature of global transactions and migratory patterns, contemporary Plaid Cymru reasoning on this matter has concluded that forging the aforementioned ‘language zones’ would be impracticable as “the inhabitants of the proposed Bro Gymraeg might feel themselves to be living in a kind of ‘open prison’ or museum”<sup>120</sup>. Dafydd Iwan, the current Plaid Cymru President, has re-iterated this opposition to sectioning Wales off into linguistic sectors by stating that reviving the Welsh language is “important to me, the party and everyone in Wales, not only Welsh speakers... But it is not by building ramparts that we achieve our goal, but by facing the challenge with confidence and creativity”<sup>121</sup>.

<sup>118</sup> Carwyn Fowler and Rhys Jones, Locating and Scaling the Welsh Nation, 2004, p.6

<sup>119</sup> Plaid Cymru, The New Wales: Synopsis of the Policy of the Welsh Nationalist Party, p.6

<sup>120</sup> Colin Williams, Revival of the Welsh Language, p.19

<sup>121</sup> Dafydd Iwan, Plaid Cymru announces new Vice President, Press Release, 10.04.2002



If Plaid Cymru considers the idea of a ‘language zone’ to be unworkable, then the party’s commitment to the advancement of the Welsh language, and its subsequent position within the party’s ideology, needs to be reconsidered. If these actions amount to an abandonment of the Welsh language as a prime motivator for the party’s political ambitions then the notion that language can be calculated as a Freedinite core concept within Plaid Cymru’s ideology would appear to be contentious. Evidence needs to be provided by ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru, therefore, for this thesis to place language as a core concept within the party’s ‘thought-practices’.

### **Plaid Cymru’s Language Dilemma**

While language may not be the dominant theme in the party’s rhetoric of late, it nevertheless still commands a position within Plaid Cymru’s thinking that can be described as both practical and emotional. One example of this came from former party leader Dafydd Wigley. Commenting on the language in general, whilst being acutely aware that there are funding shortages within both the public and private sector finances in Wales, Wigley, in a speech at Bangor in 1999, argued that resources for the bolstering and advancement of the Welsh language had to go to areas in which that money would have the greatest effect. To these ends, Wigley stated that he longed to see “a shift in the emphasis of language policy to very young ages”<sup>122</sup>. This call for a concerted set of policies to educate children, and the younger generation generally, through the medium of Welsh was, however, nothing new. Chris Rees, the party’s then Director of Research, noted in the Plaid Cymru Annual Report of 1967/68 that a development plan for the Welsh language was needed that incorporated

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<sup>122</sup> Dafydd Wigley, Speech at Theatr Gwynedd, Bangor, 18.01.99

primary education and which would be “responsible and practical enough to fire the imagination and gain support at the same time”<sup>123</sup>.

The realisation that a pragmatic approach and agenda was required was foremost in the party’s thinking, therefore, as far back as 1968. Nevertheless, in ideological terms, what Wigley, and Plaid Cymru as a whole, would wish to see develop within Wales is what amounts to a Burkean – and hence, arguably, a somewhat conservative – ‘line of linguistic transmission’, wherein the Welsh language, and its corresponding socio-cultural attributes, are passed from generation to generation and, ultimately, are decisively secured as component parts of the Welsh national identity. While few people in present-day Wales would argue against the continuation of the Welsh language as an everyday means of verbal and written communication, the desire to maintain the language could, and often does, leave the party open to those critics who view Plaid Cymru as an essentially conservative, possibly even reactionary, party in its espousal of linguistic concerns. Although it may be found that language is not a core concept of the party’s ideology, certainly in the case of ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’, it nevertheless remains the case that the perception of outsiders who assess Plaid Cymru’s policies and objectives view what they claim to be the party’s placing of the language at the centre of Welsh social and political life as an integral facet of the party’s make-up. Good or bad, rightly or wrongly, this perception persists within political circles.

Regardless of how accurate or fair some of these criticisms may be, this thesis would maintain that what cannot be denied is the conviction that the Welsh language

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<sup>123</sup> Plaid Cymru, Annual Report 1967/68, p.5

is inextricably bound with Plaid Cymru's conception of the Welsh nation; although Rhodri Glyn Thomas has admitted that "it is no longer Plaid's sole property"<sup>124</sup>. Nevertheless, to appreciate how much of a key it is to the morphology of the party, Hywel Davies', in a section of his book entitled '*Language Dilemma*', has commented on how "the radical feature of the Welsh Nationalist Party at its inception was not its association with the objective of some degree of Welsh home rule, but its use of the Welsh language"<sup>125</sup>. Davies talked of a 'dilemma' within Plaid Cymru's ranks and he has illustrated how, in its formative years, uncompromising attitudes angled towards the preservation of the Welsh language, and against the use of English within party circles, emerged. The outcome of this period of internecine language warfare only managed to confirm, as Davies has noted, "the dominance of the Welsh language in the upper echelons of the Nationalist Party organisation"<sup>126</sup>.

### **Language as an Internationalist Concern**

On intermittent occasions over the years, but more frequently in recent years, the party has also taken an internationalist line on the language, seeing it as an identifier with liberationist struggles and nationalist causes worldwide. In a press release that pledged Plaid Cymru's solidarity with the plight of the Kurdish minority in Turkey, Eurig Wyn, a Member of the European Parliament at the time, considered the similarities between the suppression of the Kurds by the Turkish state and the suppression of the Welsh by the British state. Highlighting the relevant indigenous languages, Eurig Wyn contended that "there are clear similarities between the Kurdish cultural situation and our own in Wales. The Welsh language was effectively banned

<sup>124</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, *Interview*, 14.05.01

<sup>125</sup> Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945*, p.180

<sup>126</sup> *ibid*; p.183

early in the last century, and the same is now true for the Kurdish language that is prohibited from the school curriculum”<sup>127</sup>.

When used in this context, language is a politicised instrument as it acts as a signifier of what is essentially ‘Welsh’ or, in this instance, essentially ‘Kurdish’. It also differentiates against other languages as markers of national or regional characteristics. The concept of ‘the Other’, a noted feature of nationalist thinking, is thus summoned by the politicisation of language; this politicisation, incidentally, being undertaken by both sides in the argument, the oppressors and the liberationists. If Plaid Cymru is following this line of reasoning, then the party is straying down the path of particularism that can be identified with a nationalist political position.

When Freeden’s model is held against the relevance and use of language as an ideological concept within Plaid Cymru ‘thought-practices’, a change in the primacy of the concept is observed. ‘Early’ Plaid Cymru, as noted above, clearly evolved its political thinking around the evolution of a distinctly ‘Welsh’ Wales. For this to come about the indigenous language had to be centred; in actual fact, cultural and linguistic preservation, as opposed to the desire to forge an overtly political or public policy agenda, was the original driver and motivational force for the party’s founding fathers. If this thesis were assessing Plaid Cymru’s ideology up to the 1950’s then the promotion of the Welsh language would be classified as a Freedenite core concept within that ideological framework. However, ‘modern’ Plaid Cymru’s attitude towards the Welsh language is less fundamentalist and the favouring of bilingualism

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<sup>127</sup> Eurig Wyn, MEP’s Kurdish Pledge, Press Release, 08.02.2002

as the party's linguistic goal has altered the conceptual patterns of the party's morphology.

To some extent, this thesis would contend, the formation in the 1960's of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (The Welsh Language Society) released the debate over the Welsh language's future prospects away from the preserve of Plaid Cymru and propelled it into the social and political arena of Wales as a whole. Today, therefore, while the Welsh language is still very important to the party's views on what constitutes Wales and 'Welshness', the pressure valve on Plaid Cymru has been released, and positive messages about the survival and growth of the language can now be heard emanating from other political parties and from within the general realm of civil society in Wales. The identification of Plaid Cymru with the issue of language preservation has thus been broken. It is the contention of this thesis, therefore, to place the Welsh language as a peripheral, as opposed to a core, concept within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'.

## **Social Justice**

The theme of social justice has appeared in Plaid Cymru literature and pronouncements in recent years; corresponding, arguably, with the Labour Party's conversion to the concept of social justice. What needs to be examined, therefore, is whether it is a case of Plaid Cymru merely mirroring 'New Labour' in its promotion of this concept. This may not be as trivial an observation as it may first appear. This is because, when dealing with concepts within a political ideology, it is important to remember that ideologies are representative of the prevailing discourses of the time; Michael Freeden's assessment that concepts are "idea-artefacts that serve human

convenience as ways of coming with the world”<sup>128</sup> would appear to be applicable in this instance. Whether or not these ‘prevailing discourses’ have succeeded in putting pressure on Plaid Cymru to use the language of social justice and, by its association with ‘Third Way thinking’, the language of ‘New Labour’, social justice has certainly featured in Plaid Cymru’s rhetoric and pronouncements to a greater degree since ‘New Labour’ started using the term on a regular basis.

Recent cases in point, wherein incidentally the concept of ‘self-government’ is juxtaposed with the concept of social justice, include the example of Cynog Dafis, who, in an acclamation of Ieuan Wyn Jones’ leadership qualities, noted that “there is fire burning in his breast and it has to do with two things in particular: social justice and the need to create a national future for Wales”<sup>129</sup>. Likewise, in a declaration of her personal beliefs, that appear to be almost indistinguishable from those of Ieuan Wyn Jones, Helen Mary Jones AM holds the concept of social justice in high regard. Jones has commented on how she approaches National Assembly business. She has claimed, “before I attend a single meeting or draft a single amendment I ask myself ‘How does this move us towards full self-government? ‘How does this contribute to social justice?’”<sup>130</sup>

### **The Socialist aspects of Plaid Cymru’s ‘social justice’**

While there is clear evidence of the concept’s usage within Plaid Cymru, that still does not pin down what Plaid Cymru’s interpretation of social justice actually is. In other words, generalised comments by figures within the party would be fine if, and

<sup>128</sup> Michael Freedon, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.65

<sup>129</sup> Cynog Dafis, The Presidency of Ieuan Wyn Jones, tribanoch.com, 20.12.02

<sup>130</sup> Helen Mary Jones, Plaid Cymru in Opposition, tribanoch.com, 21.12.02

only if, the concept is decontested in the patterns of thought of those who seek to use it. As this thesis is searching for decontestation and clarity on several fronts, any explanation of the concept by party members is deemed valuable. To these ends, somebody who gives the impression of having a relatively lucid conception of the adaptation and implications of social justice as a concept within the party's ideology is Rhodri Glyn Thomas. If his view of this concept were taken into consideration, then it would appear to be the case that, in the party's ideational structure, social justice is interconnected with socialist ideas and practice.

For Thomas, redistribution of wealth is a key factor in ensuring social justice. Praising Plaid Cymru's policy of increased taxation and welfare spending, Thomas, somewhat simplistically, has stated that "if you are a low taxation party then you don't believe in redistribution of wealth and you don't believe in social justice"<sup>131</sup> How far Rhodri Glyn Thomas' interpretation can be taken as indicative of party reasoning on this matter is debatable as Thomas is not a key player in terms of Plaid Cymru's policy-making team. Nevertheless, the proposal that the implementation of social justice should be linked in to a commitment to welfarism, through a greater extension, and a more systematic application, of publicly funded social and economic provision, is an interesting vision.

This explanation of Rhodri Glyn Thomas falls in line to a certain extent with an explanation of social justice presented by Michael Freeden. Freeden has commented that the term social justice, as used by advocates of welfarism, can be equated as "the equal treatment of all, spelt out as the distribution of fundamental scarce goods on the

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<sup>131</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Interview, 14.05.01

basis of need”<sup>132</sup>. Meanwhile, Plaid Cymru’s angle on social justice, according to the party’s literature, is that it is a concept that encapsulates, and connects together, the elements of cultural vitality and democratic renewal<sup>133</sup>. For the notion of social justice to have any veracity, therefore, Plaid Cymru maintains that it must feed off a reinvigorated awareness of indigenous cultural concerns and, assumedly, a reinvigorated sense of national identity, together with a fresh culture of democratic activism. Hence, this thesis would contend that, on this reading, social justice is not a stagnant theoretical viewpoint but a means through which social, cultural, economic, and possibly political, amelioration can be achieved.

Attempting to position Plaid Cymru’s ‘social justice’ along the ideological spectrum involves relating adjacent concepts – brought into the arena, as they have been, by party members – such as welfarism, the redistribution of wealth, and the revitalisation of cultural and democratic factors, to the concept of social justice itself. If, as Rhodri Glyn Thomas has contended, social justice operates on a basis whereby the redistribution of wealth is seen as the primary component within the rhetorical theme of social justice, then a socialistic perception is visible to those inside and outside of the party. Alternatively, the linking of social justice to national self-determination, by prominent party members such as Helen Mary Jones and Plaid Cymru’s leader in the National Assembly, Ieuan Wyn Jones, could be viewed as promoting a nationalist agenda through the façade of the concept of social justice. On the other hand, and if Freedden’s contention that nationalism is not a *full* ideology is accepted, this parallel approach to social justice and national enhancement may also be viewed as putting added ‘flesh on the bone’ of Plaid Cymru’s nationalist ideology.

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<sup>132</sup> Freedden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p.390

<sup>133</sup> Plaid Cymru, *Working for the New Wales*, p.4



It must be restated, at this point, that because social justice has not been adequately decontested within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices', a definitive statement on the party's employment and understanding of the concept of social justice is hard to arrive at. Nevertheless, in its growing use by the party as a concept that amounts to securing a better deal for the people of Wales in social, economic and cultural terms, social justice has come to the fore in the party's morphology. In a sense, it may be calculated that its rise as a concept has been counterbalanced by the demise of language and religion as core concepts within the party's ideological framework. To this extent, therefore, this thesis would argue that social justice, though still fully decontested, is now a core concept within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. Whether it remains so, however, could depend to what degree the concept of social justice remains part of the prevailing discourse; its recent ascendancy, for instance, can be gauged by the fact that, in Britain if not elsewhere, there is little doubt that the concept of social justice was not part of the prevailing discourse during the Thatcher years.

Moreover, the concept may be at the forefront of Plaid Cymru's ideology at this moment in time but, this thesis concludes, it still requires clarification in order for it to be fully decontested. Once achieved, the agreed understanding of what the party accept as being the concept of social justice will then require extensive dissemination so that it can be related in people's minds, depending on the decontested version in existence, either to the party's nationalistic commitment to an autonomous Wales or to the party's socialistic commitment to the creating of a more egalitarian society through the application of schemes designed to redistributed wealth and resources. If

this latter interpretation were adopted, it may be proposed that the concept of decentralisation could be attached as an adjoining concept. At present, however, as far as Plaid Cymru's options for achieving transparency and precision in its presentation of its political beliefs is concerned, the concept of social justice, though a Freedenite core concept, remains a concept that can be too easily misconstrued or appropriated. This elucidation, it would appear, is a task that lies ahead for Plaid Cymru.

## **Capitalism**

At first glance, this may appear to be an unusual concept to cover in this section as most observers, bar those on the far left, would not immediately pick up on the point that Plaid Cymru is a political party that, throughout the course of its existence, has advocated capitalism as a concept within its ideology. Nevertheless, this thesis would claim, that it would be fair to comment that while 'alternative' social and economic strategies appear throughout Plaid Cymru's history, there is a minimal amount of serious discourse regarding the abandonment of capitalism as the financial system of a self-governing Wales. While Saunders Lewis talked of his despair at the Industrial Revolution and what it produced – namely the modern capitalist mode of production – there are very few practical references to deconstructing, or simply abandoning, capitalism within Wales; although J.E. Daniel did launch a broadside against *laissez-faire* and classical liberalism and, somewhat presciently given the expansion in these fields, Daniel did maintain that Plaid Cymru should mount a campaign of opposition against “urbanisation and its inevitable proletarianisation, to chain stores and multiple shops”<sup>134</sup>. Thus, the theme of rurbanisation, cited earlier in this chapter, is again evident in some of these pronouncements.

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<sup>134</sup> J.E. Daniel, Welsh Nationalism: What it stands for? p.60

But, these few instances aside, is it so surprising to find limited proposals to counteract capitalism throughout the party's history? If it is the case that Plaid Cymru, or certainly some individuals within the party, really believe that capitalism breeds 'factoryism' and, subsequently, generation after generation become dehumanised as they are servile to machines, and, furthermore, if Plaid Cymru genuinely wants to create a decentralised, socialist Wales, then it may be reasonable to contend that there is an element of contradiction conducted by the party in that Plaid Cymru is not facing up to, and honestly engaging in, a dialogue with the political and structural realities of what the continuation of an economic system like capitalism would mean for the party's attempts to radically realign Welsh society. If Plaid Cymru is putting capitalism to one side, and regarding it as an economic rather than a political or a politico-economic concept, then what does this convey about, amongst other things, the party's commitment to societal change, the general naiveté of the party membership as to the ubiquitous nature of capitalism, and the party's views – in a Hayekian sense – about whether, in the interest of the freedom of the individual, it is better for people to be allowed to participate in acts of economic spontaneity in contrast to having to endure the strictures of a planned economy.

### **Capitalism and its interpreters**

As in the earlier discussion on the ideology of liberalism, the amount and type of freedom that Plaid Cymru seeks to cultivate is back under the spotlight. This is an imperative argument as the concepts of capitalism and freedom either clash or compliment each other depending on which side of the political spectrum the observer is coming from. For J.E. Daniel, for example, industrial capitalism "ignores all the

things that make of man something more than an animated tool, the things that make him a person, family, nation, religion”<sup>135</sup>. Capitalism, in this interpretation, goes against the forms of communal bonding favoured by Plaid Cymru; to clarify further, that is those forms that were favoured, most vociferously, by Plaid Cymru in its ‘early’ manifestation. If the colonisation and market forces theses, presented by Michael Hechter<sup>136</sup> among others, were taken as an accurate assessment, then Wales, as a peripheral player in the great scheme of the British Empire and the markets of the West, would inevitably suffer appreciably in any period where an economic downturn occurred. Charlotte Davies<sup>137</sup>, commenting on the harsh realities of life in Wales between the wars, has contended that the responses of Plaid Cymru to the series of crises faced by capitalism at this time was variable to say the least and, taken as a whole, these responses were hardly the passionate anti-capitalist lines of attack that may have won the party a sizeable number of converts.

While the party has, from time to time, proposed a fresh *modus operandi* out of which Welsh society could progress, these innovative proposals invariably fell short of seeking an implosion for capitalism. Like Saunders Lewis before him, Michael Freeden has observed how “the origins of socialism are closely linked to the emergence of the capitalist mode of production and to the development of urban industrial societies”<sup>138</sup>. Although Plaid Cymru has argued, as noted earlier in this thesis, for spatial transference away from the cities to the much romanticised rural idyll, in order to advance the cultural, social, spiritual and philosophical tendencies of the Welsh people, the economic transference issue remains problematic, and arguably

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<sup>135</sup> *ibid*; p.21

<sup>136</sup> Michael Hechter, Internal colonialism: The Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966

<sup>137</sup> Charlotte Davies, Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century, chapter 4

<sup>138</sup> Michael Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, p.420

somewhat decontested, within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. This is down to the fact that even though economic transactions would still occur under rurbanisation, albeit on a more humane and decentralised level, with the mode of production being co-operativist, the method of financial exchange within both this decentralised Welsh society, and with the rest of the world, would remain the capitalist system. Plaid Cymru has no plans, seemingly, to induce a Stalin-like 'socialism in one country' scenario that would quixotically seek to abandon capitalism in the hope that others may view Wales as a role model and adopt this co-operativist rurbanisation that would lead to a collapse of capitalism on a global stage. It would appear that capitalism, even under a Plaid Cymru-led Wales, is therefore likely to remain a constant. Plausibly, this thesis would contend, this could hinder any attempt by Plaid Cymru to introduce the party's radical ideas for restructuring Wales' internal configuration of socio-economic and cultural relations.

The question remains as to the extent to which the concept of capitalism overhangs other social and economic concepts within Plaid Cymru's ideology. This thesis has uncovered the fact that the ideology of socialism, or at least the overall notion of creating a socialist society, acts as a driver for the ideas fermenting and circulating within Plaid Cymru. The depth of that socialist commitment is being challenged here, however, as socialism's *raison d'être* is to confront the capitalist system, and subsequently overcome it, in order to ensure that the Freedinite socialist core concept of "the constitutive nature of the human relationship"<sup>139</sup> is favourably altered so that the social and economic inequalities that are observable in human relationships under capitalism, in its present and past guises, no longer exist in any

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<sup>139</sup> *ibid*; p.425

future societal arrangement. Unless Plaid Cymru faces up to the consequences that this major realignment of the economic system would bring about – providing, that is, that this is what the party actually desires – then its vitriol towards capitalism will remain purely rhetorical, and its support for the continuation of the capitalist system in its current form will remain in place; albeit that it is a tacit support unlike, for example, those champions of the free-market who stridently advocate capitalism as a core concept within New Right ideology.

It is the contention of this thesis, therefore, that the concept of capitalism within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' should be seen as a peripheral as opposed to a core concept. It should also be noted that it is a concept, for Plaid Cymru, which 'dares not speak its name'. Very few members of the party featured in this thesis, when approached to do so during interviews, would discuss the concept of capitalism as a part of Plaid Cymru's morphology. This is because, this thesis would contend, those members generally regard capitalism as 'a necessary evil', and, in conjunction, they would assert that the restructuring of the social and cultural aspects of life in Wales is more important than transforming the economic base. Furthermore, this thesis would interpret the estimation of these members on this issue as being one of assuming that this restructuring could be realised without having to confront the entire capitalist edifice head on; which is what an organisation such as the Socialist Workers Party, for example, unambiguously seeks to do. Capitalism, this thesis would argue, is thus a peripheral concept that the party would rather do without. Nevertheless, it is a concept that Plaid Cymru is unwilling, or unable, to present a coherent ideological case against, regardless of the seeming disdain for its existence being tendered at regular

intervals over the years by key strategists and theoreticians within the party such as Saunders Lewis, Gwynfor Evans and Phil Williams.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to identify and assess a selection of key concepts that form part of the morphology of Plaid Cymru. The fact that more turned out to be peripheral rather than core concepts suggests that there are still areas in which Plaid Cymru's core lacks identification or recognition. The lack of core concepts at this stage in the thesis may appear unusual but, this thesis would maintain, this is because the type of analysis of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' that is being presented here has not been undertaken before. Hence, many of the hitherto findings by commentators on the party that purport to illustrate Plaid Cymru's 'ideological content', actually report ideas or hypotheses that are either superficial or are actually out of date. Likewise, this thesis has hopefully shown that the common catch-all expression, favoured more often than not by its political opponents, that 'Plaid Cymru is a nationalist party', displays not only a lack of insight into the structure of ideologies and ideological concepts but, as this thesis has hopefully done so far, and is its intention to explain in more detail in the concluding chapter, this representation is essentially incorrect.

So, having evaluated ideologies and ideological strands in the previous chapter, and in this chapter having considered what this thesis maintains are the most salient ideological concepts that arise within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices', the concluding chapter will condense the main arguments within this thesis. This will occur after a brief identification of some of the ideological ruptures and internecine

disputes that have taken place within Plaid Cymru over the course of its history. This will demonstrate that there is not ideological unity within the party, and that disputes are not only between individuals but, on occasions, are collectively led. Further to this, a Freedinite model of the ideological concepts that comprise what this thesis contends to be Plaid Cymru's 'true' ideology will be offered before some concluding remarks are presented.



## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

In an attempt to establish the exact form of Plaid Cymru's ideology, this thesis has scrutinised the genealogy of the party's 'thought-practices', its ideational construction in both 'early' and 'modern' periods, the views of some of its most prominent and middle ranking representatives, and the thoughts of writers and commentators in the fields of ideology, nationalism, Welsh politics, and Plaid Cymru itself. The thesis has been underpinned by an assessment of, and the usage of, Michael Freeden's paradigm of what, in both ideational terms and in the structure of concepts, constitutes an ideology. Before some concluding remarks are presented, it must be recognised that although all ideologies and ideological concepts are, initially at least, the products of the thoughts of individuals, and Plaid Cymru's ideology is no different in this respect, there is evidence that groups promoting varying ideological positions have been operating within Plaid Cymru since its inception. Before this thesis is summed up, therefore, attention will be drawn to one specific example of this ideological factionalism within Plaid Cymru. This example is proffered primarily because it occurred at a time of widespread ideological debate across British politics and because the outcome of this ideological dialectic within Plaid Cymru opened the pathway to the configuration of the party's contemporary 'thought-practices'.

This collective ideological confrontation within Plaid Cymru took place in the early 1980's; an era in which the New Right ideology, embraced in Britain by leading Conservative thinkers and summed up by the term 'Thatcherism', was approaching its zenith and the Labour Party's was involved in an orientation to the left. Both of these

external occurrences undoubtedly had an influence on the ‘thought-practices’, and general political opinions, of the membership of Plaid Cymru. As, over the past two decades, Thatcherism and any sense of a socialist essence within the Labour Party have both faded, Plaid Cymru’s construction, or re-evaluation, of its ideology at that time may, somewhat surprisingly, prove to be the most long-lasting of these epochal ideological turns; even though, in terms of popular awareness and public salutation, it was not particularly far-reaching. What it did become, nevertheless, was a crucial period for Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’; the after effects of which are still resonating today.

The rationale for including this assessment at this stage of the thesis is to attempt to show how the ideological dialectic within a party can surface at certain periods within that party’s history. Also, the reasoning behind focussing on this at a late stage in the thesis is that, having covered the ideologies and ideological concepts evident within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’, it was felt that a clearer picture of this ideological dispute would be visible and more open to interpretation and understanding.

### **‘Hydro and the National Left’: Plaid Cymru’s Key Factional Ideological Battle**

The election of the Conservative Party in the 1979 General Election almost certainly had a massive effect on how Plaid Cymru saw itself as a party of opposition; not just to the party’s customary foe in Wales, the Labour Party, but also to the perceived ‘Englishness’ of a Conservative Government that had little or no sympathy with what they perceived to be the atavistic principles and policies that were being put

forward at that time by Plaid Cymru. Hence, Plaid Cymru found itself in a situation where, if the party was to propel itself forward as a realistic challenger to both the policies and the perspectives held by the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, a redefinition of its political position was deemed necessary. This need for a repositioning and redefinition was heightened by the Welsh public's rejection of the Labour Party's proposals for political devolution in 1979; a defeat that was undeniably felt harder amongst the membership of Plaid Cymru than it was within the rank and file of the Labour Party who had actually instigated the proposals in the first place.

Around the time of these events, two diametrically opposed factions emerged within Plaid Cymru. One, the Hydro Group, focussed on what they perceived to be the traditional party strengths, such as its commitment to 'rurbanisation' and the safeguarding of Welsh language. The other faction, who became known as the National Left, sought to formulate an agenda that would build on the Welsh social and political tradition of radicalism in order to challenge the New Right-inspired Thatcherite ideology. These progressives within the National Left thus intended to situate Plaid Cymru, once and for all, as a socialist political party. Once again, comparisons could be made at this point to the ideological debates taking place within the SNP in Scotland in the 1980's and early 1990's over whether to campaign for a fast-moving and dynamic campaign to secure independence or whether a steadier, piecemeal approach is the most realistic option<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Hearn, Claiming Scotland, pp. 53-56.

## **Hydro, Ideology and Dogma**

The Hydro Group was set up, as Laura McAllister has noted, at the 1982 Llandudno conference<sup>2</sup>. Its name derives from a local hotel where some delegates were staying. One of Hydro's chief instigators, Keith Bush, has contended that the objective of Hydro was to "re-establish self-government for Wales, unqualified by ideological dogma, as the main aim of Plaid Cymru"<sup>3</sup>. Hydro's argument on this point, as McAllister has remarked, was that "Plaid's nationalism required no qualifying or explanatory terms"<sup>4</sup>. Plaid Cymru's 'nationalism', as far as advocates of the Hydro position were concerned, was incontestable. It was, they maintained, the established form of nationalism that was identifiable through association with Plaid Cymru.

Two points that relate to ongoing discussions within this thesis are of note in these statements. First, the idea that 're-establishing self-government for Wales' – an act that would demand enormous change to the social and political landscape in Wales – is somehow non-ideological and can be achieved through a few minor technical adjustments here and there, as opposed to recourse to the 'thought-practices' of the party, is staggering. This approach does, nevertheless, present a picture of how the nature of ideology is misunderstood, not only by people within Plaid Cymru, it has to be said, but also by the public at large. Furthermore, it also brings to light the attitude of conservatives – conservative traditionalists in this instance – to ideology. Both small and large 'c' conservatives view their political beliefs as being innate

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<sup>2</sup> Laura McAllister, Plaid Cymru, p.173

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

dispositions that are not constructed and do not subsist on dogmatic positions.

Hydro's view of 'self-government for Wales' as somehow being the natural, evolutionary course down which Welsh society is chartered displays all of these conservative tendencies. Similarly, Hydro's disdain for the variety of socialism that it saw operating within Plaid Cymru would also fit into this 'anti-dogmatic' position; even though its refusal to enter into a dialectic process with those advocating socialism amounted to a dogmatic position in itself. Erroneously, Hydro argued for an ideological stasis when what they really wanted, if they genuinely sought a substantial transference of power to enable Wales to have self-government, was a paradigmatic shift.

### **The National Left: Plaid Cymru's Socialist Front**

The National Left was formed two years before Hydro at Plaid Cymru's 1980 Porthcawl conference. The founders of the National Left included committed socialists and radical thinkers such as Robin Reeves, Phil Cooke, Janet Davies and Dafydd Elis-Thomas<sup>5</sup>. The National Left's remit was that it should be "a broad-based movement representing all strands of left opinion in Wales, including members of other parties, and those without party affiliation"<sup>6</sup>. Although, being a scion of the party, it was inevitably dominated by Plaid Cymru activists, the National Left's ambitious intention was to build a socialist front on an all-Wales level so that a future self-governing Wales could introduce a full raft of socialist policies. At its heart was the philosophy of the New Left, an inspiration for Elis-Thomas and other students of the 1960's.

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid*; p. 175

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*; p. 174

The National Left's stance on socialism tied in to Plaid Cymru's 1981 conference decision to adopt 'decentralist socialism'; albeit after a nine-hour debate on the findings of the Commission of Inquiry. This internal Commission of Inquiry had looked in some considerable detail at the party's ideology. However, Phil Williams, who himself wrote a minority report at the time, raised some serious questions about the "practicality of the decentralist socialism advocated in the main report"<sup>7</sup>. In an interview for this thesis, Williams remarked that the commitment to decentralist socialism was acceptable to him but "I was aware that no deep thought had gone into it"<sup>8</sup>. In a sense, herein lies Plaid Cymru's ideological dilemma. A concept, decentralist socialism, has been recommended by the Commission of Inquiry, accepted by conference and welcomed by the socialist-minded National Left without, it appeared, any great understanding of what the actual concept entailed. Hence, in Freedinite terms, this thesis would propose that it is fair to assert that decentralist socialism had not been decontested within Plaid Cymru's ideological arena.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the entire internecine ideological battle of the early 1980's between Hydro and the National Left was conducted on a level in which the 'thought-practices' of the two factions were either in denial, in the case of Hydro, or, in the instance of the National Left, were suffering from a distinct lack of clarity, with concepts that they sought to introduce, such as decentralist socialism, and, arguably, socialism itself, remaining decontested within Plaid Cymru's ideology. Yet the perceived understanding of the use of the terminology of 'decentralist socialism', 'self-government', and even 'nationalism', proved sufficient for advocates of these ideological concepts and ideologies to insert them into their general political

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<sup>7</sup> Charlotte Davies. *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, p.79

<sup>8</sup> Phil Williams, *Interview*, 25.09.01

discourse. The development of the National Left, for instance, can thus be seen through the growth in personal and group statements and rhetoric that included references to ‘decentralist socialism’, ‘community socialism’ and the coalescence of socialist and nationalist elements within the party.

Tracing the ideological line adopted by the party, since this period of factionalism in the 1980’s, this thesis maintains that it would be accurate to describe the National Left as having far more of an impact of the party’s ‘thought-practices’ and policy direction than Hydro managed. Moreover, the legacy of the National Left can also be seen in the articles conveying socialist and republican themes that are available on the Plaid Cymru supporting left-wing website [tribancoch.com](http://tribancoch.com); whose current editor is Rhondda activist and former councillor, Syd Morgan, one of the National Left’s founder members. The traditionalism represented by Hydro, on the other hand, though not entirely expunged, is very much a perimeter position within the party today.

### **Plaid Cymru’s Ideological Modifications**

The importance of highlighting this collective ideological struggle in the concluding chapter of this thesis is to ensure that it is appreciated that there is an internal dialectic within Plaid Cymru that is not merely the product of lone voices; those ‘lone voices’ being, more often than not, people who hold, or have held, strategic positions within the party. Through the creation of ideological factions at sporadic intervals throughout the party’s history, Plaid Cymru has re-asserted the openness of its internal space for discussion and it has managed, simultaneously, to disparage any sceptics who may have sought to portray the ideological and policy pronouncements of the party as ‘top-down’ in their nature. As Rhodri Glyn Thomas

has observed, “it has always been part of the party’s philosophy that there are groups who try to move the agenda on”<sup>9</sup>. As simplistic as this statement may appear to be, it does at least display an acknowledgement that political discourse within Plaid Cymru is fluidic and that the party’s internal reasoning has not been left to simply stagnate.

One contemporary example of this ‘agenda setting’ can be seen with the establishment of a pressure group entitled *Dewis* (Choice) set up by Plaid Cymru’s former leader, Dafydd Wigley, and the party’s former Policy Director, Cynog Dafis. *Dewis* arrived in the wake of the party’s disappointing showing at the 2005 British General Election and the group have added to the evolving dialectic within Plaid Cymru. *Dewis* want to see Plaid Cymru adopting a position of ‘principled pragmatism’<sup>10</sup> so that the party can explore ways in which to end Labour’s political hegemony in Wales through the establishment of some form of political coalition or alliance. According to Cynog Dafis, Plaid Cymru must consider “a real historic compromise in which Plaid, the Liberal Democrats and Welsh Conservatives, along with others such as Forward Wales, work together to transform Welsh politics”<sup>11</sup>. This appears to be a bold initiative but one, this thesis would maintain, that will not have universal support throughout the party as it calls for talks with the Conservative Party. For a party espousing socialist principles and policies to consider any form of alliance with an avowedly anti-socialist party, such as the Conservatives, appears impractical. Interestingly, Dafydd Iwan, Plaid Cymru’s President, immediately described the proposals put forward by *Dewis* as a “huge political mistake”<sup>12</sup>, and the message advanced by *Dewis* does not appear to have impacted on party thinking to

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<sup>9</sup> Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Interview, 14.05.01.

<sup>10</sup> Cynog Dafis, ‘*Wales and Plaid Cymru face clear choices*’, Western Mail, 21.05.05, p.18.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Dafydd Iwan, BBC Wales Today, 16.05.05.



any great extent. Of overarching interest to this thesis, however, is the fact that Plaid Cymru's internal ideological debates continue apace. This is important because further exemplifies the aforementioned fluidic nature of the party's 'thought-practices'.

Despite the occasional arrival of pressure groups who attempt to promote certain ideological or policy positions, what is evident for all to see is that, as with most other British political parties, Plaid Cymru has a leadership tradition that has carved its own niche on the ideology of the party. However, as it has evolved into a vibrant democratic forum, Plaid Cymru has produced, through its ranks, people who have challenged the prevailing orthodoxies of the party. Thus, as a consequence, some intriguing ideological directions have been unveiled. The fact that the party of 2006 is a completely transformed party political animal and a markedly, though not entirely, different ideological force than that which first met at Pwllheli in 1925, proves that the ideological shifts that have occurred within the party have not been parentheses but have had a lasting effect.

Also, as this thesis has contended, the party's 'thought-practices' in its 'early' and 'modern' modes emphasise these shifts and show the maturing of the party on a variety of levels. In terms of straightforward ideological taxonomy, 'early' Plaid Cymru symbolised a romantic nationalist vision of a Wales that has long disappeared, and in some instances, like all nationalisms, it celebrated a Wales that never existed. In some of its political dealings, during a time of major social, economic and political upheavals, it displayed a pathetic naivety. Eventually, within the general process of introspection that happens in all political parties, the relinquishing of the Plaid Cymru

leadership by Saunders Lewis in 1939 allowed a recalculation of the party's objectives and its direction to occur.

It was during this period of recalculation that 'modern' Plaid Cymru began to take shape. The party, after much contemplation, tightened its political image – both inwardly and outwardly – during the years of the 'post-war consensus' and, over time, Plaid Cymru began to drift leftward as the realisation that the welfarist settlement devised by the 1945 Labour Government did not turn out to be the panacea that many on the left in Wales envisaged. In conspicuous ideological terms, as noted earlier, matters came to a head with the battle for the soul and direction of the party that occurred around the early to mid 1980's.

When considering the possible longevity of 'modern' Plaid Cymru, this thesis would contend that contemporary Plaid Cymru – certainly that is the party that has come through the devolutionary process and is now very much centre-stage in Welsh politics – could be said to be in the last stages of modernity. This is because further ideological shifts may be required, this thesis would maintain, if the party is to achieve its *raison d'etre* and attain a form of autonomous rule that would prioritise the safeguarding and promotion of 'all things Welsh'. Those speculations, however, are not strictly a part of this thesis and therefore too much conjecture would be beyond the remit of this document. What this thesis would argue is clear, however, is that the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru have not stagnated and are thus bound to create fresh avenues down which the party will inevitably travel in the years ahead.

## Constructing an Ideological Model for Plaid Cymru

Having assessed the concepts and ideologies existing within Plaid Cymru's morphology, a picture emerges of what exactly the party's ideological make-up is. With this in mind, a model of Plaid Cymru's ideology can be constructed in order for a new definition of the party's ideology to be enunciated. Hopefully, this innovative model could be used by people engaged in research into the 'thought-practices', or the public persona, of Plaid Cymru in order to further the debate regarding, and the subsequent understanding of, the ideational configuration of the party. The taxonomy for the model will be along the lines of 'core', 'peripheral' and 'adjacent' concepts, as enunciated by Michael Freeden in his writings on ideology. It is worth recalling here how Freeden saw these concepts operating within a political party's morphology. As he enunciated, core concepts are "ineliminable key concepts"<sup>13</sup> that provide "a minimum kit"<sup>14</sup> without which any particular ideology would cease to exist. Hence, Plaid Cymru, like any other political party, or indeed any other political organisation or pressure group, must have some core ideological concepts in order to have a considerable, and vital, degree of substance to its 'thought-practices'

Peripheral concepts, on the other hand, are "situated on the perimeter of an ideology"<sup>15</sup>. These peripheral concepts bolster the core concepts without being an essential part of an ideology's corpus. For this reason, they tend to have a more fluidic persona than core concepts. Plaid Cymru requires a certain amount of peripheral concepts to stimulate the ideational process. Ideological concepts that may at one time have been core concepts, such as, for instance, 'nationalisation' or 'universal state

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<sup>13</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p.61

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*; p.62

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*.

welfare' in the case of the Labour Party, may now be registered as peripheral concepts, or even in the former case, adjacent concepts. This could be down to the fact that peripheral concepts, such as 'universal state welfare' still generate ideas that add to the morphology of the ideology or ideological position that they are constituents of, but they are no longer perceived to be or, alternatively, never have been perceived as being, imperative core components of the conceptual framework. Hence, using examples such as the above, it is possible to relate how the fluidic nature of ideological concepts is personified through the ebbing and flowing of concepts, over space and time, between the core, peripheral and adjacent positions.

Further to the two aforementioned categories of concepts, adjacent concepts are also part of an ideology's make-up. Adjacent concepts, as Freeden has noted, act to restrict the core's "capacity for multiple interpretations"<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, if 'democracy' was estimated to be an adjacent concept within the ideology of environmentalism, for example, then environmentalism's capacity to adopt anti-democratic tendencies or anti-democratic concepts, such as imprisonment without trial or denial of basic human rights, would be eliminated, or, at the very minimum, severely restricted. Further to this, when applied to political parties, such as Plaid Cymru for example, adjacent concepts should enable party members to embrace ideological concepts, or political themes, that may not necessarily be part of the party's main ideological corpus – in terms of its core and peripheral concepts – but which, nevertheless, do not in any shape or form impinge in a negative sense upon the spirit or general mood of the party's ideological perspective. Indeed, this thesis would assert that adjacent concepts

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*; p.63

should always compliment, and add extra dimensions to, a political party's 'thought-practices'.

After these ideological concepts are presented, in the upcoming model, they will then be collated in order to judge whether they fit into a pattern association with any standard political ideology, or whether, as these thesis contends will probably be the case, Plaid Cymru's ideology is a distinctive set of 'thought-practices' that does not sit comfortably under any one recognisable ideological banner. This thesis will attempt to resist placing the exact same concepts that have appeared in the previous chapter into this original model, as the purpose of constructing this new paradigm is to offer innovative approaches to the study of Plaid Cymru's ideology. Although this model will undoubtedly fall short of covering every minute aspect of the party's 'thought-practices', it should, by re-classifying some concepts and forging some fresh ones, at least enable the thesis to more accurately describe the actual content of the ideological concepts that make-up the 'thought-practices' of Plaid Cymru. However, a word of caution must be noted at this juncture as some overlap in description, and a certain degree of similarity of content to that previously exhibited, is almost inevitable when undertaking a task such as this. Nevertheless, in attempting to proffer original thoughts, this thesis will try to keep any repetition to an absolute minimum.

### **A New Model of Core Concepts**

To commence, therefore, this thesis will contend that Plaid Cymru's core concepts – remembering that these are the essential ideas at the heart of the party, and without which there would be not be a political entity known as Plaid Cymru – could be arranged thus:

a) *'An acknowledgement of, and promotion of, Welsh identity'*

This, debatably, is the *sine qua non* of Plaid Cymru's ideology. From the outset in 1925 the party has been very specific in its commitment to preserve and enhance traditions and vernacular activities. These activities would include the promotion of not only the Welsh language but also the prolongation of corresponding Welsh customs such as the Eisteddfod, the Welsh poetic and folk traditions, and so forth. In this acknowledgement that there is a conspicuous thing that can be labelled 'Welsh identity', however, there is also a stress on the fact that the Welsh nation – the breeder and feeder of this Welsh identity – is no better or no worse than any other nation or group of people on earth. To this extent, therefore, this thesis would maintain that Plaid Cymru does not in any way represent any ultra nationalistic or xenophobic line in which, invariably, preference is always given to 'your nation' over and above any concern that may be expressed about the fate or condition of others. *The acknowledgement of, and promotion of, Welsh identity* is thus a non-imperialistic celebration of existing literature, culture, language and social traditions. Hence, it falls short, in the reckoning of this thesis, of being a possible core concept of nationalism in that it does not, to use Michael Freedon's expression, emphasise "its superiority over other national identities"<sup>17</sup>.

b) *'The legitimacy and centrality of the nation'*

This is the proposition that 'the nation', in the eyes of Plaid Cymru, acts as the focal point towards which all political, social and cultural ideas gravitate. Likewise, it is the location from which political ideas, aims and objectives can be disseminated

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Freedon, *Ideology*, p.98.

back into the public arena. Hence, it acts as a two-way magnet. The nation is also the unit from which socio-economic, as well as political, subsidiarity derives. Although it is the entity, or the centralised machinery, that is recognised as ‘the nation’ that is the focus for this distributive network, this ‘top-down’ course of action is not necessarily a nationalist assumption and, this thesis believes, it should not be taken as one. What it does denote, however, is a sense of identification with a geographical entity – Wales – within whose boundaries multifarious layers of power are acknowledged as existing. In the meantime, also, new layers and networks are constantly evolving, in a Foucauldian sense<sup>18</sup>. Hence, this thesis would argue that *the legitimacy and centrality of the nation* is not a centralising concept. It is, in point of fact, almost the complete opposite as it is interwoven with, and can be identified through, the adjacent concept of decentralisation. This is because Plaid Cymru maintains that a substantial degree of power – power that other ideologies seek to hold at the centre – should be imparted to these various decentred layers of authority.

c) *‘Vicinity as the primary source of solidarity’*

Taken as a whole, this entails a belief in ‘localism’, or ‘villageism’, as a positive rather than a negative concept. One of the ideas cherished within this concept is that local communities are organic, and part of their function is to absorb and reflect the concerns of people in Wales. Thus, bonding and social transaction on a localised, face-to-face basis is encouraged within Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’. This nurtures a sense of solidarity that Plaid Cymru contends is a viable one as it does not demand day-to-day allegiance to any abstract constructs; hence, this thesis would argue, the party maintains that the vicinity around you is there to be experienced as

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<sup>18</sup> Eric Matthews, *Twentieth Century French Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.149

you go about your routine and, over time, a rapport and sense of togetherness is established, often subconsciously, with your neighbours.

This thesis would subsequently assert that this is the type of communal identification and allegiance that people like Saunders Lewis and Gwynfor Evans believed actually energised the people of Wales within their locales. The solidarity that arises from the sense of calm assurance that people can discover in their local areas feeds into a lot of the Plaid Cymru rhetoric about communityism. However, this thesis would contend that where vicinity may differ from communityism, and these are important spatial and philosophical points, is that individuals can experience this form of localised harmonization without any of the commitment attached to forging strong community links. This belief in 'vicinity as the primary source of solidarity' could therefore be seen as 'thin' communityism, and it may find backing from more liberally-inclined Plaid Cymru members who are attracted by libertarian values and who, while still accepting the fact that human beings operate in a social environment, may wish to take a concept like decentralisation down to its lowest possible level. This thesis would conclude, therefore, that 'vicinity as the primary source of solidarity' presents an avenue for those seeking to maximise personal freedom whilst, simultaneously, offering a 'safety net' in order for them to engage with, and possibly endorse, community values and actions. In a liberal sense, therefore, these chosen courses of action should be undertaken on a strictly voluntary as opposed to an obligatory basis.



d) *'Encouraging the ubiquity of spirituality'*

This thesis would wish to emphasise from the offset that this concept is not necessarily an adherence to any given religion or religious order. What it is, nonetheless, is a belief in a certain degree of decorum and tranquillity within society. This thesis asserts that spirituality has the advantage over any set religion, as it is able to locate itself within a predominantly secular polity without having to seek approval from any theocratic body; spirituality, as a concept of a non-religiously based party such as Plaid Cymru, would thus be used in a corporeal rather than a metaphysical setting. Furthermore, this advocating of spirituality, in this context, does not alienate potential supporters of the party who already hold religious views. This is because this spirituality would not be seen as being antithetical to any other religious creed and it would not seek to implant any fundamental religious principles or practice. This thesis would contend that, on an empirical basis, an historical precedent for this 'encouraging the ubiquity of spirituality' is evidenced by the fact that it was from this general disposition of 'spirituality' within Wales, plus the allied desire to attain a more self-possessed and serene existence, that Plaid Cymru's scepticism towards the 'dehumanisation' of Welsh society – a 'dehumanisation' process that the party maintain came about through industrialisation – stemmed. This thesis would, therefore, contend that this concept has a genealogy within the party's 'thought-practices' and, moreover, that 'spirituality' in this context represents the party's engagement in an ongoing struggle against both 'dehumanisation', in its various guises, and against the excessive devotion of some people within society to materialistic values.

e) *'The endorsing of negotiation over disruption'*

Plaid Cymru's concerns for non-violence as a general rule of life, non-violent-direct-action as a campaigning tool, and pacifism as a general philosophical position, all fit into this category. These three components of the core concept of 'negotiation over disruption' furnish Plaid Cymru with a complete counterbalance to any allegations or insinuations that the party is a belligerent political force; a belligerent force, its critics may imply, that, in its desire to defenestrate the British state system, would one day be tempted to take up arms and operate along the same parameters as some of the more aggressive elements of nationalist or liberationist parties elsewhere. Plaid Cymru has consistently rejected any suggestions that it would contemplate any such action. Moreover, and in complete contrast, Plaid Cymru's recent voicing of its disapproval of the actions of the US and UK administrations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the party's concern for the indigenous peoples displaced by conflict in these, and other, lands, also further exemplifies, this thesis would contend, that *the endorsing of negotiation over disruption* should be considered as a core concept within Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'.

Without this concept at its core, remembering that Plaid Cymru is desirous of structural and constitutional change, the party could feasibly lay itself open to influences of a more extreme type; the type, indeed, who may seek to promote a more hard-line insurrectionary approach. Hence, 'negotiation over disruption', as it currently operates, anchors the party's thoughts and actions through the employment of a conciliatory methodology. This anchoring, and the party's general stance on violence of any kind, this thesis would argue, affirms this concept as a core component of Plaid Cymru's ideology. In addition, this thesis would argue that 'the

endorsing of negotiation over disruption' could also be portrayed as being an adjacent concept to the previous core concept of 'spirituality'; although it must be acknowledged that the two are stand-alone concepts that are not necessarily mutually interwoven.

### **A New Model of Peripheral Concepts**

Similar to the above, this thesis will now move on to contend that Plaid Cymru's peripheral concepts – concepts that support and enliven a party's ideology without having the burden of being indispensable to the central workings, or the heartbeat, of an ideology - could be:

#### **a) *'Holistic assessment'***

'Holistic assessment', this thesis would contend, is an ability to look beyond Wales' borders for an appreciation of matters political, cultural and philosophical. Central to this concept, therefore, is the air of confidence, which is evident within Plaid Cymru, which asserts that an 'internationalist agenda' is an indispensable element for a modern political party that has to function in a rapidly evolving global society. Added to this, there is a conviction evident within Plaid Cymru that maintains that a credible attentiveness towards cross-border solidarity and equality – both internally, in a British sense, and externally, in a global sense – is a vital instrument for attaining conceptions of how the good life can be achieved. All of this is then immersed in an environmentally friendly ethos.

Taken as a whole, therefore, this thesis would contend that this 'holistic assessment', when contrasted to narrow, insular nationalism, can be viewed as a

‘binary opposite’<sup>19</sup>. This is because, whilst some critics, as noted earlier in this thesis, have claimed that Plaid Cymru’s political standpoint is representative of the insularity typified by the ‘narrow nationalist’ position, the truth of the matter is that the ‘binary opposite’ of narrow nationalism, what this thesis has termed *holistic assessment*, is far more symbolic of the party’s ideological outlook. Moreover, placing *holistic assessment* as a peripheral concept within Plaid Cymru’s ideology, this thesis would conclude, also reinforces the link between these particular aspect of the party’s ‘thought-practices’ and Plaid Cymru’s aforementioned commitment to harmony through non-violence. Subsequently, by adopting ‘holistic assessment’ as a peripheral concept, this thesis would also propose that this may culminate in pushing Plaid Cymru further away from categorising it as a nationalist political party.

b) ‘*Social fairness*’

This peripheral concept is, *prima facie*, similar to social justice; although replacing ‘fairness’ with ‘justice’ is not strictly compatible as justice may be seen as too legalistic a term for this concept’s philosophical basis. This thesis would contend that the concept of *social fairness* can be linked to the core concept of ‘spirituality’ through the implication, within some of Plaid Cymru’s rhetoric, that there is a sense – an albeit naïve one, this thesis would add – that within Wales there is an inherent responsiveness to ‘fair play’ that is juxtaposed with a high degree of mutual aid among people. The belief in being ‘a good citizen’ – celebrated not only by Plaid Cymru members but by communitarians and ‘Third Way’ advocates alike – could also enter the discussion at this point. Nevertheless, this thesis would argue, the unique Plaid Cymru concept of ‘social fairness’, in terms of a style of ‘good citizenship’ and

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<sup>19</sup> Jim Powell, *Derrida for Beginners*, Writers and Readers Limited, London, 1997, p.23

acknowledgement of 'fair play' can be viewed in personal philosophies and convictions of party theoreticians such as Gwynfor Evans.

Further to the above, the peripheral concept of 'social fairness' bolsters Plaid Cymru's core concepts of 'vicinity as solidarity' and 'spirituality' in the manner that it concludes that breaking down the causes of alienation within society will lead to the formation of enriched individuals and communities. Interestingly, Laura McAllister, remarking on Gwynfor Evans' thoughts in this ideational arena, argued that they owed a lot to Guild Socialism<sup>20</sup>. By eradicating alienation through the breeding and application of 'social fairness', this thesis would propose, Plaid Cymru may seek to contend that everybody would wish to help others, be it in their immediate vicinities or beyond. Yet again, the core concept of 'spirituality' can be brought into play here as a belief in moral goodness, impartiality, and integrity on an individual and collective basis, would tie in with Plaid Cymru's conviction that, given the right conditions, respect and fairness, like communities themselves, can evolve organically in a caring environment.

c) *'The redistribution of wealth'*

As a stand-alone ideological concept, 'the redistribution of wealth' would not be substantial enough in content to be either labelled as a socialist concept, or to be made a core concept within Plaid Cymru's ideology. This thesis would contend that this is down to the fact that schemes to apportion wealth more evenly are not uncommon within non-Right wing political parties the world over. In Britain, for example, the centrist Liberal Democrats – not generally regarded as being a socialist organisation –

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<sup>20</sup> Laura McAllister, The Perils of Community as a Construct for the Political Ideology of Welsh Nationalism, p.505

has pursued various types of redistributive schemes since its formation in 1988. What an analysis of Plaid Cymru's particular interpretation of the concept of 'the redistribution of wealth' could conclude, however, is that the party has made a number of commitments to raising the profile, economically and socially, of the poorest in society, through, for example, redistributive and egalitarian policies in its manifestos<sup>21</sup>. To this extent, this thesis believes that the concept of 'the redistribution of wealth' should be included as a peripheral concept in any list of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices'. This is because it adds an important economic element to some of the more philosophical concepts, both core and peripheral, discussed earlier.

Furthermore, there is contained within this peripheral concept, as Plaid Cymru would see it, the acceptance that in any decent society the more affluent citizens of that society have a duty to help to ameliorate the living conditions experienced by the poorest citizens. However, Plaid Cymru would argue that this duty to organise redistributive services, and to adequately resource this distribution network, cannot remain the preserve of charities or philanthropists. Hence, once more, the moral and economic duty falls on the individual acting on an equal basis with others in his or her community. This thesis would propose that the concept of 'the redistribution of wealth', as interpreted within Plaid Cymru's ideology, is therefore a commitment on both the individual and the community to bring to fruition economic and practical co-operative action to ensure a fairer redistribution of resources, goods and services. This would all be underpinned by a philosophical position stemming from another peripheral concept, 'social fairness'.

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Plaid Cymru, Manifesto 1999, and Plaid Cymru, Manifesto 2001

d) *'Freedom as a frame of mind'*

The peripheral concept of 'freedom as a frame of mind' represents the inculcating of the idea that people in Wales, and indeed world-wide, should be at liberty to express their views and feelings and to act with the maximum amount of autonomy possible in any given scenario. A belief in freedom of thought and expression is seen as an imperative within this concept and the act of suppression – be it government inspired or emanating from another individual – is not to be regarded an option. Indeed, any form of suppression is frowned upon not only because it is ethically wrong, as Plaid Cymru activists may read it, but also because freedom of thought and expression acts as a driver for the societal dialectic that would be much needed if the entity that is Wales, with all its constituent parts, is to progress, as all Plaid Cymru members would wish it to.

What is of interest with this concept is not just how it could sit with adjacent concepts such as 'democracy', 'liberty' or even 'existentialism' but how, through 'the discourse of freedom' that runs throughout Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices', the party has opened up fresh ideological avenues that, this thesis would contend, other parties who have been labelled nationalist, such as the SNP in Scotland or the SDLP in Northern Ireland, do not appear to have explored. Here, this thesis contends that it is appropriate to add that this could be seen as a criticism rather than a compliment, as it may be construed as being another version of romanticism that steers Plaid Cymru away on a different ideological course and, in so doing, further removes it from the more pragmatic everyday political practice of the aforementioned parties. Whether true or not, it is probably fair to declare, as this thesis would do, that this peripheral concept of 'freedom as a state of mind' heads towards a libertarian position – though

not in an unfettered Nozickean New Right sense<sup>22</sup> – but it stops short as ‘cultural constraints’ and the formality of community succeed in keeping a check on any unbridled actions.

### **A New Model of Adjacent Concepts**

In addition to the above, and recalling that adjacent concepts are concepts that can be adopted to support an ideology, and to offer different interpretations and angles for manoeuvring within that ideology, this thesis will contend that adjacent concepts that have a bearing on Plaid Cymru’s core and peripheral concepts, even though, as adjacent concepts, some of them may not feature to any great extent within the party’s pronouncements and literature, could be:

#### a) ‘*Democracy*’

This thesis would proffer the judgement that Plaid Cymru has always maintained a commitment to both a democratic system of government in Wales and to the proliferation of democratic values throughout society at large. Plaid Cymru’s affirmation that the party would not engage in undemocratic practices to achieve their stated aims is identified here by positioning democracy as an adjacent concept to the entire breadth of the party’s core and peripheral concepts. As a political party who seek to change the social and political structure within Wales through support garnered through the ballot box, Plaid Cymru’s embedding within the mainstream of democratic party politics within Britain was secured at the party’s inception in 1925. Since then, no indication of undemocratic practice, or any conspicuous anti-democratic rhetoric, has been heard or observed within party pronouncements or party

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Oxford, Blackwell, 1974



literature. Thus, whilst talk of democracy certainly does not dominate Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' in any way, this thesis would nevertheless contend that positing democracy as an adjacent concept is important to the party's morphology because, as Michael Freeden has commented, "the existence of concepts adjacent to the ideological core is essential to the formation of the ideology"<sup>23</sup>.

If democracy was not an adjacent concept for Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' then it would disrupt the party's conception of its role in the Welsh, British and European political processes, as all of these are based on the principles of liberal democracy. Excluding democracy from any of the concepts that constitute Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' would also reposition the party and it would alter the channels through which the party's policies that were designed to achieve autonomous rule could pass. Whereas, under democracy, the party has to go through a conventional formal procedure at present, wherein it attempts to persuade the electorate to grant it a minimum winning margin, if it was to stand outside of the standard routes of democracy, and therefore not contest elections, it would inevitably operate in a more informal setting in which it would, in essence, become a political pressure group. Under these circumstances, the methods employed by the party to secure its aims and objectives would undoubtedly be modified. Hence, this thesis would argue that the concept of democracy, though rarely mentioned or discussed by the party, is nevertheless vital to the ideology of Plaid Cymru, and to its image as a conformist party within a multi-level democratic political system.

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp.77-78

b) *'Equality'*

This thesis would wish to submit the proposition that, within Plaid Cymru's ideology, opposition to all forms of inequality can be registered as an adjacent concept to the peripheral concept of 'social justice', as seen in the previous chapter, and 'social fairness', as presented in this prototype model. This is because, this thesis would contend, that in familial, local, communal, national, and international settings, the philosophical notion of equality pervades Plaid Cymru's thinking. Dispensing with the theoretical underpinning that the concept of equality brings could leave the party open to sexist, homophobic, racist, or other non-egalitarian or chauvinistic tendencies. Although this thesis would agree that many of these biases could be countered by practical action both at the policy-making and the grassroots levels, the fact that commitments to the creation of an equitable Welsh, and global, society are embedded within the party's ideology enables the party to refute criticisms and accusations that may come its way. Hence, this thesis concludes, it is important for the party membership to observe the concept of 'equality' in operation on an everyday basis as an adjacent concept within the 'thought-practices of Plaid Cymru.

c) *'Indigenous entrepreneurialism'*

This thesis wishes to propose that 'indigenous entrepreneurialism' should be viewed as an adjacent concept to the concepts of 'communityism', 'decentralisation' and 'vicinity as the primary source of solidarity'. 'Indigenous entrepreneurialism' represents both the spirit and the practicality of enticing home-grown talent in the cultural, social, political and, above all else, economic fields. This adjacent concept has evolved gradually over the course of the party's history. For example, whilst 'early' Plaid Cymru sought to foster localised skills and community-based crafts,

‘modern’, and certainly ‘contemporary’ Plaid Cymru, has chosen to encourage the development of indigenous small and medium sized enterprises in order for them to supply, first and foremost, the Welsh market, but then to expand their range within Europe and beyond.

In a philosophical sense, and possibly somewhat fancifully, some within Plaid Cymru may have also been tempted, over the years, to maintain that inducing indigenous talent and entrepreneurial skills ensures that the culture and heritage of Wales – the country’s innateness – seeps through. As this occurs, any unnecessarily extraneous or ill fitting ideas, such as, for instance, industrialisation, if Saunders Lewis’ line of reasoning was to be highlighted, could be rejected as being contrary to more conducive and inherent Welsh practices. ‘Indigenous entrepreneurialism’, therefore, is open to several interpretations and may be visible in several guises. Nonetheless, this thesis would contend that it should not be interpreted as one of Plaid Cymru’s ideological drivers; its role as an adjacent concept being one of offering space and ideas that other core and peripheral concepts, as mentioned above, can then borrow from in order to further develop and enhance the clarity of Plaid Cymru’s ideology.

### **Attaching Labels to Plaid Cymru: More Socialist than Nationalist?**

Arguably the key finding or recommendation to be extrapolated from this thesis is that if it is necessary to classify Plaid Cymru’s ‘thought-practices’ in terms of the existing and standardised political ideologies, then it would be far more accurate to describe Plaid Cymru’s ideology as being akin to socialist ideology than it would be to match the party to a nationalist ideological standpoint. Whereas this may cause

dismay among some party traditionalists, and it would cause confusion among observers of both ideologies and the Welsh political scene, for Plaid Cymru this would be more beneficial in practical terms as socialism, using Freedén's paradigm, is a *full* ideology that is comprehensive in its ideational scope. Nationalism, as Freedén has correctly observed, is not a *full* ideology in that its core and peripheral concepts do not furnish it with the complete range of viewpoints and opportunities for developing policies that *full* ideologies require. As this thesis would contend that Plaid Cymru's ideology is also not a *full* ideology, in the sense that, over time, the party's political pronouncements and manifestos have had to broaden the range of policies and ideological concepts that they have featured – borrowing unashamedly from other parties and ideologies on occasions – it may be useful if the party added some components of socialism in order to augment its existing 'thought-practices'. This would then make Plaid Cymru a party with a clear and precise socialist ideology.

This thesis would maintain that the only perceivable stumbling block to this labelling of Plaid Cymru as a party encapsulating socialism would appear to come from the fact that unless Plaid Cymru alters its position to enable it to adopt a totally cosmopolitan, and less Wales-centric, political stance, which seems highly unlikely, then the first two core concepts of the original model, enunciated earlier in this concluding chapter, are likely to remain centrally positioned within the party's 'thought-practices'. If some form of synthesis was to be concocted between Plaid Cymru's current 'thought-practices' and socialist 'thought-practices' – ideological positions which are partly overlapping but still remain sufficiently diverse enough to stand-alone – then a type of '*spatial socialist patriotism*' could well be the resulting ideology; indeed, this may not be too far removed from the stated opinion of Adam

Price, the Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, who cites Marx as a major influence and who envisions a decentralised 'libertarian socialism' as the way ahead for Plaid Cymru and Wales<sup>24</sup>.

However, whatever shape the party's ideology takes in the years ahead, this thesis would contend that Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' will remain unique – as it could be argued that all ideologies are anyway – and the party's ideology may well continue to defy conventional classification. This thesis would argue that Plaid Cymru's ideology, like all ideologies that are not *full*, in the Freedenite sense, is a palimpsest. This means that, rather than being set in stone, it is continuously evolving and expanding, and it is overwritten by each new generation of politicians and theoreticians. This thesis would contend that this should be viewed in a positive light. This is because the present morphology of Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices' allows scope for the type of ideational development that *full* ideologies tend to stifle.

This thesis started out to exam whether Plaid Cymru's ideology could be equated to nationalism, as Plaid Cymru is invariably regarded as a party that exudes nationalist thought and nationalistic intentions. The conclusion to this thesis is that rather than just applying the simplistic, and inaccurate, label of nationalism to Plaid Cymru's ideology, the actual 'thought-practices' of the party, certainly at this present moment in time, could in fact be the '*spatial socialist patriotism*' that was cited earlier. Whether this is acceptable to party members or not, this thesis believes that Plaid Cymru's ideology is undoubtedly unclassifiable in conventional terms. However, one thing that is certain, and one thing that this thesis has hopefully revealed, is that the

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<sup>24</sup> Adam Price, *The Passion of Price*, The Western Mail, 13.09.2004, p.15

party's ideology cannot simply be labelled as nationalist. Whatever descriptive terms are used to sum up Plaid Cymru's 'thought-practices', this thesis would argue that, after all of the information provided in this thesis has been assessed, and an evaluation of the party's ideology using the Freedinite model has been conducted, Plaid Cymru is not a nationalist party, in its purest sense, as it is not a conduit for, and breeder of, nationalist ideology alone.

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