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**Loosening the bonds? The causes and consequences of
multi-speed membership in the British Labour Party
2011-2018**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signed

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Abstract

Using the framework of multi-speed membership, this thesis explores party membership and party organisational change. It does so within a single party case study, the British Labour Party: a party that has made significant changes to its membership model in the period of analysis (2011-2018). This party provides a critical case within which to explore and expand our understanding of membership and membership change.

The case study takes both a demand-side (elite) and supply-side (members) approach in order to understand both the causes and consequences of multi-speed membership change. On the demand side, the question of 'why change?' is answered by developing a multi-level model of party change, a model appropriate to the idea of multi-speed membership. This framework not only facilitates a broad exploration of party change but demonstrates the value of a multi-level, interactive model which accounts for the role of party actors in shaping change as well as responding to it.

The supply-side analysis explores the nature of party membership and the relationships between members and their party. This member-centred approach reveals the dynamics in this relationship: the processes that lead to joining, what happens after joining, and how and when the relationship sometimes ends. In taking this approach, new concepts and categories for understanding party membership are developed. These conceptual developments suggest a path towards solving some of the puzzles of party membership, such as why, in spite of significant ideological incongruence and dissatisfaction, some party members don't leave.

This thesis seeks to fill the qualitative gap in party membership studies applying a mixed-methods approach utilising interviews, document analysis and participant observation within a single critical case to develop a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of party membership and party organisational change. This in-depth analysis of change in one party adds to our general understanding of party membership, party membership changes and their consequences, with insights that can be applied across other cases.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 The Labour Party and multi-speed membership: 2011-2018	2
1.2 Understanding the consequences of multi-speed membership: a gap in the literature	6
1.3 A Qualitative approach: the supply and demand of party membership	7
1.4 Research question, aims and approach	8
1.5 Thesis structure.....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	14
2.1 Membership decline?	14
2.2 What is party membership? Concept and definitions.....	17
2.3 Party organisation and change.....	18
2.4 Value of members to parties (demand-side).....	21
2.5 Value of party to members (supply-side)	26
2.6 Recruitment, retention and the revolving door	29
2.7 Supporters not members	31
2.8 Expanding membership rights	32
2.9 Multi-speed membership.....	34
2.10 Multi-speed membership and intra-party tensions.....	36
2.11 Conclusions.....	38
Chapter 3: Research Design	40
3.1 Research Question	41
3.1.1 Research sub-questions.....	41
3.1.2 Definitions	42
3.2 Methodology	44
3.2.1 Aim of study.....	44
3.2.2 Qualitative research approach.....	45
3.2.3 Case study strategy.....	46
3.2.4 Case study unit	47
3.2.5 Embedded units	48
3.2.6 Case study strategy and generalisation.....	48
3.3 Data collection, tools and methods.....	49
3.3.1 Data collection - Q1 'why change'	49
3.3.2 Data collection - Q2 'what consequences'	51
3.3.3 Sampling strategy.....	54
3.3.4 Context and time boundary.....	56
3.4 Analysis	57

3.4.1	Analysis Q1 (why change?)	58
3.4.2	Analysis Q2 (what consequences?).....	60
3.4.3.	Grounded theory approach.....	62
3.4.4.	Organisation, transcription, software.....	64
3.4.5.	Analysis – party level	64
3.5	Ethical considerations.....	64
3.5.1	Anonymity	64
3.6	Trustworthiness, validity, reliability and credibility	66
3.7	Potential bias and limitations	66
Chapter 4: ‘Why Change’		69
4.1	Modelling and explaining multi-speed membership.....	69
4.2	Party change.....	70
4.3	Party change and intra-party democracy	72
4.4	Modelling party change	75
4.4.1	What change?	75
4.4.2	The model.....	77
4.4.3	An ecosystem of change.....	79
4.5	Applying the model	82
4.5.1	Environmental conditions	83
4.5.1.i.	The ecology of membership.....	83
4.5.1.ii	Political climate	90
4.5.2	Party type, organisation and structures	98
4.5.3	Purposive-action approach	105
4.6.	Conclusion.....	113
Chapter 5: The supply side of party membership.....		117
5.1.	Why do party members join, what do they do, and why?	118
5.2	Interviews	123
Results: Section One		123
5.4.	Why do party members join and become active?	123
5.4.1.	Paths to party membership.....	123
5.4.2.	Selective outcome incentives and party culture.....	128
5.4.3.	Active non-members and joining.....	130
Results: Section Two		134
5.5.	What next? The bonds and barriers of party membership.....	134
5.6.	Results	135
5.6.1	Socialisation.....	135
5.6.1.i.	Language, skills and knowledge.....	136

5.6.1.ii.	Convergence of ideas	140
5.6.2.	Social ties	142
5.6.2.i.	Social networks: Party as fabric of life	144
5.6.2.ii.	Social networks: Party activity influenced by social ties	144
5.6.3.	Socialisation and social ties: conclusions	146
5.6.4.	Implications for multi-speed membership	147
5.6.5.	Conclusions	148
Chapter 6: Exit, voice and committed incongruence		150
6.1.	Exit, voice and loyalty (and ideology) in multi-speed Labour.....	150
6.2.	Exit	152
6.2.1	Exit as a process	152
6.2.3.	Reasons for exit.....	153
6.2.3.i.	Reasons for exit: Activity, socialisation and exit	154
6.2.3.ii.	Reasons for exit: Centralisation and exit.....	156
6.3	Voice	157
6.3.1.	Discontent and (non-)voice.....	157
6.3.2.	Discontent and ideological incongruence	160
6.4.	Loyalty	163
6.4.1.	Loyalty as expressive attachment	167
6.4.1.i.	Expressive attachments: Membership as identity.....	168
6.4.1.ii.	Expressive attachments: Membership as responsibility and ownership.....	169
6.4.2.	Expressive vs instrumental attachment	170
6.4.3.	Implications for multi-speed membership	172
6.4.4.	Conclusions - Party membership as committed incongruence.....	173
Chapter 7: Members vs supporters – expanding affiliation and political rights		175
7.1	Multi-speed membership and ‘narratives of legitimacy’	176
7.2.	Members vs supporters.....	177
7.3.	Results	178
7.3.1.	Beyond cost-benefit.....	178
7.3.2.	Activists and active incentives	182
7.3.3	Multi-speed membership and collective traditions	185
7.4.	Conclusions.....	187
Chapter 8: Conclusions		189
8.1	Multi-speed Labour	189
	Summary of findings	190
8.2.	Why adopt multi-speed membership?	190
8.3.	What are the consequences of multi-speed membership?	192

8.3.1. Members and their party	192
8.3.3. Intra-party tension?	195
Contribution	196
8.4. Multi-speed membership success?	196
Appendix.....	201
Bibliography	203

Figures

Figure 1: Grounded theory process.....	62
Figure 2: The Model – an ecosystem of change.....	81
Figure 3: Timeline of change	106
Figure 4: The process of joining	125
Figure 5: Joining incentives – example coding decisions.....	125
Figure 6: Socialisation (language, skills and knowledge) – category and properties.....	137
Figure 7: Socialisation (convergence of ideas) – category and properties.....	141
Figure 8: Social ties – category and properties.....	143
Figure 9: Loyalty as expressive/instrumental attachment – categories and properties....	165

Tables

Table 1: Case study units.....	201
Table 2: Interviewees	202

Chapter 1: Introduction

"The difference between supporters and members is like the difference between cohabitating with your partner and marrying someone. I think it's a personal choice. It doesn't make your relationship any less valid. It doesn't mean you can't have kids together or a joint account, or fight over the dishes. It just means something to you. It's a commitment in front of your friends and family that demonstrates that this is a union that matters to you. I think it's the same with joining the party." (member, >20 years)

There are many ways of defining membership, and many ways of supporting a party. And whilst these various forms of support can be quantified in terms of fees, rules and rights, this leaves the significant question of what it *means* to be a party member, and of what party membership means to parties. What is the relationship between party members and the structures, ideologies and organisation of the parties to which they belong?

As membership of organisations go, political party membership is strangely hard to define. It is often seen as a set of rights obtained through the payment of a fee but there is also the question of activity: whether there is a responsibility to participate or if simply paying a membership fee is sufficient. Members could be defined as loosely as those that support the party at the polls and in campaigns. Members could be those who choose the party's candidates, leader and policies. And if non-members can, and do, engage in all of the above (whilst some members do none of these things) this suggests that the concept of membership may have little actual significance.

History shows us that the relationship between parties and their members can be a difficult one. Members are sometimes seen as a strength, sometimes as a liability. Yet the persistence of membership-based organising suggests that parties continue to see party membership as essential: that it is necessary for the functioning of the party. Whether that is as a source of financial support, campaign support, or as a source of political legitimacy. Such is the relationship between parties and their members that the widespread decline in party membership in the latter half of the last century, particularly in the UK, has been used as evidence of party decline. The idea that party membership is a source of party strength is well entrenched.

This relationship between party strength and membership support suggests that to understand parties we need to understand how membership is structured and the relationship between parties and their members; both how parties view membership and how members view party membership. And it is a relationship that is changing. As the traditional membership model loosens and expands, wider, more open supporter

structures and expanded democratic mechanisms are becoming increasingly common in political parties. Susan Scarrow (2015) coins the term ‘multi-speed membership’ to describe this open approach to engagement. Multi-speed parties offer new ways to affiliate with the party, often extending traditionally member-only rights such as leader selection ballots to these affiliates. In doing so, multi-speed parties begin to blur the difference between membership and support. Yet the multi-speed membership party does not sacrifice formal membership completely, continuing to offer formal membership options and attempting to attract new members with increased rights and privileges.

The concept of multi-speed membership provides a framework for understanding membership and party organisation change. It is a place from which to assess the scale of change within political parties and to understand the direction of travel. This framework gives us a place from which to assess the full implications of expanding affiliation and intra-party rights, to develop our understanding of this model of organisation and in doing so, expand our understanding of the party-member relationship and its implications for organisational strength.

Whilst we know that parties are adopting affiliation models and intra-party rules that go beyond traditional membership, we know little of the consequences, and much less about the impact from the perspectives of the members themselves. To understand exactly why these changes are being introduced and what the impact is, I use the framework of multi-speed organising to examine their introduction and impact within the British Labour Party; a party that has gone beyond the traditional membership model to a degree not seen in most other established parties in the UK, analysing this change from an explicitly member-centred viewpoint.

1.1 The Labour Party and multi-speed membership: 2011-2018

In 2011 the British Labour Party formalised a move to expand affiliation, revising the party rulebook to include a change to the party’s primary clause. This change made explicit the role of non-member supporters in contributing to achieving the party’s primary goals of developing policy and achieving office for its representatives. Clause 1 of the party’s rule book was amended to include supporters and ‘collective action’. The new rule book text read:

Clause 1. 3. The party shall bring together members and supporters who share its values to develop policies, make communities stronger through collective

action and support, and promote the election of Labour Party representatives at all levels of the democratic process.

Following this change, and after another party-wide consultation, new rules for leader selections were approved in 2014, introducing a One Member One Vote (OMOV) rule which would also allow non-member supporters to participate. For the first time in the party's history, by paying £3, anyone who declared support for the party could register to have an equal vote on its future leadership.

Whilst the Labour Party had previously included affiliated trade union members as part of the Electoral College for leadership elections¹, this expansion in political rights was a significant departure. It is perhaps a cruel irony that after a long battle for One Member One Vote (OMOV) (Russell, 2005) members came closer to these rights at the very time they were given away to a larger group of more loosely attached supporters.

The first leadership contest under the new rules in 2015 saw a significant jump in party affiliation with 112,799 supporters registering and paying £3 to vote in the contest as well as 148,182 affiliated trade union members opting-in. A year later, in the subsequent leadership election which again allowed supporters to register to receive a ballot (though under stricter rules and for a significantly higher cost of £25), 121,517 non-member supporters voted. And yet, many people also chose to join the party as full members during this period. By the mid-point of 2016, the party reported that membership stood at over half a million (McNicol, 2016), up from around 190,000 in the period 2010-2014.

The results of this exceptional experiment in expanding intra-party democratic opportunities in the party are well documented (Dorey and Denham, 2016; Quinn, 2016); the grassroots of the party (which now included members, supporters and affiliated trade union members who had 'opted-in') elected a leader who barely received enough nominations from his parliamentary colleagues to get on the ballot. The vast majority of supporters, majority of trade union affiliates and nearly a majority of members voted for a left-wing candidate put on the ballot by his parliamentary colleagues (many of whom voted for other candidates) in order to 'widen the debate' (Helm and Boffey, 2015) without expectation of a serious challenge.

¹ The 2010 leadership election was held under the reformed tripartite Electoral College consisting of equal thirds of the vote for MPs (incl. MEPs), individual members and individual levy payers of affiliated organisations. MPs retained nomination powers.

The year immediately following the first leadership election under the new rules saw greater internal conflict and tension between the leadership, members and party elites than had been experienced in decades. Senior party figures suggested the party had seen widespread infiltration from far-left groups, some local parties were suspended and a group of new members challenged decisions about affiliation rules made by the party's ruling body, the National Executive Committee, in the High Court.

Following a vote of no confidence in the leader, supported by 172 members of the Parliamentary Labour Party², a second leadership election was held in 2016. In defiance of the Parliamentary party, the leader was returned to the leadership of the party by the majority of members, supporters and trade union affiliates. The party's new leader found himself with significant support amongst the grassroots of the party, the size of which had been boosted by a surge in membership and support, but not from his parliamentary colleagues.

This rapid expansion of the party's membership and support base raised significant funds and provided the party with a substantial volunteer resource to draw on; a resource seen as helping the party to a significant vote share in the 2017 General Election. The Labour Party had not only reversed the long-term decline in party membership numbers but had somehow managed to do this whilst at the same time introducing new rules for expanding intra-party democratic rights; an expansion in rights that would appear to reduce the value of the membership offer.

Alongside this, a new Labour party linked organisation with a membership base of its own was established by supporters of the new leader in order to 'build on the energy and enthusiasm generated by the campaign' (Momentum, n.d.). Momentum was the successor of the campaign to elect Jeremy Corbyn as leader and transformed after his election to boast 150 local groups, 23,000 members and 200,000 supporters (Momentum, n.d.). Having come through internal disagreements between its leader and other individuals (Fisher et al., 2016), from July 2017 Momentum members were required to also hold membership of the Labour Party. In doing so, Momentum moved to adopt a strategy of greater integration with Labour Party structures, with six Momentum supported

² A large majority of the 232 members of the PLP (including the Leader) at that time.

candidates elected onto the National Executive Committee and its leader running to replace the party's General Secretary in 2018.

This period in the Labour Party's history is significant not just for the change in leadership and resulting intra-party battles, but for the changing significance of party membership and the role of party members and supporters. The party membership emerged from this period stronger in number and (being the new party leader's source of support) more influential. The new party leader sought to increase members' role within party structures, launching a review of Labour Party democracy which includes within its terms of reference suggestions for ways to increase the policy making role of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and Party Conference, and 'strengthening the involvement and participation of our hundreds of thousands of new members in constituency parties and other aspects of the Party's work' (Labour Party, 2018). Yet it can hardly be said that the party elite had planned such a transformation in the party when the new rules were initially ratified.

By the summer of 2016, a year after losing a General Election and six years on from holding government office, the Labour Party in Britain had more party members than all other UK political parties combined. With over half a million members, the party had nearly tripled the number of members it had prior to the General Election. By adopting a multi-speed way of organising, the party appeared stronger, but also transformed in ways that could not have been predicted.

By adopting a model of open affiliation and intra-party democratic rights, the Labour Party had taken a significant step beyond traditional membership organising; a step into a form of membership organising not usually seen in traditional, established parties like Labour. This extraordinary shift in the party (resulting in a far larger membership, a new leader, and a considerable campaigning base) is a highly significant period in the Labour party and also presents a significant opportunity for party membership studies.

It is a period in Labour Party history that provides a unique insight into changes in the party membership environment, party responses to these changes, and the consequences for traditional membership organising, participation and political support. It is therefore to the British Labour Party that this research turns in order to better understand the causes and consequences of multi-speed membership.

1.2 Understanding the consequences of multi-speed membership: a gap in the literature

Political parties are expanding intra-party democratic rights (Scarrow et al., 2002; Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012; Cross and Katz, 2013; Gauja, 2013; Pilet and Cross, 2014; Faucher, 2015; Scarrow, 2015) but we don't fully know why, and we don't know what the consequences are. There is an assumption that parties are expanding rights in order to increase participation and attract new affiliates. But are there other driving factors? And are these aims achieved in widening participation - who does it attract and what is the impact on existing members? How does expanding rights change the dynamics of the party?

Scarrow suggests there is a conflict when intra-party democratic rights are expanded: Parties wishing to recruit and retain members might be advised to limit intra-party ballots to the long-term membership, whilst those seeking to mobilise a wider constituency of support would want to expand them (2015, p.212). These political rights can be used to attract new affiliates or reward and encourage member loyalty, but not both at the same time. Moreover, these new affiliation changes are often made incrementally; they are 'layered' on top of the existing structures and this creates new organisational tensions. Such change, Scarrow argues, creates uncertainty about the 'normative source of authority' (p.211) in the party. Opening party rights can shift who the party is responsive to and can empower those who may not share the party's long-term values.

In terms of the impacts of expanded affiliation and intra-party democratic participation on membership, the multi-speed model raises a number of questions: Is there necessarily a conflict for parties pursuing the dual multi-speed membership strategy of appealing to formal members as well as loosely affiliated supporters? Does a multi-speed party that expands political rights to supporters necessarily sacrifice member loyalty? If pursuing this model creates tensions between types of affiliate, where and how are those tensions felt?

Whilst we do not know the impact of these specific changes on members, there is evidence that expanded participation has significant consequences for parties. Open forms of party democracy such as fully open primaries have been shown to 'degrade' the status of member, weakening party support and disempowering the leadership (Rahat and Hazan, 2001) as well as eroding party cohesion (Pennings and Hazan, 2001). Greater

participation does not necessarily lead to increased party strength. The consequences of expanding intra-party democracy are potentially damaging not simply for membership but for the cohesiveness of the party.

The success of multi-speed membership depends on the impact it has on the traditional membership structures upon which it sits: on the effect it has on members and particularly active members who contribute the most to party organisation. Given the potential risks in this approach, it is worth exploring why parties adopt these measures, and indeed if such changes are always intentional; and to examine in-depth what their impact is on party membership dynamics and consequently on party cohesion, organisational capacity and strength.

1.3 A Qualitative approach: the supply and demand of party membership

If members are the focus of parties' organisational changes, then it is members who hold the key to their success or failure. The 'Cinderellas' of British politics (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992, p.2), the 'stalwarts', 'footsoldiers', those who deliver leaflets in the rain, take minutes at branch meetings, return campaign spending receipts, campaign, organise, fund and support the party in a myriad of unwaged activities, these volunteers still hold the key to the party's success (particularly within the Labour Party that in recent years has relied on a strong ground campaign in elections). Yet we know little of the impact of multi-speed change from the perspective of members themselves.

Labour's experience of expanding intra-party plebiscitary democracy provides a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the impact of multi-speed membership on party members, and therefore on the traditional membership model, in a party that has taken multi-speed membership further than most. And it is through the eyes of these members that this research analyses the impacts.

Membership studies to date have tended to take a quantitative approach. In doing so, the specific nature of the member-party relationship is missed. We have a two-dimensional picture of the party member, their attitudes and activities. But we don't know what party membership means to them, the processes that led them to join, the ways they have been influenced by party culture and practices, how they see themselves and the party, the relationship between the party and their values, and how far this relationship can stretch before it breaks.

This qualitative gap in party membership studies means we are missing a large part of the party membership picture. Van Haute and Gauja (2015) suggest a qualitative approach would better uncover the changing nature of participation within parties, arguing that the survey method cannot fully grasp “party membership as a relationship or dynamic process involving both a demand side (parties) and a supply side (members)” (2015, p.200).

To see the dynamics of party membership (the in-and-out, how party members move between active and inactive support and why, the background conditions and the triggers for joining, when they decide to leave and what leads them to do so, and even to understand why they don’t leave when the exit arithmetic suggests they should) we need a more comprehensive way of researching party membership. A qualitative approach allows us to see a fuller picture of party membership and crucially to see it as something over time, something that can develop and change, and which is part of a broader landscape of political action and everyday life.

This approach is complimentary to the wealth of surveys that have developed a strong picture of why members join and what they do. Qualitative analysis fills in some of the gaps exploring how motivations might be structured, which motivations are important when, and how motivations might change. A narrative approach, looking at membership over time, also allows us to ask not just what members do and why, but to investigate what sustains that activity and how members’ relationship with the party might change.

Understanding multi-speed membership fully requires a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between members and their party: one which can explore not just the reasons party members give for their membership but the routes they took to the party and how that relationship developed over time. This depth of understanding calls for a qualitative approach.

1.4 Research question, aims and approach

This research begins with two fundamental questions: why would a party adopt multi-speed changes to membership organisation and, what are the consequences of doing so? In other words (and as might be asked by those in the party), *how did we get here, and what does it mean for the party?*

By pursuing multi-speed strategies, parties are treading a fine line, balancing extending supporter options (often with incentives attached) with trying to retain the commitment and loyalty of traditional members. For such parties, success depends on navigating that tightrope, ensuring an increase in other affiliates (who may be contributing finances, campaigning resource or contributing to the party in some other way) does not lead to a loss of traditional membership (or loss of member activity). We might then hypothesise that multi-speed success requires members', and particularly committed and active members', incentives for joining, becoming active and remaining so, to be unaffected. In short, multi-speed success depends on leaving the dynamics of the traditional membership model largely intact.

We might also presume that success demands, to some extent, that parties' expectations when introducing such measures match the actual impact. If a party sees a wider support base as an essential source of additional funds, did the returns match the investments (financial or otherwise)? Alternatively, if the aim is wider legitimacy, greater linkage benefits, then success might be more tightly linked to supporter participation, and types of participation. If a party sees supporter status as a gateway to membership, have extended affiliation options also increased membership numbers? A party's aims could encompass all of these or none. And indeed, intentions aren't always met, nor are they immune to change. Nevertheless, the consequences of change, the correspondence between what is intended and what results, are a relevant measure of success.

Taking both a supply-side and demand-side approach, this thesis examines the causes and consequences of party membership change from an elite and a party member perspective. Using the British Labour Party as a case study of membership change, the drivers of multi-speed membership reforms and their impacts on the traditional membership model are explored in-depth within a party that has gone further towards this model of organising than most. By bringing together these two sides of the multi-speed equation, this thesis provides the detailed and rounded understanding of the paths to organisational change and impact of these changes on the grassroots of a party, that has been missing in the literature. It highlights the pitfalls and the potential benefits and offers lessons that all parties considering wider affiliation and intra-party democratic rules could learn from.

This research draws on unique data drawn from interviews with a range of party members at all levels of the organisation, including staff, representatives and party elites

during a period of significant change in the organisation. These interviews were conducted during this critical period (between 2015 and 2018) and as the consequences of changes to affiliation and intra-party rights were still unfolding. As the party as a whole sought to manage, accommodate, understand, accept or reject this dramatic shift in the party, these interviews explore the attitudes, values, responses to change, and opinions of members who would be considered to be most affected by the shift to a more open party model. The research focuses on members who were or had been highly active and engaged in party activity; members whose connection to the party is potentially most at odds with the new models of organising support and similarly, those whom the party has most to lose by alienating.

Members who provide the most resource to the party are a good place to start to examine the impact of multi-speed membership. By exploring the attitudes of active party members, this research adds to our understanding of the party-member relationship and this provides a basis from which to assess the impact of membership change and consequences for the party as organisation. It is the response of these members, their willingness to accommodate change and the elasticity in their relationship with the party, that indicates whether the multi-speed strategy has successfully navigated the tightrope of expanding the organising model whilst leaving the traditional membership dynamics in place. This analysis also suggests what the longer-term consequences of multi-speed membership might be.

1.5 Thesis structure

Chapter two reviews the literature on party membership and membership organising. Starting with the decline thesis, this section considers membership in the context of party organisation: the value of members to the party and the value of the party to members. The literature on recent changes to membership and affiliation is then reviewed and the multi-speed membership theory (Scarrow, 2015) introduced.

Chapter three outlines the research questions and research design. Here I set out how the characteristics of multi-speed membership will be specified. I separate out the two core questions of the research (the demand side (why), and the supply side (consequences)) and explain how these two different perspectives on the same subject have been researched. I detail the case study approach employed for this research and why it has particular utility in this research area. I specify the tools, methods and analytical

approaches (primary and secondary) employed in answering the two questions (these tools, methods and analyses differ for the supply and demand sides of the question). I provide details of the interviewees, interview processes, ethical considerations, strengths and limitations of the research.

Chapter four answers the first research question: ‘why change’. Drawing from the literature on party organisational change, I construct an *ecosystem* model of change which I test against multi-speed changes within the Labour party. This chapter charts the changes within the Labour party which saw the party’s rule book adapted to include a wider model of affiliation and then subsequently saw the rules for leadership selection changed to include supporters. Given that multi-speed membership is not only a move towards supporters but also a retention of traditional membership, this section is really asking both ‘why change’ and ‘why continuity’. Using this ecosystem model of change, I explore the possible causal factors which I categorise as environmental factors, organisational structures and party-type, and direct ‘purposive-action’ moments. This analysis draws on classic political economy explanations relating to the competitive and membership environment of the party; party type explanations relating to the party’s ‘narratives of legitimacy’ and structures; and ‘purposive action’ explanations for change which draw on elite perceptions and key moment of ‘external shock’. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the most influential factors in the Labour case, and in doing so not only provides an answer to the question of ‘why change’ for Labour but provides a model framework for evaluating multi-speed change in other parties.

Chapter five begins the supply side analysis which considers the consequences of multi-speed membership from the member perspective and therefore the consequences of this strategy for the dynamics of the traditional membership model. I begin by considering what and how party members are driven to join up and become active for the party. I analyse members’ joining narratives to understand the processes which lead them to party membership. From this analysis I conclude which factors are driving members to join the party and how these motivations are structured. This analysis also reveals aspects of party culture that may influence members’ reconstructed justifications for joining. Joining narratives also reveal the place of other parties within members’ political lives, with potentially positive implications for multi-speed organising.

In the second section of this chapter, I analyse members’ ongoing relationship with the party: what keeps members active and what keeps them involved. I find specific processes

that affect member activity and party cohesion, but these are processes that may have negative implications for multi-speed organised parties. I conclude by evaluating what these member dynamics mean for parties adopting multi-speed models.

Chapter six considers the next stage of party membership: why party members leave or stay, and how they deal with change within the party. This chapter provides answers to one of the key questions for multi-speed organised parties: how to retain member loyalty when opening the party to non-member supporters. Using Hirschman's trilogy of exit, voice and loyalty, I analyse member interviews to provide insights into member exit and re-joining and reveal the factors that encourage members to leave or to stay. First, I explore exit, considered as a process rather than a single decision to leave. Looking at exit as a process shows that leaving involves not just a final decision and the prompt for that decision, but background conditions and the influence of structural factors. This chapter also explores 'discontent' as a proxy for voice. Finding extensive negative opinions of the party, I consider the main reasons for discontent, particularly discontent arising from ideological incongruence and party change. I consider the reasons for ideological incongruence and how members rationalise these views.

In the final section of this chapter I explore loyalty understood as 'non-exit'. I explore why party members stay, particularly when the party changes. Here I develop categories for understanding party member 'misfits': those who remain within a party which they see themselves as ideologically apart from. I provide an explanation for the puzzle of member misfits based on the relationship members have with their party; how members see the party and their role within it. I conclude by evaluating what these findings suggest for the multi-speed organised party.

Chapter seven concludes the supply side analysis of multi-speed membership by directly addressing the question of how party members feel about multi-speed membership. This section sets out what members felt about the new rules for leader selection. Here I analyse whether the expected tension (suggested by the dual approach of expanding rights whilst retaining traditional membership) has occurred, and if so, exactly where that tension is being felt. First, I consider members' views of multi-speed changes in terms of their relationship with the party, their expected costs and value calculations. I then consider the expansion of political rights against the background of the motivation structures established in chapter five. Finally, I consider the Labour Party-specific factors which may

influence members' reactions to this change. I conclude by summarising the consequences of multi-speed organising within the Labour Party.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis with a summary of the key findings and an analysis of the opportunities for success with multi-speed organising, drawing on the experience of the Labour Party case. Whilst there are factors that may be Labour Party-specific, there are many areas of the Labour experience which will have relevance for other parties moving towards multi-speed membership, particularly those in the cleavage party model. I suggest which areas should be a cause for concern and which areas present opportunities for multi-speed organising.

This thesis, considering both the supply and demand side pictures of multi-speed membership, within a single case study, examines the introduction of multi-speed membership within an established and traditionally cleavage-representation type party and in doing so illuminates the difficulties, and potential opportunities, for change within a party type that would be expected to struggle most with multi-speed change.

The demand-side analysis sheds light on the reasons parties might adopt multi-speed changes and what they may be expecting in doing so and demonstrates the utility of a multi-level model which acknowledges the interactions between variables and recognises the way individuals shape change as well as responding to it.

On the supply-side, by taking a qualitative approach to members' joining, activity and exiting behaviours and attitudes this research reveals previously overlooked elements of membership and provides possible answers to important puzzles of party membership: why party members continue to support parties that they feel ideologically distant to and why some members join without becoming active whilst others become active without joining.

In answering these puzzles and exploring multi-speed membership change in depth and through the eyes of those enacting and experiencing the change, this research provides a unique insight into multi-speed membership and the future of party political organisation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Party membership studies have begun to investigate changes to party membership and the expansion in ways citizens can connect to and engage in party activity. This emerging area of research suggests that whilst individual, formal membership is declining, this does not directly equate to a decline in organisational strength or legitimacy. Parties are experimenting with expanding membership options, creating new modes of affiliation, and are increasingly involving a wider group of citizens in policy development and candidate selection. This alone gives us reason to question the conclusions drawn from member decline theories as it is not only those connected to political parties by traditional obligations and privileges that engage in activity within and for the party. Understanding the change in how parties and citizens connect is fundamental to understanding the changing shape of party organisation.

2.1 Membership decline?

The dominant literature within party membership studies has predominantly emphasised membership decline. Both within-nation and cross-national studies of European democracies have shown a general downward trend in membership numbers. The major works on party membership in European democracies (Katz et al., 1992; Mair and van Biezen, 2001; Van Biezen et al., 2012) have demonstrated a robust and consistent trend across the majority of European democracies (old and new) of long term decline in party membership. This downward trend has been confirmed by more recent analyses (Webb and Keith, 2017). All of these major studies analyse both absolute membership numbers (M) and membership as a ratio of the electorate (M/E).³

The first major study looking at membership across European democracies⁴ from 1960-1980 (Katz et. al; 1992) found that whilst the ratio of members to electorate declined in eight of the ten countries studied, there was no evidence of a European-wide collapse in total numbers of party members (M). The decline in the M/E ratio was, they argued, a

³ The M/E measure allows for cross-national comparison as well as within nation comparison whilst absolute numbers can only tell us about membership number decline over time. Party membership can also be measured as a percentage of a parties' voters (M/V) but this has limited explanatory power as an increase in the ratio could either explain an increase in members or decrease in voters.

⁴ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK.

result of increasing numbers of electors (in part due to the extension of the franchise in many countries). However, the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands did suffer more acute decline, finishing the period of analysis with no more than a third of the members they started with (measured as M/E). Denmark and the UK were, they noted, exceptions deserving the term 'collapse'. The follow-up to this study looking at the period 1980-1990 (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001) found a continuation of the decline in the M/E ratio but, for the first time, a decline in absolute membership numbers (M) as well. This study reviewed 20 European democracies⁵ and whilst finding a significant range across countries (Poland, France and the UK had M/E ratios below 2% whilst Austria recorded 17%), concluded that the 1990s had witnessed, 'the first substantial and consistent aggregate evidence of growing disengagement from conventional politics across Western Europe' (2001, p.13). Significantly, thirteen of the largest democracies were 'simply haemorrhaging members' (2001, p.13). This trend was continued into the 2000s with a large majority of European countries experiencing further decline on 1990s levels (Van Biezen et al., 2012). In this study of twenty-seven European democracies⁶, six countries had M/E ratios of less than 2% and France and the UK were found to have lost around two-thirds of the memberships they recorded in the 1980s. In the most recent study of membership ratios (Webb and Keith, 2017), only Ireland records a modest increase in M/E ratio; all others confirm the picture of decline.

The downward trajectory of party membership (in the majority of cases) is both consistent and strong, if not entirely uniform. And whilst the direction of these figures is robust enough to give confidence in the general trend, they should not be read uncritically. Party membership suffers from a range of measurement issues. There are just two ways to measure party membership: through self-reported party membership in surveys or by using parties' reported figures. The former is open to measurement error owing to sample size and relying on survey participants' understanding of party membership (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001) as well as cross-survey variations in question wording (Ponce and Scarrow, 2016); the latter presents different problems. Parties have not always kept accurate records. Many parties registered members locally and in a more ad hoc fashion than the centralised, national lists that prevail today (Scarrow, 2015). Parties also have reason to inflate their membership figures as they provide a signal of the party's strength

⁵ As above plus Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland.

⁶ As before plus Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia.

and popular support. In the 2012 study, Van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke address this issue by using European Social Survey (ESS) data as a check on the validity of the party-reported figures. Whilst reported party membership is slightly higher than parties' own figures, the measures co-vary substantially. Ponce and Scarrow (2016) overcome the instability in survey-based self-reported membership figures by using a behaviourally-validated membership definition: self-identified party members who are active outside and/or within the party. This measure demonstrates that decline in membership numbers can mask a substantial amount of stability in active party political participation. These refinements in measuring party membership however, do serve to confirm the general downward trend in party membership across Europe since the mid-point of the 20th Century.

Recent studies of party membership have however challenged the decline thesis. By considering the development of the mass party prior to the Second World War, Scarrow (2002, 2015) demonstrates that the mass party was not the dominant model in all countries in the first half of the 20th century. In fact, only a limited number of democratic parties were organised in such a way. Scarrow argues that by taking the mid-point of the century as the starting point, party membership decline is overstated; the amount of variation across countries and within party families is 'hard to reconcile with artificial and undifferentiated invocations of the former age of mass party dominance' (2015, p.67). Selle and Svåsand (1991) argue that rather than a generalised trend in party membership decline across Europe, countries fall into one of three categories: countries in which major parties' memberships have declined, those in which party membership in general has increased, and those in which some parties have increased members whilst others have lost them.

Kölln (2016) argues that by aggregating all parties' membership data within a country, cross-national analysis has overlooked the differences between parties within countries, particularly between older and newer parties. Kölln also argues that by taking just a few points in time, the data masks the fluctuations that occur in between. Taking 47 parties' annual reported membership between 1960 and 2010 (1653 observations), Kölln finds that 23% did not experience membership decline during this period. The results give some support to the idea that the more established parties are, the greater the membership loss, with data showing the age of party to be a determinant of membership decline. This is consistent with Gauja and van Haute's (2014) analysis which highlights the recent stabilisation or growth in membership of environmental, regional, new and far right

parties across Europe and Paulis et. al.'s (2017) analysis that finds nuances in membership decline according to party family and age of the party.

These analyses suggest that whilst the overall direction of party membership numbers is undoubtedly downwards, there may be more to party membership than uniform decline. Evidence of variation between parties and countries at different points in time suggests that the aggregate downward trend may be masking a much more nuanced picture. This picture is further complicated by disparities and developments in the definition and forms of party membership.

2.2 What is party membership? Concept and definitions

Party membership is a flexible concept that varies across countries, between parties, and within them over time. This variety in membership makes cross-national comparison challenging (Ponce and Scarrow, 2013). The major works cited above used a strict direct and individual membership criteria but parties have other affiliation modes. Heidar (2006) categorises these as: individual membership, auxiliary membership (through organisations linked within the party: usually youth, women, pensioners groups), and collective 'corporate' membership such as trade union affiliation. The range of party attachments creates further difficulties in comparing and assessing membership numbers. For instance, parties with large numbers of members affiliated through other bodies (such as trade unions) have often reported these individuals in their total membership numbers.

The formal modes of membership affiliation listed above would define party membership organisationally by members' obligations (such as paying fees) and privileges (such as voting rights) though even within this definition there is considerable variation in the rules covering fees, citizenship requirements, age restrictions, probationary periods and exclusivity (Gauja and van Haute, 2014). But membership can also be defined by activity. Duverger's (1959) seminal work on party organisation devoted a whole chapter to the various forms of party membership and affiliation, and the levels of participation they entail. For Cross and Gauja (2014), membership can be seen as 'a concept constructed by parties and one that can be used and manipulated (in terms of who can be a member and the rights/duties ascribed to members) as a tool to achieve a party's goals' (2014, p.612). Clearly a member/non-member distinction does not give us the full picture of party affiliation.

2.3 Party organisation and change

The analysis of party membership cannot be divorced from consideration of what role party members are given in party organisation: what they bring to the party, what parties expect from them, and how they add or subtract from parties' organisational strength. As such, party membership needs to be considered in the context of how parties organise and organisational change.

The pattern of parties' adaptive change viewed through party model theories, from the mass-party model Duverger (1959) through the catch-all party (Kirchheimer, 1966) and electoral professional model (Panebianco, 1988) to Katz and Mair's cartel party model (1995), can be viewed as an evolution in increasing detachment from party membership: a move away from internally focused concern with party members, towards outward concern with voters (Kirchheimer, 1966). In Duverger's mass party model, parties provided the platform for bringing newly enfranchised populations into political participation. Parties therefore aspired to *mass* membership not necessarily in number but in their structure (1959, p.63). The mass party provided a place for mobilisation of the masses of new potential voters along interest-based lines. The transition to a catch-all model of party organisation (Kirchheimer, 1966) represents a move from depth to breadth of support. In this mode parties try to appeal to the widest possible base rather than represent their members as a socially identified group. They make their appeals on policy rather than on ideological grounds and in doing so weaken the relationship with members, no longer articulating their (predominantly class-based) interests. The floating voter becomes the focus instead of the member, and leaders are responsive to the wider electorate over the membership.

The role of party members is further weakened in the electoral-professional model (Panebianco, 1988) with members replaced by professional campaign staff, media experts and pollsters who are employed to run campaigns; once the work of local party members and local party organisation. Whilst the electoral-professional party may seek to increase its membership, it does not do so to see members fill the roles they did in the mass party model. Member roles in financing the party and contributing to policy are limited, with the party focusing on the 'opinion electorate' over the 'electorate of belonging'. Thus, any expansion in membership in this model is likely to favour a passive membership.

The focus on inactive, dispersed membership is developed in the cartel party model (Katz and Mair, 1995), in which the party member has greater rights exercised through individual ballots, but must also share these rights with a wider group of supporters as the 'distinction between party members and non-members becomes blurred' (Katz and Mair, 2009). And because these rights are exercised through ballots rather than local meetings, members are less able to organise against the leadership and challenge it. The cartel party gives a veneer of mass support, with significant rights for members, whilst strengthening central leadership. The party member is connected more directly to the central office, but also more atomistically, and the party on the ground is increasingly separated from the party in office.

The direction of these adaptations is away from members and mass participation. Because of this, moving away from membership has often been characterized as party decline or decay. Yet a weakening in the relationship to the grassroots of a party doesn't necessarily mean a weakening of party strength organisationally. Taking the mass party as the starting point has naturally led to an extensive literature on parties in decline; the move away from membership is seen as a decline in organisational strength. Katz and Mair (1995) argue that by considering only the relationship of party to civil society and the 'party on the ground', the strength of party organization in terms of public office and central office is overlooked. It is in these areas that parties have strengthened, becoming institutionalized and self-sufficient but also more remote (Katz and Mair, 1995). It is important therefore not to conflate membership decline with party decline. If parties are successfully adapting to models of organisation that are not reliant on party members, and are in fact strengthening in the process, this suggests that adaptation away from members could be more than a gradual response to a changed external membership environment. Instead, it might derive from specific party strategy. It is important therefore to consider the role of elites in party membership change, what pressures they might be responding to, and what role they see for members.

Some theories of organisational change (Harmel and Janda, 1994) argue that party change is the result of specific elite actions. Rather than a gradual process of adaptation, they encourage a reading of party change as a 'discontinuous outcome of specific party decisions linked to party goals' (1994, 259). Previous theories of party change, they argue, have not given enough attention to party decision-making processes, seeing change as a response to gradual external environmental change. Instead they develop a hybrid model which sees party change as involving both internal and external causal factors. It is the

impact of this external stimulus on a party's internal organisation (specifically when it affects a party's 'primary goal') that brings about change. Assuming that parties are conservative organisations and won't change for the sake of it, this external 'shock' or stimulus is needed for elites to consider it worth overcoming the 'wall of resistance' (1994, p267) to change.

Harmel and Janda (1994) outline four primary goals of parties: vote maximisation, office maximisation, policy advocacy and intraparty democracy maximization. For parties in this latter category, the representation of members' wishes is paramount and therefore sudden membership decline might be exactly the type of external shock that effects a change in strategy and would, 'presumably cause a rethinking of internal mechanisms for interest aggregation and articulation' (1994, p271). How then to understand the impact of membership decline for parties whose primary goal is not member participation? What role does it play in elite decision-making compared to electoral concerns?

Panebianco (1988) argues that throughout parties' organisational changes, features of the original model will remain (in much weaker form) shaping future developments: 'A party's organisational characteristics depend more upon its history, i.e on how the organisation originated and how it consolidated than upon any other factor' (1988, p.50). For parties that have previously organised around member mobilisation, does this continue to have a role in the decisions a party makes? In understanding party change, particularly around specific elite decision, it is important to consider both where the party comes from and how this ideological background is understood by elite decision makers.

Scarrow (2015) argues that the decisions elites make about party membership are shaped by party values. These 'narratives of legitimacy' identify the party's credentials for governing. For instance, these could be narratives around strength in leadership or the party's links to citizens. Parties with different narratives of legitimacy would therefore have different responses to membership, and membership loss. For cleavage representation type parties, parties that represent group interests and build ties to those groups, membership is a way of cementing those links; party members are like members of a community. Even when the party no longer exclusively represents these interests, the values and ideological commitment to this form of party representation may remain, shaping the party's organisational choices. This type of party would have a different response to membership loss than a personalistic or political market party which sees members more as fans (Scarrow, 2015, p.20-26).

This party-type understanding of change suggests that parties' strategies are shaped by the historical role of membership in the party. Alongside the cost-benefit analysis of what party members offer, legitimacy connected to ideology would shape a party's membership strategy. Yet, whilst this ideological commitment may shape a party's response to member decline, where such considerations fit within elite based strategic decisions is not known. Scarrow (2015) suggests that ideology interacts with the cost benefit analysis parties make, applying a filter to the expected political economy logic by which party organisational decisions are usually considered, but this has not been tested. How great a role this ideological filter plays in the analysis elites make needs further exploration. Dalton, McAllister and Farrell (2011) argue that 'party leaders, typically, are committed to the party's heritage and ideology, and want to influence policy. But their livelihood is also often dependent on the party' (2011, p.225). If party elites are driven by both party ideology and strategy, how does this affect decisions regarding membership?

Ideal-type party models provide a way of conceptualising the role of members throughout parties' organisational shifts and the impact of membership decline on parties' strength and organisational capacity. Yet there is much to be discovered about how party elites view membership, the organisational ideologies that may shape these views, and what impact this has on party organisational change.

2.4 Value of members to parties (demand-side)

Viewing the transformation of party organisation through the attachment to membership, suggests that membership is a resource that can be pursued or forgotten according to a party's organisational needs and goals. But membership is not a straightforward resource. For Bartolini, (1983) maintaining, increasing or decreasing membership is a process which requires, 'from the leadership perspective, an organisational effort which might or might not be rewarded in terms of money, work and time' (1983, p207). For parties therefore, the cost-benefit analysis of membership, why they pay the costs and what they expect in return, helps explain why parties might seek to change their supporter relations. In short, understanding why parties change requires an understanding of the value party elites give to membership. And it is a value that need not be grounded in truth; it is elite perceptions of members' value that explains the change: 'Unlike money, the value of members as an organisational resource is a subjective one, and it is precisely this

subjective view that can shed light on parties' organisational manifestations' (Scarrow, 1996, p.36).

The value of members to parties can be viewed both in organisational functional terms and according to wider democratic functions. Scarrow (1996) identifies eight contributions members can make to a party both inside and outside the organisation. Six of these can be seen as directly helping the party fulfil its functional roles. At the very basic level, members make up the available pool of candidates for office. In this way, members provide the means for parties to fulfil their main function in a democracy: contesting elections. Members also help win those elections for the party. Campaigning 'on the ground' by party members (delivering leaflets, knocking on doors and 'getting out the vote') has been shown to have a significant effect on election outcomes in the UK context (Whiteley and Seyd, 1994; Pattie et al., 1995; Denver and Hands, 1997). In addition to campaign labour, members can also provide outreach benefits, playing the role of 'ambassadors in the community' by communicating and showing support for a party's values. Members also provide a regular and stable source of votes, though parties still need to win votes outside of their own supporters. This core support is regular and reliable as members are more loyal in their voting habits than non-members (though it is not necessarily membership that *causes* party loyalty, rather it may be that the most loyal voters make up the membership (Katz, 1990)). It is also suggested that party members can be a source of innovation, providing the party with new ideas (Scarrow, 1996). Members also have a role in financing party activity. In addition to membership dues, they are more likely than other supporters to make donations (Ponce and Scarrow, 2011). Members are an important financial resource; one that provides, if not the majority source of funds, still a 'non-trivial' contribution to party coffers (Scarrow, 2015) and provides an income that is both more stable compared to donations (which can be dependent on electoral success) and seen as more legitimate (Scarrow, 1996). Additionally, in countries where public subsidies for parties rely to some degree on membership and electoral support, the financial benefits of membership to parties is two-fold.

However, it is precisely in these functional roles that members have seemingly become less central to parties. Whilst members still predominantly make up the pool of candidates for office, in terms of labour, communications and finance, they have arguably come to be seen as less essential. In organisational adaptations, parties have switched their campaign activity from primarily local canvassing by party members, to centrally controlled and professionally run campaigns. Parties have been using new technologies to communicate

nationally from central office, and financing the corresponding increased campaign costs by non-member donations or state funds (Bowler and Farrell, 1992; Webb, 1992; Katz and Mair, 1995; Farrell and Webb, 2002). Each of these developments can be seen as a move away from membership; a reduced role for activists as campaign volunteers, funders and communicators. An increased use of opinion polling which is 'seen as the main alternative form of campaign feedback to the subjective networks provided by canvassing and the party activists' (Bowler and Farrell, 1992), has also seen party members' role in policy input reduced. Members' functional benefit for parties, whether supplanted or supplemented by these developments, is clearly less crucial; party members' contributions are valuable, but not irreplaceable.

Scarrow (1996) argues that the cost-benefit analysis parties make regarding membership must include an assessment of what type of supporter (in terms of levels of engagement) is likely to satisfy the role that parties seek to fill. Parties only reap the benefits of membership if they can recruit members who are willing to be active in the areas they want them to be; whether that is canvassing, making donations or some other role. Whilst party members are regular, loyal voters of their party (Katz, 1990), there is evidence to suggest that party members are an increasingly inactive group. Whiteley and Seyd (2002) find that new members of the British Labour Party (recruited to the party in a centrally-driven recruitment campaign) differed from existing members in levels of activity. Whilst party members in the heyday of party membership were certainly not all uniformly active participants, across a number of studies (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Heidar, 1994; Gauja and van Haute, 2014) party members have been shown to be less active than in the past. This is further evidence that membership numbers alone should not be directly equated with organisational strength and that the value of party members as a functional asset is not straightforward. Parties can only gain from the membership in terms of volunteer labour and outreach benefits if the members recruited engage in these activities. Likewise a decline in membership doesn't necessarily result in a decline in activism if those that remain are the most engaged (Scarrow, 2002).

Despite developments in party organisation that would suggest members' roles are now less valued operationally (and because of developments in technology, communications and financing, also less necessary), party elites continue to emphasise the importance of members, placing a high value on membership numbers in party rhetoric (Gauja, 2013; Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2013). Beyond purely functional roles, members clearly bring something to the party, and the answer may lie in their non-functional roles.

Whilst money can buy a number of functional benefits, it cannot replicate the democratic legitimacy parties derive from their members. This democratic legitimacy works in a number of ways. It may signal to potential voters that the party is well supported, enhancing its electoral appeal. Likewise, if members reflect the segments of society that the party seeks to represent and appeal to, this adds credibility to those claims. It also may serve to demonstrate that the party is not the preserve of the political elites that run it (Scarrow, 1996). In this sense, parties may seek to enhance membership lists even if those on them remain inactive. Unlike the functional roles outlined before, legitimacy can be simply a question of numbers (an idea reflected in the presence of state funding regimes based on membership numbers).

Attached to the concept of legitimacy is that of linkage; 'parties claim to serve as agencies of linkage because that is one way to maintain legitimacy, to capture the votes, which are their currency in the markets of power' (Lawson, 1980). Lawson argues that it is linkage that marks out the specific role of political parties in forging a 'substantive connection between rulers and ruled' (1980). Lawson identifies four types of linkage that political parties frequently make between citizen and state: 'participatory linkage' in which political parties provide the means for citizens to participate in government; 'policy-responsive linkage' in which political parties ensure the government is responsive to the views of voters; 'linkage by reward' in which parties provide the channel for exchange of votes for favours; and 'direct linkage' in which the political party is used by government as a means of maintaining coercive control over citizens (1980). In considering the role of party membership in creating a link between citizen and state, it is the first of these categories that is of interest. Mass parties which emphasise getting people involved in politics provide a 'participatory linkage' making party membership strength an important indicator of linkage strength (Widfeldt, 1995). It is worth stressing however that numbers alone do not necessarily provide linkage. Duverger's (1959) mass party is not defined as such by the volume of the membership but by the structures that facilitate members' involvement (through political education and financial support). So, whilst a party with a large membership might appear popular and representative, it is not a *parti de masse* in Duverger's sense. How party members are involved in their party is also of import when assessing linkage benefits.

Contained within Lawson's conception of participatory linkage are the notions of 'representational' and 'policy' linkage. Lawson sees both the 'transmission belt' of

candidates to office and the influence of activists on policy as part of participatory linkage. It is perhaps helpful to separate these out, as Dalton, McAllister and Farrell (2011) have done, into 'campaign linkage' (including the recruitment of candidates and shaping of the electoral process), 'representational linkage' (achieving 'good congruence' between citizen policy choices and government programmes) and 'participatory linkage' (activating citizens into the political process through elections), as well as 'ideological linkage' (parties' role in providing policy choices and informing voters of these choices) and 'policy linkage' (in which parties then deliver on what they have advocated). Membership decline might be expected to have an impact on the first two of these, creating a smaller pool of candidates to draw from (and therefore a potentially less representative one), and weakening the party's connection to citizens views as a result of a depleted membership base.

Membership decline can therefore affect party strength by decreasing linkage in certain areas and this can have an impact electorally. The extent to which a party has reach in a community through its members helps to demonstrate that it is 'rooted in the concerns and values of real people' (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Linking to the values and concerns of the electorate not only presents a picture of the party that can be electorally beneficial, but provides a party with a connection to the community it serves. Participatory linkage also helps stabilise the electoral environment for parties. Creating a connection between state and citizen by exchanging votes for policies, parties can stabilise their electoral support (Poguntke, 2002). A similar decline in membership-based organisations linked to parties (such as trade unions) increases linkage problems (Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014).

Whilst it could be argued that opinion polling has to some extent replaced policy linkage, in connecting parties with citizens' views, it has been seen as a poor substitute. Swanson and Mancini (1996) argue that this 'objectified statistical construction' could 'in periods of instability and rapid change, [] leave the parties at a loss as to understand voters' sentiments, grievances and desires' (1996, p.15). However, linking parties to citizens through members' policy input is not a straightforward benefit. For some parties this might be seen as much a liability as a benefit. The benefit to parties of involving members in intra-party policy process is that they link the party to voters. If party members are the party in the electorate then they will help reflect those views in party policy and candidate selection. However, this strength can become a weakness if the members participating in these activities are not ideologically representative of the party's voters. May's law of curvilinear disparity (May, 1973) contends that those most active in a party, the mid-level

elites or activists, are more ideologically extreme than the voters and party leadership. Granting significant powers to this group can result in a break in policy linkage with the party's policies becoming unattractive to voters. Party members can become, 'more of a nuisance, less willing merely to shout their approval of elite policies and more prone to make electorally costly demands' (Katz, 1990).

For the Labour Party in Britain, party activists have, at times, been viewed as such a nuisance; becoming an impediment by imposing vote-losing policies on the party and creating an unattractive environment for recruiting new members. The party's response has been to increase intra-party democracy and centralise membership, the increase in 'ordinary' members and expansion in membership rights created, paradoxically, an increase in central party control by undermining activist and local party organization (Webb, 1992; Scarrow, 1996). Given there is good evidence to suggest that empirically May's Law (1973) does not hold in all cases and party activists are not the political extremists of the party compared to rank and file members or comparing members to party supporters (Kitschelt, 1989; Norris, 1995; Widfeldt, 1995; Narud and Skare, 1999; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; Van Holsteyn et al., 2017), the need to 'dilute' the activists in the party to better reflect the wider public may not always be a concern. However, the Labour Party case highlights that parties' decisions to expand selection procedures might not always mean a reduction in central control.

Understanding party members' potential value to party organisation, functionally and symbolically, helps explain why elites continue to place a value on party membership recruitment. It explains why parties may try to make themselves attractive to potential new members, but it doesn't entail that they are successful in that endeavour. Likewise, the costs and benefits of party members are not straightforward and parties are not always able to dictate the outcomes. And whilst parties may outwardly be trying to attract members, we do not always know their intention in this regard; we don't know what value party elites see in membership.

2.5 Value of party to members (supply-side)

Parties' organisational adaptations towards or away from membership are only one half of the picture. Whether parties see a value in membership is of course of little import if members see no value in joining parties.

Whiteley and Seyd's general incentives model (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Whiteley et al., 1994; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002) goes a long way to explain the complex and numerous motivational factors behind party membership. The general incentives model builds on Clark and Wilson's scheme (1961) which defined incentives as solidary (social) incentives such as being with like-minded individuals and having shared social or recreational opportunities; material incentives from expectation of personal rewards or patronage; and purposive (political) incentives which derive from being part of advancing particular ideological goals (all of which are divided into inclusive or exclusive benefits). Whiteley and Seyd's model brings together incentives that combine aspects of rational choice with social psychological models of participation and in doing so seeks to overcome the paradox of participation (Olson, 1995). They define these incentives as selective process incentives (perceived personal benefits from the process of participation itself regardless of outcome) and selective outcome incentives (such as furthering a political career). They add to the model collective incentives such as furthering collective goods or preventing the opposite, altruism, expressive attachment (which sees loyalty and affection for the party as a motivating factor), and social norms which sees political involvement stemming from the perceived expectations of family and friends.

Across a range of national surveys (Young and Cross, 2002; Gallagher and Marsh, 2004; Pedersen et al., 2004; Heidar, 2014; Baras et al., 2015) ideological incentives (those related to political goals) come out as the strongest motivations for joining and several of these studies have supported the view that ideological incentives have far greater impact on party joining than selective incentives (Heidar, 2014; Pedersen et al., 2004; van Haute and Gauja, 2015). One exception to this is found specifically in the case of younger members, where there is evidence of younger 'professionally minded' members being driven by selective outcome/material motivations such as career opportunities (Bruter and Harrison, 2009).

However, this extensive literature on membership incentives is nearly entirely survey based and what we know of members joining activity is limited by the data. A more in-depth approach to understanding member's motivations could provide a richer picture of what drives party membership.

The importance of ideological incentives in attracting members is consistent across different political systems and corresponds to a decline in parties' scope to provide other incentives. As social and class ties have declined, the automatic, socially-conditioned reflex

to join a particular party has lost strength for some and collective solidary benefits have weakened. With expanding opportunities for leisure and social activities outside of parties, and an increasing desire for extra-party political participation in more individualised activities (Norris, 2002), selective process and solidary incentives are much less in parties' gift. Parties may provide material benefits to members through access to discounts and consumer benefits, but these are not necessarily valued by party members, and are widely available elsewhere. What remains in a party's gift is access to its own democratic channels. It is political incentives that parties are still able to offer to potential members and are doing so.

If the incentives parties offer have changed, then it is possible that those joining have also changed. Given the declining appeal of solidary, selective and material benefits, it might be expected that those who do join parties are more ideologically driven (Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010). Who joins is an important question as the composition of party membership may add or detract from a party's organisational strength and legitimacy. If, by shrinking, parties become home to a minority of ideologically motivated citizens, the membership may cease to represent the wider electorate, damaging the party's representational and policy linkage. Party decline theories suggest that parties (in terms of their memberships) are becoming less representative of the wider electorate (Van Biezen et al., 2012). This is a problem if parties rely on members to campaign in their core constituencies and provide candidates as well as selecting them. As Anders Widfeldt argues: *"If a party needs to explain party policies to women, young people and working-class electors, it might stand a better chance of doing so effectively if it has more women, young people and workers amongst its members"* (Widfeldt, 1995).

Yet recent research suggests that whilst parties continue to be sociologically unrepresentative (older, more male and (in some studies) more educated) (Widfeldt, 1995; Gallagher and Marsh, 2004; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; Baras et al., 2015), they are not necessarily ideologically unrepresentative. Whilst ideology attracts potential members to parties, there is little to suggest as May's Law (1973) proposes, that party members are the political extremists in all cases (Kitschelt, 1989; Norris, 1995; Narud and Skare, 1999; Van Holsteyn et al., 2017). Though studies have found that party members place themselves further to the end of the ideological spectrum than party supporters (Webb et al., 2017) they have also been found to represent a diverse range of opinion (van Haute and Gauja, 2015). This suggests that party membership decline has not necessarily led to a break in representational linkage. And whilst membership numbers alone may represent a

decline in participatory linkage, this might be changing with the development of supporter affiliation.

2.6 Recruitment, retention and the revolving door

This twin picture of a decreasing demand for party members on the one hand, and a decreasing desire for party activity on the other, paints a picture of party membership decline at the micro-level; the individual decisions of party members and party elites about the costs and benefits of membership. Yet at the macro-level, a focus on aggregate national trends in membership has encouraged party system explanations of change. These two types of analysis see parties either completely powerless to reverse membership decline or all-powerful in shaping it. Missing from these micro and macro analyses is a party-level explanation for membership change. Paulis et. al. (2017) have remedied this gap by providing an explanation that takes into account the party's position (vote share, competition, age) and internal variables such as leadership change and selection procedures (Paulis et al., 2017). This analysis finds 'a bandwagon effect between electoral cycles and membership cycles' (2017, p.15), with parties that are gaining votes also increasing membership ratios. This suggests that whilst parties may not be completely at the mercy of system-level changes, they are not necessarily completely in control of membership recruitment either; parties may gain or lose members depending on the political environment. This presents opportunities for parties, though not ones in which they have absolute control.

The importance of electoral and political factors in shaping party membership is highlighted by Pemberton and Wickham-Jones (2013). Looking at Labour Party membership and recruitment strategies during the 1990s, Pemberton and Wickham-Jones (2013) conclude that membership is much more like a 'revolving door' than a linear process. They point to the significant drop in party membership following the party's recruitment drive in the mid-1990s and they argue that the wider political context had greater impact than party incentives on this decline. The incentives remained constant during this period, it was the political context that had changed. Whilst parties can shape some of the incentives to join (reduced joining rates, member benefits, political rights), the political context is largely out of their hands. Election campaigns, election defeats, and whether (and how long) the party holds government office, also affect the party's attractiveness to members or potential members. However, parties do have the opportunity to utilise these key moments for member recruitment.

Whether parties' strategies of recruitment (and retention) are effective or not, they continue to attempt to attract members with reduced costs and by lowering the barriers to entry (Faucher, 2015; Gauja, 2015). This manipulation of the costs and benefits of party membership and the importance of electoral cycles suggests that parties can try to use membership recruitment for specific purposes at specific times (particularly elections). It is during election campaigns after all, that collective benefits are particularly salient and the opportunities for selective process benefits (taking part) are at their highest. It may also be the case that a continuous and stable mass membership is not an organisational necessity or goal. Gauja and van Haute (2014) suggest something similar in their cross-national analysis of party member fluctuations which finds that in Canada and Israel (countries in which parties hold primaries for leadership selections) significant fluctuations occur around leadership contests. They suggest that in these countries, party membership takes on a more 'instrumental character ...rather than a signifier of a shared political ideology' (2014, p. 6).

Whiteley and Seyd (2002) have already shown in the UK context that the move towards more 'plebiscitary' participation in party internal affairs can lead to a less active or more distant membership. It may be that parties are happy to have a more loosely attached member or supporter base; a 'virtually' attached membership who are not regularly attending local meeting are more easily led by the party elite and less able to organise and manoeuvre against them (Katz and Mair, 1995). There are good reasons to recruit members and offer incentives but these do not necessarily increase activity nor is a highly active membership necessarily desirable. Parties' aims in member recruitment are not always straightforward. Nor is it clear whether parties see membership as a constant or as a resource to accrue as and when necessary. Are parties moving towards a concept of membership that has a more 'instrumental character'?

Whilst parties continue to be interested in member recruitment (for specific periods or otherwise), it is unclear how much they concern themselves with retention. Party membership literature has focused on members joining parties and the reasons for doing so, but far less attention has been given to why members leave (with some exceptions (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2016; Bale et al., 2017; Wagner, 2017)) or indeed, if they come back again. Membership figures at the party level are unable to establish fluctuations within the figures (members leaving and joining, new members replacing leavers). The lack of research in this area is understandable. Member exit is a

challenging research object requiring either a panel survey or the ability to track down ex-members; a far harder task than finding current ones. However, not knowing the party member journey (whether membership is a revolving door bringing new members in as it rejects old, or whether members themselves are trapped in that revolving door, leaving and re-joining) it is difficult to fully assess the organisational implications of party developments such as changed incentives and expanded affiliation. Understanding why party members stay, when they leave, and in what circumstances they return, is vital in understanding the implications of changes to membership organising.

2.7 Supporters not members

Party membership has been shown to be a flexible concept taking a number of different forms across nations, within nations, and within parties over time. Ponce and Scarrow's (2016) work on a behaviourally-qualified measure of party membership permits the idea that a supporter, who identifies as a party member (perhaps because of a psychological attachment rather than being fully paid up and on a list) and engages in the same party activity within and/or outside the party, has equal status as a formal party member. There is a vast difference in levels of activity within party membership. If there are party members who participate very little it stands to reason that there may also be supporters who engaged in greater levels of party activity.

Fisher et. al.'s (2014) analysis of campaign activity during the 2010 UK General Election found a significant amount of campaign activity was undertaken by supporters who were not formal members. These supporters' efforts made a positive independent contribution to the intensity of local campaigns and both complemented as well as supplemented member activity. Recent analysis of member and supporter campaign activity (Webb et al., 2017) shows that whilst supporters are less likely to engage in high intensity activities, they do make a significant contribution which, at the aggregate level (because of their greater number), may be as great (or greater) than that of members. Whilst there has been a substantial amount of research on the benefits of party membership, there has been little assessment of the relative benefits of membership compared to support (Ponce and Scarrow, 2013). Ponce and Scarrow's (2013) research shows that parties rely on non-member supporters in substantial numbers; in equal or greater numbers than members in some cases. They define supporters as non-members who declare a partisan preference⁷

⁷ Respondents answering 'very close' or 'quite close' to the 'How close do you feel to that party' question in the European Social Survey (ESS).

and find that whilst members are much more likely to work for a party, the percentage of non-member sympathisers who report having worked for a party is significant (making up over 30% of the volunteer workforce in eleven of the twenty-four countries analysed). This group of non-member supporters, by being numerically larger than the membership, might be presumed to provide parties with a substantial resource to potentially mobilise.

It is now perhaps the case that party membership in the individual and direct model is no longer an appropriate measure either of party organisational strength or linkage.

Particularly in the campaigning function, the supporter/member distinction is becoming less important as parties seek 'boots on the ground' from outside the membership (Cross and Gauja, 2014). Whilst parties generally require their candidates to be members, other organisational functions are being fulfilled adequately by supporters who are also connecting parties to the communities they represent. As parties increasingly blur the member-supporter distinction (Katz and Mair, 2009; Gauja, 2015), the pressing task is to understand the relationship between parties and non-member support. What do parties want or expect from supporters? In what ways are they changing to make use of this resource? And what does this mean for formal membership?

2.8 Expanding membership rights

Another growing trend in party membership is the expansion of intra-party democratic rights such as leadership selection and policy development (Scarrow et al., 2002; Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012; Cross and Katz, 2013; Gauja, 2013; Pilet and Cross, 2014; Faucher, 2015; Scarrow, 2015). This expansion in membership rights at a time when traditional membership is in decline represents something of a puzzle for party membership studies. The apparent paradox in which parties are increasing members rights when there are less of them, makes party membership 'simultaneously less and more important' (Scarrow, 2015, p.1). For Scarrow this puzzle is explained by the continued value of members to parties (financially, electorally and as volunteers) and the utility of rights and privileges as incentives to retain and attract members. The continued contribution party members make (simply in number) to party legitimacy perhaps explains why parties are expanding their intra-party democratic processes with leadership ballots and policy forums; not simply to dilute activists but in an era of declining member numbers, and growing suspicion of parties, to give an air of legitimacy to their operations (Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010). Political rights are becoming a key tool in increasing parties' appeal in an attempt to reverse the general decline in membership

numbers (Van Biezen et al., 2012). Parties are using new ‘democratic credentials’ to make themselves more attractive in the political marketplace (Scarrow, 2015); their desire to demonstrate these democratic credentials evidenced in the fact that some parties have shown more interest publicising these options than in utilising them (Scarrow, 1999). Not only are parties more able to offer such benefits but they are also seemingly attractive to members: participation in intra-party ballots is high compared to other party activity and parties’ memberships grow around these contests (Scarrow, 2015). Such is the spread of democratisation that some 55% of parties⁸ have now institutionalised some form of plebiscitary intra-party democracy (von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017).

The trend towards democratisation in parties, particularly the expansion of leader and candidate selection, is ‘one of the most remarkable and widespread organisational changes in the past two decades’ (Scarrow, 2015). Achury et. al. (2018) find that 43% of parties⁹ give party members a direct vote on the election of their leader (2018, p.5). This trend has been analysed in comparative texts (Leduc, 2001; Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012) and country specific analyses (Marsh, 1993; Wauters, 2009). Britain, as one of the most extensively examined cases (Punnett, 1992; Stark, 1996; Quinn, 2004a; Russell, 2005; Denham and O’Hara, 2008) (and possibly an exceptional one (Denham, 2017)), has attracted significant attention. The British Labour Party in particular stands out, having extended democratic opportunities to non-members and in doing so, become a rare case of what von dem Berge and Poguntke (2017) categorise as ‘open plebiscitary intra-party democracy’.

Whilst intra-party democratic processes are being expanded, not all forms of democratisation are equal. Studies have begun to disentangle the concept and start categorising and measuring types of intra-party democratic processes (Bille, 2001; Rahat and Hazan, 2001; Kittilson and Scarrow, 2003; Kenig, 2009; Aylott and Bolin, 2017; Rahat and Shapira, 2017; von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017). Some studies focus on the relative inclusiveness or exclusiveness of elements within the processes (Rahat and Hazan, 2001; Kittilson and Scarrow, 2003; Kenig, 2009), others have developed indexes for assessing intra-party processes on a variety of measures (Rahat and Shapira, 2017; von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017). Von dem Berge and Poguntke (2017) develop a two-fold distinction between assembly-based and plebiscitary types of intra-party democracy. This

⁸ Of 122 parties across 19 democracies drawn from the Political Parties Database project (PPDB) <http://www.politicalpartydb.org/>

⁹ Of a sample of 57 parties across 10 countries draw from the PPDB

is an interesting distinction as it highlights the role of individuals within the process. The latter of the two categories has implications for the increasing individualisation of party decision making. Primaries and other types of intra-party decision making that go beyond the membership are classified as 'open plebiscitary intra-party democracy' which the authors note remain 'a rare exception' (Von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017, p.148).

Most analyses of intra-party democratisation are made through an organisational lens; a top-down, demand-side perspective. Democratisation is seen from the elite perspective. A few studies have considered members' views and reactions to intra-party democracy generally (Seyd, 1999; Sandri, 2011; Sandri and Amjahad, 2015; Rüdig and Sajuria, 2018). But a party member perspective specifically on the role of supporters in the party, and the changes to include supporters, remains largely absent (with notable exceptions looking at the Australian Green Party (Gauja and Jackson, 2016) and Italian parties (Sandri, 2011)). This is a notable gap as, where parties have expanded intra-party democracy beyond the membership (in semi-open or open primaries), they would appear to have directly affected the value of membership. This is particularly salient in the case of the British Labour Party where democratisation has led to the expansion of rights beyond the membership, a substantially increased support base, and a party that is significantly different to the one many members joined. A member perspective on intra-party democratic change is largely missing in this rapidly expanding literature.

2.9 Multi-speed membership

Scarrow (2015) argues that parties' efforts to engage citizens beyond their members has created multi-speed membership parties. Multi-speed parties offer a range of affiliation options which entail a variety of engagement and participation. These multi-speed parties differ from traditional membership parties by attempting to create new affiliation options for supporters whilst also attempting to maintain a traditional membership base by lowering the costs of membership and increasing the rewards associated with membership.

In addition to this approach to members and supporters, Scarrow argues that multi-speed membership parties have three characteristics. They are centralised (supporters affiliate directly to the central party); digital (based on electronic media with registration and party updates through Facebook, Twitter, blogs and text); and accessible (they are easy to join with little cost) (Scarrow, 2015, p.136-7).

The range of affiliation options offered by the new multi-speed membership party include categories for loyal supporters which usually involve rights and obligations, and looser membership options which do not require exclusive membership and also do not impose duties (though some membership rights might be extended to this group). The first of these categories include traditional individual membership, light membership (such as party friends or supporters) and cyber members. The second category includes Sustainers (who make financial contributions large or small, regular or one off), social media friends and followers, and news audience (those who sign up to receive information).

This model of membership sees activism as something that varies as individuals move in and out of different modes of affiliation and activity. Parties may even encourage that movement at particular times but there is no set process; the supporter may never become a member. Scarrow's model highlights the broad range of ways an individual can now engage with political parties and be active within them. This 'quantum' model of support recognises that parties offer a range of affiliation options and supporters move between categories of support at different times (as well as inhabiting different categories at the same time). It is a useful way of reshaping the way we think about party affiliation and it raises an important question about how we understand these dynamics. If to fully understand partisan engagement, 'we need studies that are more like films than like snapshots' (Scarrow, 2014), how can that research agenda be realised?

Though not labelling it as such, Cross and Gauja (2014) briefly explore this more fluid approach to affiliation. They point to party-affiliated interest groups in Australia (Rainbow Labor and Labor for Refugees) as examples of a fluid and campaign-specific way for supporters to engage politically. These loosely associated groups are comfortable with participants dropping in-and-out and copy the appeal of single-issue groups by combining policy and campaigning. It is this type of political model which, Cross and Gauja argue, is successfully engaging citizens in political activity and which points to the direction of future developments in membership organising. Indeed, some parties are already moving in this direction. In analysing parties' responses to membership change, Cross and Gauja (2014) highlight the development of community organising within the Australian Labor party. This mobilisation strategy, adopted from the United States (a country in which parties do not have formal memberships), seeks to move supporters straight to activism with no requirement to sign them up as members first; 'in this model of campaign organising, the notion of party membership has a more fluid and expansive functional

meaning' (Cross and Gauja, 2014). This adds weight to the contention that some parties are becoming more comfortable with a looser membership model and are seeking to use this to advance organisational goals. This move towards looser affiliation, to ways of organising familiar to the American model, can be seen as an individualisation of party support, complementary to a political market way of organising. In fact, it is argued that a multi-speed way of organising brings parties 'almost full circle' to the individualistic models of party activity that existed before group-based or subscriber-democracy models became popular (Scarrow, 2015, p.206).

There has been little research to date, however, on parties' intentions in this regard: whether parties seek to attract these supporters in addition to formal membership, whether they aim to use support as a gateway to formal membership or if they ultimately envisage replacing formal membership. And there is little research on how parties view support and membership itself, whether they see it as a fluid and dynamic attachment (are they as comfortable with easy exit as with easy entrance?). Scarrow (2015) argues that, 'For the most part, parties have presented these new affiliation options as complements or gateways to traditional membership' (2015, p.151), but also that these changes are often a 'bandwagon response to trends in technology and marketing' (2015, p. 136).

Given this multi-speed way of organising is being adopted in some form or other across a number of countries (Scarrow, 2015), understanding why parties are moving to this model is of great interest. Particularly as this mode of organisation is likely to have consequences for parties.

2.10 Multi-speed membership and intra-party tensions

There has been little analysis to date on the consequences of multi-speed membership; for members or for the party as a whole. Scarrow (2015) argues that the expansion of affiliation options has the potential to create tensions between the different types of support, particularly as these new support routes tend to be 'layered' on top of existing traditional membership structures (2015, p.206). Not only do multi-speed parties seek to attract supporters by expanding affiliation options, they also seek to attract them by expanding political rights. Scarrow argues that when rights and privileges are extended to this wider group it raises important questions for parties in terms of where authority lies; where the party demos is located. In cleavage representation parties this 'represents an

even greater change because it overturns long-held assumptions about who should have the last word in defining party aims and values' (Scarrow, 2015, p.208).

Scarrow argues that by expanding rights to non-members, parties bring into question the fundamental structure of the party. Because of the link between party ideology and organisational model, as much as ideology might influence the direction of organisational change, changes in party organisation (such as the expansion of political rights) may signal a change in the organising ideology of the party (Scarrow, 2015, p.26). For instance, a move to open leader selection even if introduced for short-term goals, may shift more permanently the notion of leadership support and legitimacy (Scarrow, 2015).

This looser model of affiliation may also potentially destabilise parties' electoral environments. If political incentives are used at particular times to attract more loosely attached supporters, the party potentially forsakes its reliable support base. Bringing party members into decisions about who should lead them potentially affects party member loyalty, with those supporting the losing candidates turning away from the party (Scarrow, 2015); 'whilst intra-party ballots may temporarily boost partisan participation, and even party membership, parties face a longer-term challenge of reinforcing the partisan convictions of these newfound activists, so that they are not just supporters of a particular candidate' (2015, p.215).

When intra-party rights are extended to wider groups, the shift in authority can have negative consequences. More radical forms of open party democracy (such as fully open primaries) can disempower the party leadership (Rahat and Hazan, 2001) and erode party cohesion (Pennings and Hazan, 2001). In terms of membership of the party, these changes have particular significance. (Rahat and Hazan, 2001) demonstrate the potential impact on membership that expansion in democratic rights can have. Their analysis of primaries for candidate selections in major Israeli parties finds that in some cases, primary candidates have sought to recruit members for contests regardless of their support for the party. These members have been recruited from other parties and have even failed to vote for the party in the subsequent election. They contend that the introduction of candidate primaries has in fact served to 'degrade' the status of member.

Though these examples are extreme, there is a clear problem for members in expanding selection. When parties move to open primaries, party members have no more influence in the decision of who should lead their party than any other citizen. Indeed the role of the

membership as ‘anchor’ of the party is given by Dutch party elites as a reason that more open selection has not been adopted (Van Holsteyn et al., 2014). Australian parties have also sought to maintain a privileged position for party members, even when selection decisions have been expanded beyond their number (Cross and Gauja, 2014).

Yet studies also suggest that parties with lower entry costs and higher political benefits have more ideologically and socially representative memberships than those with high costs and few benefits (Achury et al., 2018). However, this does not hold for all parties. The authors of this study highlight the British Labour Party’s recent leadership campaigns (2015, 2016) as an exception to this rule: a lower cost, higher benefit, rule change has not resulted in party members more closely reflecting party support (2018, p.11).

As much as radical forms of intra-party democratisation can have consequences for parties, the expansion of political rights does not necessarily empower the membership either. Labour’s previous experience of reforming leader selection is not seen as having handed power to members (Hopkin, 2001; Russell, 2005; Scarrow, 1996; Webb, 1994). As Katz and Mair (1995) establish in their cartel party model, party leaders can increase power through democratisation by empowering party members at the expense of mid-level organisers. Labour’s previous reforms shifted power towards the top and the Parliamentary party held onto the crucial gate-keeping role of nominations.

Changes to party affiliation and rights can have far-reaching consequences but they are not as well researched as they are popular with parties. What are the consequences of multi-speed membership models? And given the importance of these rule changes for members, what is the membership perspective on this shift? Does this shift create a tension and where is that tension felt? Who benefits from this change and are these beneficiaries the intended ones?

2.11 Conclusions

Whilst different parties have different membership relations, from parties with no formal members to traditional mass parties with membership constitutionally defined, it is clear that there have been some notable development in party membership and affiliation. The expansion of affiliation modes and engagement of a wider range of affiliates in party activity suggests that parties are moving into an organisation model that cannot be assessed by membership figures alone.

Parties are moving towards much wider affiliation models and radically reshaping their internal democratic mechanisms. Using primarily quantitative research, recent work has uncovered a complex picture of parties expanding rights to members, expanding the number of ways supporters can affiliate to the party and experimenting with new models of mobilisation. Yet the consequences of these changes are only just beginning to be understood. This thesis seeks to address these consequences through a case-study that exemplifies such changes.

The relationship between parties and their supporters, both members and non-members, is a rapidly changing arena and an underexplored one. By focusing on a quantification of members' contributions and behaviours, research to date has not explained in depth the motivations, expectations and attitudes of this group, and therefore cannot explain members' response to, or the long-term implications of, changing the membership model. Van Haute and Gauja (2015) suggest a qualitative approach would better uncover the changing nature of participation within parties, arguing that the survey method cannot fully grasp 'party membership as a relationship or dynamic process involving both a demand side (parties) and a supply side (members)' (2015, p.200). In understanding the relationship party members have with their party, and the implications of party membership change for the party as organisation, a qualitative approach is needed.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Multi-speed membership is being adopted, to a greater or lesser extent, by multiple parties across multiple democracies, and yet the implications of this are not fully understood. If pursuing a dual strategy of retaining traditional membership whilst expanding affiliation (and sometimes political rights) to attract supporters creates the expected tension between groups of affiliates in the party, as Scarrow (2015) suggests, this is likely to have long-term implications for the membership of the party and consequently for party organisation. In particular, if these new support options are layered on top of the traditional membership model, this is likely to have consequences for membership dynamics. If a party wants to retain members (and we would expect them to want to retain those who contribute the most to party organisation) as well as expand support options, the impact of multi-speed changes on the traditional membership model, and on active members particularly, is of paramount importance to the success of this strategy.

This thesis tests and expands the theory of multi-speed organising, asking why a party would pursue this model of affiliation and what the consequences are for the party and its membership.

Using unique data from interviews with party members after 2015 when multi-speed changes were introduced in the British Labour Party, this research analyses the consequences of multi-speed membership organising from the member perspective. This uniquely qualitative and supply-side analysis provides a new perspective on the relationship between members and their party and the impact of party organisational change on this relationship.

There are few qualitative approaches to party membership study and this has left gaps in our understanding of many aspects of party membership and political activism in parties. We know a great deal from survey research about why members join but this method limits our understanding of the structure of those motivations, and potentially overlooks important motivational factors. We also have very little knowledge of what happens after joining: how members' relationship with their party develops over time and how and why it sometimes comes to an end. And, despite the widespread expansion in intra-party democratic rights and affiliation options, we know very little about members' opinion of, and reaction to, this change. Expanding our knowledge of these dynamics of party

membership allows for an assessment of the impact of multi-speed change on the traditional membership model.

The thesis supplements this supply-side approach with a demand-side perspective: the reasons for change through the eyes of those central to enacting them. This complementary perspective facilitates an analysis of the reasons, ideologies and rationales behind party membership change, and whether those match the membership response.

This research explores the supply- and demand-sides of multi-speed membership through a single party case study, in a party that has travelled significantly away from its original organisational practices and towards a multi-speed membership model. This critical case provides a lens to explore the implications of multi-speed organising, providing an insight into the challenges and potential successes of this model for other parties. And this research does so at a time in the party when those implications were being felt by both the party elite and party members. Using this unique moment in the party, when new multi-speed rules were being used for the first time, and as their consequences unfolded, provides a rare perspective on the implications of multi-speed membership.

3.1 Research Question

Why and with what consequences is the Labour Party in Britain pursuing a multi-speed membership and mobilisation strategy?

3.1.1 Research sub-questions

1. Why has the Labour Party in Britain moved towards a multi-speed membership model?
 - 1.a. Why did the Labour Party change its membership model?
 - 1.a.i. Why did the Labour Party expand affiliation to registered supporters?
 - 1.a.ii. Why did the Labour Party extend political rights to these new affiliates?
 - 1.b. Why has the Labour Party retained traditional membership?

2. What are the consequences of multi-speed membership for the party and its membership?

Question 1 addresses the demand-side of the multi-speed membership strategy. As the multi-speed way of organising is a dual strategy of appealing to a wider constituency of support whilst retaining a traditional membership structure, this question has two prongs: why is the party changing the membership model and why, at the same time, is the party continuing to pursue traditional member recruitment? This first part of the question must also be broken down into two parts. Whilst a party may expand affiliation, it does not necessarily need to use intra-party democratic rights to attract support. Question 1.a. therefore incorporates two research sub-questions: why has the Labour Party expanded its affiliation model, and why has the Labour Party included these affiliates in party decision-making?

Question 2 addresses the implications for the party of a multi-speed membership approach from the supply-side. It examines the impact of multi-speed membership on the traditional membership model through the relationship party members have with the party. It questions how the change in organisation affects the activities, motivations and attitudes of members in the party and what impact this has on organising capacity, party strength and cohesion.

3.1.2 Definitions

Multi-speed membership party - The multi-speed membership party is one that is centralised, digital and accessible and crucially, offers a range of affiliation options (in addition to membership) potentially extending rights to leadership selection and/or policy development beyond the membership (Scarrow, 2015). This expansion in rights is a critical component of the notion of a multi-speed membership party. The multi-speed party seeks to engage a wider group of supporters by using political rights as incentives but, at the same time, maintaining a traditional membership structure with similar rights and responsibilities.

For the purposes of this research the multi-speed party will be considered a party that:

- a. Offers more than one type of affiliation option

- b. Offers incentives in the form of political rights to attract members (and other affiliates)
- c. Continues to offer/promote traditional membership options

Attribute a. does not necessarily entail attribute b. (though the multi-speed theory suggests that parties offer rights to attract supporters) therefore, as noted above, research question 1 will consider these attributes separately.

Member - 'Member' or 'party member' is used in this research to refer to any individual who is officially signed up as a full member of the party. This means they have joined the party either online or through a constituency Labour party (CLP) and paid a membership fee. It includes members who paid a reduced membership fee as students, new members, retired, unwaged or through a specific discount membership offer. It does not include 'affiliated members' or 'non-member supporters'.

Activist / active member - 'active member' is used to distinguish members who are or have been active in the party. The activities used to establish this are those commonly described as 'high-intensity'. This includes various campaigning activity such as canvassing ('door-knocking'), also known as 'voter ID', street-stalls, phone banking, envelope stuffing and other constituency office-related activity; attending meetings such as branch meetings and General Committees; holding a voluntary position in the party such as CLP Chair or Secretary; holding an elected position for the party (e.g. Councillors, MPs); or holding a paid party position such as CLP Organiser.

Many of the above 'high-intensity' activities are of course overlapping and the research recognises that members move in and out of activity over the course of their membership. However, this category is necessary to distinguish those who contribute or have contributed to the party to a greater degree than simply paying their membership fee.

The research makes a distinction between 'high-intensity' activities outlined above and those that take place online. Though members may be intensively active online, those who are not active in person (face-to-face) have not been captured under this category. Whilst after the 2017 General Election there has been a growing suggestion that online activity has a significant impact on campaign outcomes, it is not placed in the 'high-intensity' category of activities because it is likely that such activity does not 'cost' the participant as much in time and effort as the other forms of participation highlighted above.

It is also important for the purposes of this research to recognise the difference between face-to-face activity and more isolated activities. Those activities in the 'high-intensity' category are all activities that require personal contact with other party members. This is an important distinction to make when analysing party members' relationship with the party.

Non-member supporter - 'Supporter' or 'non-member supporter' is used to refer to individuals who have signed up to the party under the 'registered supporters' scheme. From 2014 onwards, these individuals, sometimes referred to as '£3 supporters', had the opportunity to register online for £3 and were given a vote in the 2015 leadership election. The fee for registering as a supporter was increased to £25 for the 2016 leadership election so the term 'registered supporter' is also used in reference to those registering under the revised rules that came into effect in advance of the 2016 leadership contest. 'Supporters' were also able to register under the previous 'registered supporter' scheme (pre-dating 2014 rule changes) therefore the 'supporter' terminology extends to these individuals too. '£3 supporter' is used specifically to refer to those registering under the post-2014 leadership election rules.

Affiliated member and registered affiliates - 'Affiliated members' refers to any member of an affiliated (levy-paying) union or socialist society. Prior to 2014 rule changes, these affiliated members had automatic rights to Labour Party selection processes under the Electoral College election rules. After the 2014 rule change only 'registered affiliates' (affiliated trade union members who had 'opted-in') received a ballot.

Many party members are of course also trade union affiliates and members of Labour Party affiliated socialist societies (a situation that previously resulted in some members receiving multiple ballots for leadership selection under the Electoral College system).

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Aim of study

This research seeks to understand the multi-speed membership model, in context and in depth, to both test and expand understanding of this model of party organising. Its aim is

to demonstrate the implications of multi-speed membership by examining its introduction within a party that has moved further towards this model than most other parties.

3.2.2 Qualitative research approach

What we know about party members has in large part been shaped by the way in which party members have been researched. The methods used for party membership studies have shaped not only the population of these studies but also what we know about them. The dominance of quantitative studies in this field has meant that whilst we know about party member demographics, broad ideological positions and types of activities engaged in, we know little of how their relationship with the party has evolved: what keeps them in the party or gives them cause to leave (or indeed come back), why they engage in some activities and not others (and when), and how their relationship with the party may have changed over time. The dynamics of party membership are little understood yet crucial to understanding how parties as organisations function. Without knowing more about the relationship party members have with their party, and what happens when that relationship is challenged by change within the party, we cannot fully assess the impact of a move to multi-speed membership.

This research has sought to remedy these gaps by taking a qualitative approach. Qualitative research employing narrative analysis allows for a longitudinal view of party membership without a panel survey. This distinctive approach to party membership analysis is especially important for understanding multi-speed membership as this is a strategy that would be expected to affect member motivations and loyalty: emotions and relations that are complex and changeable. As multi-speed membership is a strategy that would be expected to alter the party-member relationship, it is important to look at that relationship in depth and over time in order to fully understand the implications of implementing such a change.

Individuals are central to these research questions. Party elites and party members are both a source of data and the subject of enquiry in this research. Their attitudes, values, decisions and activities shape parties (party strength and organising capacity) and are a driver of change in party organisation.

This research is focused on understanding a process and its implications, and it is a process in which the social actors involved and the context in which it occurs have

significance. The research questions place emphasis on the values, ideologies and relationships of those involved in the process and this therefore leads naturally to an ontological position that sees social phenomena and their meanings as accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2008).

Understanding key actors' motivations and values helps reveal the tensions, if they exist, created by the adoption of multi-speed membership and mobilisation strategies within traditional membership-based parties. If to fully understand partisan engagement 'we need studies that are more like films than like snapshots' (Scarrow, 2014), this research seeks to part fulfil that brief by taking a holistic look at the member, supporter and party relationship in depth, and in context, through the eyes of those involved.

3.2.3 Case study strategy

This research addresses both the 'how' and 'why' of multi-speed membership as well as the wider question of impact. It is therefore both explanatory and exploratory. And it examines these questions from different perspectives within the party as organisation; through the demand- and supply-side (the party elite and the party membership). This multi-dimensional approach requires a range of research tools and correspondingly a range of methods of analysis.

A case study approach is sufficiently flexible to cope with this multi-layered approach. Firstly, case studies have a particular advantage in situations where 'how' and 'why' questions are the focus of the study, and they are particularly suited to research into contemporary issues where the researcher has little or no control over events (Yin, 1994). In this way, a case study acts like a scientific experiment in a new area of enquiry; the study is guided by the existing theory but is 'better able to adapt to and probe areas of original but also emergent theory' (Hartley, 1994). Case studies are also uniquely able to handle a variety of evidence including interviews, documents and observation (Yin, 1994). The case study is often used in organisational studies and research in which context is an important consideration. These strengths made the case study strategy ideal for answering the central questions of this study.

Time was also a consideration for this research. The research questions are focused on understanding a contemporary event during a period in which the event was still unfolding and its effects unknown. The case study provided the ideal strategy for analysis

in this challenging environment. The flexibility of a case study strategy and its ability to capture context make it possible to research new areas of interest. It also facilitates in-depth analysis of change through those interpreting and implementing the change as it happens, and through the perspectives of those it affects.

In answering the 'why' and 'what consequences' of multi-speed membership, the case study approach is the ideal strategy.

3.2.4 Case study unit

This research is based on a single case, the British Labour Party. The Labour party in the UK presents a critical (Yin, 1994) or instrumental case (Stake, 1994) in the study of multi-speed organising as it meets all the criteria for testing and extending the theory. A critical case is a single case which allows a theory with testable propositions (and circumstances in which the propositions are believed to be true) to be confirmed or challenged or extended (Yin, 1994). The case must therefore meet the conditions in which the propositions can be tested.

The Labour Party is a (formerly) traditional cleavage representation party which has experimented with a range of affiliation options and widening access to campaigning and political rights such as leader selection. Within the growing trend for expanding political rights, the British Labour Party has gone further than most other parties, extending democratic opportunities to non-members. In doing so, it has become a rare case of what von dem Berge and Poguntke (2017) categorise as 'open plebiscitary intra-party democracy'. Though other parties have instituted open intra-party processes from their inception, for Labour the move to multi-speed organising is a significant shift, and therefore a suitable case for studying the 'why' as well as the 'what' of multi-speed membership. The political system within which the British Labour Party operates is also a suitable place for exploring multi-speed membership. The UK scored highest amongst nineteen countries on 'multi-speed attributes' and 'online accessibility' indexes (Scarrow, 2015).

Having adopted a more advanced model of multi-speed membership than many other parties which have cleavage party roots, the Labour Party makes an ideal case study for exploring and explaining multi-speed membership. In addition, having introduced new multi-speed membership rules prior to the start of this study, the party then tested them

for the first time during the timespan of this research. This presented a unique opportunity to explore multi-speed organising in practice as it developed within the party.

3.2.5 Embedded units

The party itself is the primary unit of analysis. However, as an organisation, it contains subunits in the form of individual constituency parties and individual members themselves. The research therefore takes the form of a multi-layered, embedded, single case study involving several units of analysis (Table 1 in the appendix). This multi-layered approach enables the research to address the question from both the supply- and demand-side which helps develop a fuller understanding of the party operation as a whole. In taking this approach, the case study design takes a lead from Lipset, Trow and Coleman's seminal study of union democracy (1956) in which the union was analysed through its component units: the local shops, social environment and individual leaders and members (Lipset et al., 1956). This embedded unit design is particularly useful for organisations with federal structures and different levels of authority and participation.

Individuals within the case are treated as separate units of analysis. For Lipset, Trow and Coleman it was 'more important to characterise the man and his immediate social environment than to characterise the union itself' (1956, p.423). Party activists are individual 'cases' creating a multiple case study within the single case. Within the organisation, there are intermediate units, the Constituency Labour Parties (CLP), which serve as subunits. These subunits are not analysed comparatively as single cases. Instead they provide an important contextual basis for understanding the operation of member and mobilisation strategies in practice. The CLP acts as the gateway to the member cases within it and provides important contextual data.

3.2.6 Case study strategy and generalisation

Whilst not comparative at the highest unit level (the party), case studies have particular strengths in analytic or theory-connected generalisation (Firestone, 1993). This case study facilitates an exploration of multi-speed membership theory in practice which has wider theoretical relevance (Mason, 1996) for other parties (particularly those in the cleavage representation model) and indeed for the theory of multi-speed organising more generally. This study is therefore not generalising to a wider population of parties but

generalising to a set of theoretical propositions; the case is an experimental unit rather than a sampling unit.

The same logic is applied to the individuals within the case study. Individual party members, though acting as multiple cases within the single case study, are not sample units but rather individual experimental units. These experimental units are used to develop a theory which is then tested on subsequent units. Embedding 'replication logic' with the multiple-case section of the research creates the right conditions for analytic generalisation and enhances the external validity of its findings (Yin, 1994). The research is not generalising characteristics to the broader population of all active members but developing an understanding of the attitudes, identities and motivations of this group; an understanding that provides the basis for further statistical testing.

Exploring and explaining the multi-speed membership model in the context of a single party (one which contains all the critical features of a multi-speed party) creates the ideal analytic conditions to test and refine the theory.

3.3 Data collection, tools and methods

The research takes a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. This provides a picture of the multi-speed membership strategy operating at different levels of the organisation and from different perspectives. However, whilst examining the Labour Party case in detail, the research does not provide a full ethnographic study of the organisation. Instead this research uses the methods appropriate to test each of the research sub-questions individually and in context. These methods differ because the nature of the object under analysis in the separate questions also varies.

The research employs elite interviews combined with documentary evidence, individual member (semi-biographical) interviews and a preliminary element of (micro-ethnographic) observation within a single constituency party. Different tools for data collection have been employed for different parts of the research questions.

3.3.1 Data collection - Q1 'why change'

Elite Interviews

Elite interviews were used to answer questions about the party's strategies and the influence of party ideology and party type on these strategies. This section of the case study asks how organisational challenges are understood and acted upon. In answering the question of why parties are adopting multi-speed membership strategies (Q1) the research considers what role ideology plays and how that is balanced against organisational needs.

The research explores how elites view the potential consequences of multi-speed membership and what role ideology and issues of legitimacy play in this assessment. Both questions are questions of values and their place in decision-making and as such, require a focus on the meaning individuals give to events and processes.

Elite interviews are a standard and effective method for analysing complex decision-making within a single case. Elite interviews draw out where key party actors place the emphasis within these competing demands and how they frame issues and legitimise their decisions. Interviewing is the appropriate choice for this type of enquiry and semi-structured interviews provided the right degree of flexibility in this context.

Documentary evidence

To support the elite interviews, documentary evidence in the form of NEC minutes, blogs and official party documents was used to corroborate the detail of events and understand the context in which they occur. The research focuses on official documents, consultations and meetings of key decision makers and their personal writings on the subject.

Documents are also particularly useful sources of party rhetoric; having been constructed for the public domain they are direct insights into party actors' understanding of the issue and how they want the world to view their understanding of it. Party rhetoric is in this sense a 'direct indicator of a party's conscious and calculated response to [] social norms' (Gauja, 2013, p.34). It reveals party elites' understandings of pressures within and without: the changing expectations of political participants contrasted to the pressures within the party. Documents reveal how the party understands the relationship between support and membership and the role of ideology in shaping their response.

Official texts are not neutral sources of information and in this research context that is a strength. The ideologies and values that such documents contain and promote are of central interest to the research question; what the party wants the world to see is precisely what the research seeks to understand. The research also specifically seeks to

understand the tensions and conflicts within organisational decisions: how these are understood and what issues are emphasised or marginalised. Party actors' personal writings are useful in this context, revealing how different key individuals draw on different discourses to legitimise or delegitimise certain positions or actions.

3.3.2 Data collection - Q2 'what consequences'

Member interviews

The consequences of multi-speed membership are explored through the eyes of the members themselves. In order to understand the relationship between members and their party, there is a need to look in more depth at how members come to join, why they join, what they do, and crucially, how that relationship develops. Only with this level of detail can an assessment be made about how multi-speed organising affects partisan attitudes and behaviours. Member interviews focused on the nature of members' relationship with the party at the national and local level. They explored the attitudes, motivations and political activities of members (particularly those engaged in face-to-face, high-intensity activity).

In-depth interviews with party members add another level of detail to our understanding of party membership gained from survey data. They enable us to fully understand the complex motivation structures behind party membership and activism. Examining members' attitudes, attachments and activity over time (in-and-out of the party, between active and passive engagement) helps to see party activity in the fluid and dynamic sense that Scarrow's 'quantum model' suggests (2015). Whilst not a longitudinal study, this research taps into these dynamics by taking a biographical approach to interviews.

In adopting elements of a biographical approach, the interviews sought to draw out interviewees' stories about their relationship to politics, activism and party politics over the course of their lives. This narrative approach to the interviews uncovers both the movement between categories of support and the values, attitudes and motivations underpinning the interviewees' political behaviours. By encouraging interviewees to place their current political activity in context of their political activity over a lifetime, the interviews reveal members' relationship to politics and the party. Interviewees were encouraged to reconstruct the story of their political activism from the beginning up to their engagement in the current campaign. Interviews explored participants' routes to political and partisan activity: when, how and why they joined, their expectations and first

impressions, what they did, what they do, and what it means to them to be a party member.

Whilst largely biographical and led by the interviewee, the interviews were semi-structured in order to keep within the issues of interest. However, it was also important to maintain space within the interview for participants to introduce issues and concepts that were not already addressed in the literature.

The biographical approach used in the interviews also facilitated an analysis of party exit. Analysing exit typically presents practical challenges: it is far easier to locate and survey current party members than ex-ones, especially as party member surveys are often based on member lists provided by the parties themselves. Surveying party member exit therefore usually requires either a panel survey or analysis of current party members' *willingness* to leave. A biographical approach in interviews can not only capture the fluidity in members' party attachments, it resolves the practical issue of locating ex-members: many one-time ex-members are current members.

Issues of recall of course have an impact on the accuracy of the descriptions. In asking these types of questions it was important to acknowledge that time has an effect on these relationships, that memory can fail, motivations change, and that the present shapes how the past is understood and explained. Authors of major quantitative studies in this field also acknowledge the difficulties asking participants about motivations. In their seminal work on civic participation, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) recognise the influence perceived current benefits of participation can have on reflections of past incentives. However, they conclude that such reports are, 'at a minimum, meaningful contemporary interpretations of past activity, respondents' current understanding of the gratifications attendant to participation' (Verba et al., 1995). They argue that as well as indicating reasons activists may have for participating again in future, respondents' 'rhetoric of participation' reveals the culture of civic participation at work.

These interviews sought to look beyond initial responses to reveal the relationships and attitudes underpinning behaviours and to remedy some of the category issues in survey data. Taking an interpretivist and individualised look at party membership, by setting the act of joining the party in the context of interviewees' political lives and giving interviewees the opportunity to talk in depth about their party membership, these interviews offer a more rounded, detailed and arguably accurate picture of the motivation

structure behind party membership. In this way, the reconstruction of past incentives in light of benefits accrued since joining tells us something interesting about how party membership shapes participants, about how their relationship with the party develops and what persuades party members to stay (or leave). In this way, the rhetoric of party membership tells us a great deal about the culture of party participation.

Examining the narratives that politically active citizens develop to explain their political lives reveals a great deal about the nature of partisan behaviour and helps to uncover cultures of political participation within the party. Understanding the nature of partisan attachment in this depth therefore enables a more detailed assessment of the impact of multi-speed changes to party organisation.

Observation and participation

The study employed some observation and participation at the initial stages to scope out the conditions and context of the research. Whilst stopping short (for practical as well as methodological reasons) from a full ethnographic study, participant observation was included as a complementary method to improve understanding of the daily operation of the research context. Observation was overt and with the consent of gatekeepers. It also helped to build relationships in advance of member interviews.

An individual constituency party campaign provided the initial site of observation. Constituency Labour Parties are a mini-ecosystem of the party at the local level, with a range of actors in different roles and with different links to the national party. They are also the site of most members' party activity. Interviews with key individuals who were involved in campaigning and organising members and supporters formed a key part of the observation strategy. This process revealed the practical operation of some elements of the multi-speed membership strategy. It revealed the priorities of the party at the local level and helped answer contextual questions about the multi-speed strategy, for instance, whether there is an emphasis on activity over category of supporter and whether there is a drive to move supporters to membership. Observation also revealed how the member/non-member relationship is managed at the local level.

This period of participant observation also provided context for the individual elements in the research design. It helped refine the member interview questions and gave some empirical shape to the issues raised in the theory.

3.3.3 Sampling strategy

The rationale for selecting the British Labour Party as the primary case has already been outlined. This next section will discuss the theoretical rationale for selecting the units within this case, both at the elite level and the embedded subunits. Because the research employs different methods and different sources of data generation there are different sampling strategies for each.

Elite interviews – purposive sample.

The elites selected for interview were chosen by reputational and positional criteria. There are a few key figures who are known to have been centrally involved in Refounding Labour and the Collins Review and whose position gives them decision-making responsibility in the organisational structure.

Documents

The beginning of the 'Refounding Labour' process creates the first boundary for document case selection and the ratification of the Collins Review the end point. These two party-wide consultation processes (conducted online and in public and private meetings) create a substantial amount of written material, from official documents to individual member blogs, as well as a number of consultation submissions from individuals, CLPs and party affiliated groups. Yet whilst a lot has been written about the process, the research was focused on particular elements of it (namely those relating to supporters and political rights). This tighter focus reduced the amount of relevant material. Likewise, there is a small group of key individuals who would be considered to have direct influence on the strategy under analysis which further reduced the volume of relevant material.

Observation (CLP/campaign)

The choice of Constituency Labour Party and campaign depended largely on access, permission and timing. The CLP is not itself the case being researched and therefore any constituency involved in campaigning would have provided a suitable test. The CLP selected was a marginal seat in a constituency with a large party membership which provided a particularly useful site for observing the operation of the multi-speed elements of a constituency campaign.

Party members – theoretical and snowball.

The selection of individual party members did not follow any particular sampling frame as these members act as individual cases not a representative sample. Question 2 is concerned with comparing attitudes, experiences and values: characteristics not captured by a sampling strategy.

The exploratory nature of this part of the research also meant that the choice of individuals needed to be directed as the theory emerged. However, some characteristics were important in selecting individuals in the first round of interviews. Active members contribute most to the party's organisational goals and were therefore an important focus for the research question. Additionally, some characteristics (such as age and gender) are important in political participation and therefore the sample of member interviews needed to ensure some variation along these lines. Length of membership was also an important consideration. After the first round of interviews, additional interviews were sought with members with longer histories of party membership in order to test particular aspects of the party relationship emerging from the data.

The data for Question 2 of the study was drawn from interviews with 30 UK Labour Party members. Interviewees were aged between 18 and 80 with roughly equal numbers aged under 45 and 45-and-over (14 under 45; 16, 45 and over). Though the group of interviewees is fairly representative of party members in terms of age they were more female than average¹⁰ (17 women; 13 men).

All interviewees were, or had been, active in the party at one stage of their lives. They all had contributed more to the party than simply paying their membership fee. All interviewees had at some stage been active in campaigning (offline), regularly attending meetings or had stood as representatives of the party: activities defined as 'high intensity' (see section 3.1.2 on definitions). Some currently, or had in the past, held elected positions, paid party positions, voluntary party positions or trade unions positions. Some were recent joiners, others members for over five decades.

The initial interview participants were sourced through contact on a single constituency General Election campaign but through snowballing reached party members and supporters from thirteen separate Constituency Labour Parties across five regions (two nations) of the UK. Though the current geographical location of many member

¹⁰ Research puts the mean age of Labour Party members at 51 and the composition of membership 61.6% male (Webb, Poletti & Bale (2017))

interviewees is the South East, most participants had been members in more than one constituency over the course of their membership, often in different parts of the country. The geographical spread of the sample is therefore wider than it appears.

The post-election period saw the election of a more left-wing leader, an increase in membership and also an increasing sense of factionalism in the party. These contextual changes meant that additional attention to participants' political views was necessary to avoid an ideological bias in the findings. Both supporters of the new leader and those who did not vote for him were interviewed in the round of interviews after the 2015 leadership election.

The list of member interviewees is provided in table 2 in the appendix.

3.3.4 Context and time boundary

The temporal boundary of the case study begins with the 'Refounding Labour' process (initiated in November 2010 which led to a change in the Labour party rule book in 2011) and ends a year after the second leadership election (held in September 2016) following changes to leadership selection rules (ratified in 2014).

The fieldwork for the study began in March 2015 at the beginning of the short campaign for the 2015 General Election. This General Election campaign was the first to be held after the initial reforms to party affiliation and provided the first opportunity to observe the way new supporter relationships and mechanisms ('multi-speed organising') were used in a major campaign.

The first round of member interviews began shortly after Labour's election defeat in the 2015 General Election and continued throughout the leadership contest (the first to use the new '£3 supporter' rules) which began shortly after, concluding in September 2015. In 2016 after a vote of no confidence in the leader, a second leadership election was held concluding in September 2016. Changes to the new rules for selecting the leader were introduced for this second election and were being considered at the time of the second round of interviews which began in late 2015.

Interviews with elites regarding the reforms were conducted in 2017 following the snap General Election in June that year. The gap between the first outing of the new rules and

these elite interviews enabled a more retrospective assessment of the reforms. By interviewing two years after the new rules were first used, the issues and outcomes, which were initially highly controversial within the party, were regarded with less sensitivity and therefore created a more open environment for discussion.

3.3.5 Procedures

Following ethical review and permissions, the fieldwork for the study was arranged through a single constituency party who granted permission for observer participation during the 2015 General Election campaign. This period acted as a learning process, observing how supporters were involved in campaigns and how new online tools and organisational practices were employed. As the busiest and most active period for party campaigners, the General Election provided an ideal moment to observe the party in action. A diary of this period was kept for analysing after the campaign. These notes provided a guide for understanding the contemporary roles, context and issues of a constituency-level campaign in order to develop appropriate questions for the member interviews.

The first round of interviews with members followed the General Election, initially with members who had worked on the campaign. The constituency selected was a marginal target seat in 2015, and the party had encouraged members from neighbouring constituencies to travel to campaign there. So whilst the campaign context was the same for many of the first interviewees, they had experience of membership of different constituencies outside of the election. Snowballing was used to reach other member interviewees from across the country.

After these interviews were analysed, a second round of interviewees were sought to test and develop the emerging theory. The questions for these interviews were refined to reflect the emerging issues of interest. The emerging theory also helped direct the selection of members (see sampling strategy section).

3.4 Analysis

The research was designed to test and expand a theory within a single case. However, within this single case are embedded units of analysis and the theory contains multiple research sub-questions. A mixed-methods approach was deemed the best way of

answering the different research sub-questions contained within the single case study (different questions explore different objects and therefore require different methods). A mixed-method approach considerably bolsters the construct validity of the research as a whole but does present a challenge for analysis of the data. There is a risk in multi-layered, embedded unit, single case studies of analysing the component parts without returning the focus to the unit as a whole. Likewise, the various methods need to be drawn together coherently to allow for theoretical generalisation.

Below I outline the primary and secondary methods of analysis used in the component parts of the research and the strategy for returning to the higher unit level of the case study in order to avoid fragmentation.

3.4.1 Analysis Q1 (why change?)

Primary methods

Elite Interviews/Document analysis

The elite interviews and document analysis components of the research are focused on understanding both the processes of decision-making and pressures that informed decision-making, as well as the role of values and ideologies in shaping those outcomes. The accounts given in interviews are themselves the object of the research revealing key actors' values, strategies and in particular, how they frame these within the context of organisational ideology and social expectation. The interviews need not serve as second-hand proof of events (documentary evidence will be used to understand the course of events) but rather read interpretively for evidence of how actors understand the issues (Mason, 1996) and events.

A narrative approach to both the interviews and analysis was employed in this section of the research. 'Narratives of legitimacy' are centrally important in the first research question. The interview schedule was therefore designed to talk through events, decisions and actions in a chronological order to focus on the data as a story and how the teller of that story makes sense of it. In line with a narrative approach, these interviews were not coded or broken down into segments, though quotes are used illustratively.

The strategy of focusing on the accounts actors give as the research object has particular utility in elite interviews where there can be pressures to downplay or make greater claim

to specific versions of events, especially when those involved are, 'talking about their work and, as such, justifying what they do' (Berry, 2002). Analysis of elite interviews needs to acknowledge that those involved in making decisions have an interest in justifying their activity and decisions, securing a legacy for their work. However, it is those very justifications that are of interest in this research. In answering 'why change', the strategies of the actors involved and the justifications given, are as important as the 'facts' of the event itself. In this research, these justifications reveal where the pressures for change or continuity lie.

Secondary method

Pattern matching

To draw these component methods together and analyse whether the empirical evidence matches the theory, a strategy of pattern matching is used as a secondary analytical method. Pattern matching, first identified by Campbell (1975) though not labelled as such, provides a particularly useful approach for within-case study research. It is a process that enables the researcher to relate different pieces of data to a larger theory (Yin, 1994), synthesising and analysing varied methods. Pattern matching is a secondary method of analysis (Lange, 2013) which draws together different primary methods and in that process explores whether the 'pattern' of the primary data matches the 'pattern' suggested by the theory. Because most theories contain more than one key proposition, pattern matching enables the whole theory to be tested within a single case and thereby, 'provide multiple points of insight into the validity of a theory' (Lange, 2013).

A 'rival explanations as patterns' (Yin, 1994) form of pattern matching is employed. This method of analysis is appropriate for assessment of the independent variables of the question (*how* it has occurred as opposed to *what* has occurred). In this form of pattern matching, alternative explanations for the phenomenon are tested against the empirical data to see which explanation fits best.

The multi-speed membership theory provides several propositions to explain why parties adopt multi-speed membership approaches. However, there are other theories of party change that provide additional or alternative explanatory variables. These variables or propositions are 'pattern matched' with the evidence found. The research analyses whether they match, challenge or result in a refinement of the theory of 'why' multi-speed membership.

3.4.2 Analysis Q2 (what consequences?)

Question 2 is exploratory in nature; the impact of multi-speed organising on members is not known. Though the theory suggests that tensions would emerge, the full implications of multi-speed organising for members has yet to be examined. This section of the research employs an explanation-building analytical strategy based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to develop new theory, as well as elements of analytic induction to test established theory where it exists.

The supply side of the research is focused on party members' relationship with the party and membership itself. This research question involves two types of inductive analysis. As well as adding to what is already known about party member activities and attitudes from quantitative studies, the interviews were designed to facilitate an inductive reading drawing out aspects of party members' relationship which may have been overlooked. In this way, analysis of the member interviews was both *concept* driven and *data* driven: concept driven where there are established theories to guide the analysis, and data driven in areas where theory is less well developed.

Concept driven analysis

Interviews with party members sought to establish the key activities and attitudes that constitute the mechanics of party membership: why members joined, how they joined, what activities they engage in. These elements of party membership are well researched quantitatively; we know a great deal about the incentives that encourage party members to join and what activities they engage in. From these studies there are established categories of incentives and activity. However, there are aspects of party member motivations and attitudes which are not amenable to quantitative analysis and which this research sought to uncover. Therefore, whilst also testing established theories in this area, the research needed to leave space for new or alternative categories to emerge.

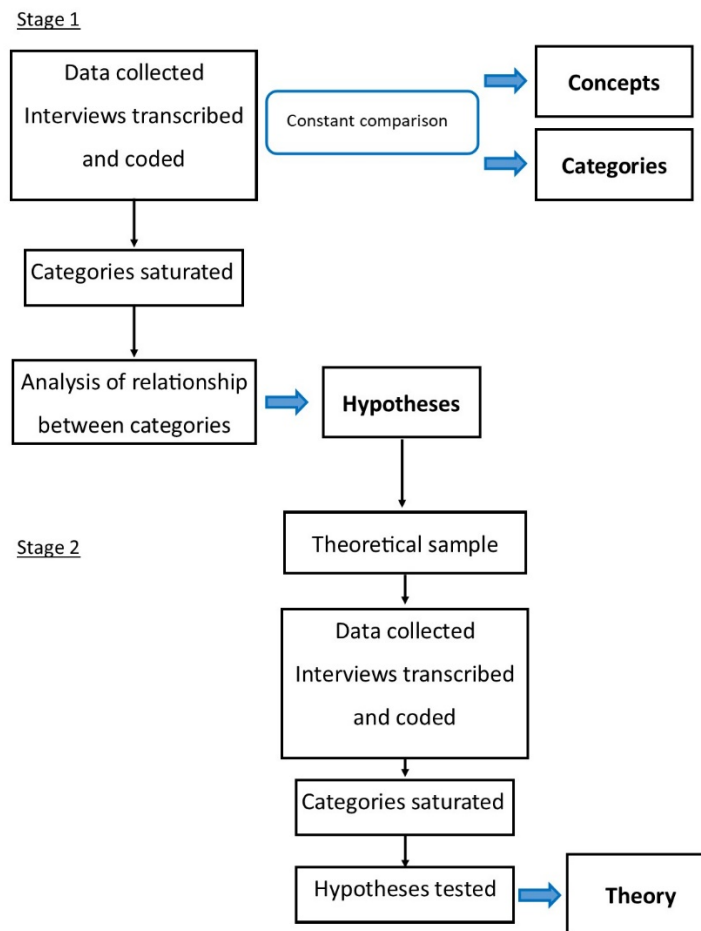
A process of analytic induction was employed to test existing theories in this area. This section of the research started with established hypotheses about the nature of party member motivations and incentives. The coding process searched for deviant cases and revised the hypotheses where deviant cases were found. The terminology used for the categories found was kept consistent with established work in this field whilst not limiting categories to those already established in order to allow new concepts to emerge.

Whilst interview data was coded for categories of incentive, the depth of interview data also facilitated an analysis of member motivations and joining incentives as a process rather than singular cause. Reviewing how and why members joined as a narrative (as well as individual motivations) revealed how the individual incentives link together, revealing overlapping and multiple motivations and new insights into why members join.

Data driven analysis

Looking beyond the mechanics of party membership, the member interviews sought to better understand the relationship party members have with their party: what keeps them active, what stops them leaving, how they feel about the party and the changes it makes. The effects of multi-speed organising on members has room for development therefore Question 2 is designed to be exploratory. This section of the research employs an explanation-building analytical strategy based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This is a hypothesis-generating strategy in which interview data collection and analysis occur in parallel. The emerging concepts and categories were drawn from the data itself with no existing analytical framework.

Figure 1 shows how the interview data is analysed concurrently with the testing and developing of the theory.

Figure 1: Grounded theory process

3.4.3. Grounded theory approach

Grounded theory provides the tools to draw theory from the data in an iterative approach in which data analysis and data collection occur in parallel. The constant comparative method employed in the grounded theory process ensures a close connection between the data and theoretical conceptualisation. This research employed the main tools and procedures associated with the grounded theory approach (of which there are a range of versions (Bryman, 2008)) to develop new concepts and theories around membership. This second part of Question 2 differs from the analytical induction approach employed in the first part of the question (concerning motivations and incentives). It does not start with a hypothesis or established set of propositions/categories to confirm or refine but rather approaches the data openly to see what concepts emerge from the data.

The key feature of the grounded theory approach is the close connection between data and conceptualisation through constant comparison of concepts, categories and their indicators in the interview data. In grounded theory, early coding directs the choice of further sample data. In this study, I have reduced this part of the approach to a two-step process in which the concepts emerging from the first round of interviews directed the second round of interviews.

The stages of this approach are highlighted in figure 1. Interview data was collected, transcribed and coded in parallel. Codes in the grounded theory approach are flexible, allowing for revision as new data is inputted. They operate as indicators of potential concepts at the early stage and are open to as many new concepts as possible. A more focused coding procedure is then used in later stages to develop categories and their properties.

Concepts or labels representing discrete phenomena (e.g, loyalty, emotion, skills) were produced through open coding. From these concepts, higher level categories (expressive attachment, social networks) encompassing one or more concepts, were established (coding grids are presented within the empirical chapter texts which set out the categories, concepts and properties developed). The first round of interviews were then re-analysed to see how well they corresponded to the emerging categories. From this process of coding, and in line with grounded theory, two types of category emerge: those abstracted from the language of the members interviewed (e.g., 'hanging in') and those constructed in the process of assessing the theoretical properties of the categories (e.g, forms of socialisation). Those abstracted from the situation form labels for behaviours whilst those constructed form the explanation of the behaviours (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

These categories then formed the first hypotheses which directed both the interview schedule and the choice of participant for the second round of interviews. Categories emerging from the first stage suggested that loyalty and socialisation were significant and so party members with longer memberships were sought for the second round of interviews in order to test the emerging theory.

The process began again with the second round of interviews. This data was compared against the existing categories whilst also openly coded for new concepts. The categories

were developed and refined in this second round of interviews until no further insights could be gained and the hypotheses could be stated.

3.4.4. Organisation, transcription, software

A fieldwork diary was kept during the participant observation phase of the research. These notes were collated thematically, analysed and used to direct the interview question guide for the first interview phase of the research.

Interviews with members were recorded, and then transcribed in full, as close to the time of interview as possible. Interview transcripts were anonymised (see ethical considerations, section 3.5), assigned a number, and then uploaded to Nvivo. Only age, gender, length of party membership and region were retained as participant information.

Each interview was read, re-read and then coded according to emerging concepts and categories in Nvivo (see description of approach above). Coding grids for each of the substantive concepts are given in chapters 5 and 6.

3.4.5. Analysis – party level

In the concluding analysis, the various components are drawn together to assess how well the findings match the propositions (see pattern-matching section) contained within multi-speed membership theory and where new concepts can help refine our understanding. Returning to the primary unit of analysis (the party) the research concludes by making an assessment at the highest unit level of the causes and implications of multi-speed membership.

3.5 Ethical considerations

3.5.1 Anonymity

Interviews

In the case of elite interviews, the position someone holds is of relevance to the data they provide. Because of this, interviewees were asked to waive anonymity (given the positions are usually held by a single person, it would be difficult to ensure anonymity). However,

participants in the elite interviews were given several options in relation to their anonymity and data.

Participants were given a consent form explaining clearly their options regarding anonymity. They were offered a range of options for the information disclosed about them and were made fully aware of the purposes of the project and use made of their data. They were also given the opportunity to review the data (quotes used). In some cases, the option of reviewing the data to be made public was taken up. This added to the construct validity of the research by adding a key informant review stage in the analysis.

To help participants in their understanding of the project (in order that they can fully assess what level of anonymity they may want), a guide to the issues for discussion and types of questions in the interview were made available in advance.

Party members were not asked to waive anonymity and a number of steps have been taken to ensure that they are not identifiable. Only the very basic data about the individuals involved has been recorded (age, gender, length of party membership, type of job/position in the party and region). Given the small number of activists involved in some CLPs it was important to ensure participants could not be identified through the constituency and this meant anonymising the CLP and other geographical information that could identify their location. Constituency Labour Party details were removed from the individual transcripts. Additional details in the interview data that could locate an individual or identify them (such as discussion of the nature of the constituency, the MP, the area) was also anonymised.

During data transcription and analysis, participants were assigned a code ID. As with elite interviews, it was made clear to the interviewee that they had the opportunity to review their data or get in touch regarding their data at any point after the interview.

Overt observation

During the participant observation stage, the researcher's role and purpose was made explicit to other volunteers and party employees. It was agreed that this role would not be highlighted to other individuals that the researcher came into contact with during activities as this was considered detrimental to the volunteers' and staffers' work and these other individuals' activities were not being observed as part of the research.

3.6 Trustworthiness, validity, reliability and credibility

Case studies have particular value in securing construct validity. Multiple sources of evidence, appropriate to the variables of interest, add strength in this area. Within the overarching case, the two core research questions, being explanatory and exploratory respectively, have differing approaches and therefore different tests for rigour.

The use of multiple sources of evidence in answering Question 1 provides strong construct validity. The two main sources of data (elite interviews and documentary evidence) are used to corroborate evidence of the same phenomena. The two methods are particularly suited to methodological triangulation in this research as they are both designed to provide data of the same research objects and propositions. Elite interview data and documentary evidence are compared to see if they support the same findings and enhance construct validity. The use of pattern matching to establish the causal relationships in Question 1 also bolsters the internal validity of the case study.

This case study is not making claim to statistical generalisation but theoretical generalisation. In the exploratory section of the research (Question 2) the judgement of rigour must be based on the strategy used for collecting, coding and analysing the data. Measures of rigour such as sample size and hypothesis construction do not apply in grounded theory: theoretical sampling does not provide extensive enough data to provide for statistical generalisation to a population. Nor is it claimed that different analysts would arrive at exactly the same codes independently. Rather the process is flexible enough to enable theory generation which can be tested subsequently. The close connection between data and theory in this inductive approach avoids the potential for inaccurate inference from findings to theory, a risk typical in deductive analysis.

3.7 Potential bias and limitations

This case study does more than analyse a single period of change within a specific party. By using this instrumental case to develop a theory, this research has developed and expanded on a theory of party change that could be applied in other parties and other case studies. However, the theory generated here needs to be taken further and tested in other cases.

Whilst the sample of members interviewed is not enough to generalise to the population of party members, it does add to our understanding of member behaviours and attitudes that could be tested quantitatively. The findings on members' motivations, attitudes and behaviours presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7, reveal new dimensions in the member-party relationship that provide a framework for future member surveys. The analysis of members' joining and leaving behaviours specifically look at gaps in existing quantitative research. Having filled in some of those gaps, the next step would be to integrate them into quantitative research. By highlighting areas where existing quantitative studies are insufficient, this research has provided a map for areas to test in future.

By taking a grounded theory approach in the second section of Question 2 of the case study, the sample of members is tied in to the development of theory. The sample is dictated by the point at which theoretical saturation is reached (where new interviews yield no further categories) and therefore there is nothing to suggest that further interviews would add to the theory.

One of the common problems specific to the inductive section of this research (Q2) is that grounded theory tends to produce substantive theory – relevant to the specific research object – but not formal theory which would require data collected in alternative settings (such as other parties, other countries). Given the depth of this research, such breadth would be far beyond its scope. However, this research has gone beyond the categorisation of data to produce theories that are appropriate for testing in other settings and by other methods in future research. Yet there are several elements of this case that would not be applicable in other parties. Having begun life as a party without individual membership and having a strong history of collective affiliation, the Labour Party is different in original form to other social-democratic membership parties and other cleavage representation parties. Debates about, and struggles over, internal democracy also have a pronounced heritage within this party especially. Whilst the rare nature of the party's experiments in opening decision-making are helpful, making the ideal case in which to test and develop theory on these elements, the other aspects are less so.

Some of the aspects of this study are specific to a very tumultuous and difficult time within the party. This case study specifically looked at contemporary events as they unfolded and interviewees responses will undoubtedly have been shaped by these contemporary events. Whilst this does not affect the value of the interviews (interviewees' immediate reactions to the changes within the party are important) it does mean that elements of the

research would be difficult to replicate. However, the theories and hypotheses developed are testable in different situations and at different times.

Chapter 4: 'Why Change'

4.1 Modelling and explaining multi-speed membership

When Labour's leader Ed Miliband took to the platform at the party's special conference in 2014, he introduced the changes he sought ratification for as, "the biggest changes to our party since 1918". What he was asking for were indeed significant changes to the party. These reforms moved the party towards a more open form of party organisation that would place Labour at the more extreme end of plebiscitary intra-party democracy (von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017). Though in line with a general shift towards greater intra-party democracy and wider engagement that has characterised the most recent period of development in party organisation (Leduc, 2001; Scarrow et al., 2002; Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012; Cross and Katz, 2013), Labour's decision to open leader selection to non-members was a step further than most parties have been willing to go. Why would Labour take such a decision, and how did the party end up with this specific form of open plebiscitary intra-party democracy?

This chapter takes a demand-side lens to multi-speed membership asking how the Labour Party arrived at this particular form of open plebiscitary intra-party democracy and why. The chapter first sets out how party change is measured and understood, then creates an original model that provides a framework for examining multi-speed change in a single party case study. The model brings together environmental, structural/party-type, and purposive-action approaches to party change, in order to facilitate a broad and deep analysis of this period of change within the party and multi-speed changes more broadly. This multi-level framework which encompasses political environment, party environment and individual factors is applied to the events leading up to the two significant rule changes within the party that ushered in a more multi-speed membership model. This rich account of the range of drivers for change also captures forces for continuity and the role of party organisational ideology in shaping change, thereby creating a specific *multi-speed* framework for party organisational change.

The analysis draws on official party documents, interviews with key decision makers and wider written resources such as minutes of party meeting to provide a thick description of the environment for change and the key moments of change, as well as capturing the

rhetoric employed to explain and promote change, and the norms and values that underlie that rhetoric.

This approach finds that whilst an environmental reading can explain the first set of party reforms, latter reforms are better explained by a purposive-action model. However, as the first set of party reforms is a significant explanatory factor in the latter reforms, a multi-level explanation provides the best fit overall. Structural and party-type related concerns underlie both reforms and help explain both the direction of reform and its limitations.

The multi-level, multi-speed framework developed here (which captures structures and agency, pressures for change and pressures for continuity, and recognises the role of ideological filters as well as rational choice in decision-making) provides a useful model for understanding multi-speed change in parties. By putting leader and elite decision-making at the centre, this model provides a framework for understanding not just the conditions for change but why change happens, and indeed what limits and constrains it.

4.2 Party change

The literature on party change offers two distinct (though not necessarily contradictory) visions of parties as organisations: the party as gradually evolving, adapting to survive (Katz and Mair, 1992, 1995; Webb, 1994; Dalton et al., 2011) and the party as naturally conservative organisation, changing abruptly only in response to specific stimuli (Panebianco, 1988; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Wilson, 1994). For the former, party change (at the individual rather than system level) is continuous, gradual and occurs in response to changes in the external environment. This environmental approach sees the party as shark-like, continually adapting to survive (Dalton et al., 2011).

Party membership is one area in which parties' adaptation to environmental change is evidenced (Dalton et al., 2011). The mass membership model itself emerged out of the expansion of the franchise and the need to fund party organisation. This mass model, developing from parties on the left ('the concept of membership is a result of the evolution which led from the cadre party to the mass party' (Duverger, 1959:63)), was replicated by other parties in a 'contagion from the left', as Duverger coined it (1959). The mass model secured funds and provided democratic linkage, but as the membership environment changed so too did parties' models of organisation. Changes in campaigning, funding and the use of technology are further evidence of parties' gradual adaptation to environmental

changes (Webb, 1994; Scarrow, 1996; Farrell and Webb, 2002). The notion of contagion in the environmental approach is also noted by Scarrow (2015) who argues that changes (to membership rights especially) can often be a 'bandwagon response to trends in technology and marketing' (2015, p. 136).

Party leaders do have a role to play in the environmental¹¹ theories but it is a role like that of a CEO, a straightforward personal investment in the continuation of the organisation for their own sake (Dalton et al., 2011, p.255), rather than as a direct agent of change.

Alternative accounts of party change see the strategic choices of leaders driving change. From these theories we get a picture of parties as conservative organisations 'forced' to change in response to specific external pressures. For Harmel and Janda (1994) there is a 'wall of resistance' to overcome in change: it is not something that 'just happens' (Harmel and Janda, 1994, p.261). Janda (1990) specifies the conservative forces within party organisations that make them resistant to change: parties are constrained in policy positioning by being identified with certain issue positions, constrained by their dependence on their support base, and constrained by internal power bases.

These purposive-action¹² models of change include both internal factors and external stimuli but tend to put an emphasis on the former. Party actors have a significant role to play in perceiving and responding to external change, but they must also build coalitions in order to enact changes internally. 'Perceptive and capable leaders' must also find support within their parties for change, particularly if the environment (socioeconomic, political and institutional) is not favourable (Wilson, 1994, p.281).

Harmel and Janda's model (1994) of party change (the most widely replicated of all the 'purposive-action' models) theorises three factors in party change: leadership change, change in the dominant faction, and/or external stimulus. Electoral defeat is a classic example of an external stimulus (Harmel and Janda, 1994; Panebianco, 1988), but Harmel and Janda add another level of detail to our understanding of external pressures by linking them to party goals. For Harmel and Janda the most important external stimuli are those which force a party to reconsider how it meets its primary goal. They offer four possible primary goals: vote maximising, office seeking, representation/participation of members, and policy/ideology advocacy (1994, p.268). Primary goals can vary across parties and

¹¹ To use (Müller, 1997) terminology.

¹² *ibid*

within them over time. A party will experience external stimuli as an 'external shock' when it directly impacts on the party's primary goal. For instance, an electoral defeat will be experienced as 'external shock' for a vote maximising party. Party actors are assumed to have an explicitly rational actor type response to this 'external shock'.

4.3 Party change and intra-party democracy

The environmental type model of change has already been employed to explain issues of membership within parties and changes in membership roles, but turning specifically to changes in membership rights, Cross and Blais (2012) have developed a model to explain why parties adopt direct member votes in leadership selections. This model draws on both internal and environmental factors and the interaction between them. In an analysis of leader selection across different parties in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom, they find that the adoption of a wider selectorate in the latter three countries can be explained by four factors: the party being in opposition, suffering an electoral setback, being a new party and the presence of contagion within the party system.

Cross and Blais' (2012) model, whilst not explaining why a party initially adopts direct leader selection in the absence of other parties doing so, explains how a party comes to do so if there is the possibility of contagion within the party system. Once one party has made the change, others will do so after they have suffered an electoral setback and are in opposition. Opposition matters as it reduces the stakes in choosing the leader (members are not selecting the Prime Minister) and the parliamentary party holds less power as a result of being out of government, thereby shifting power to the extra-parliamentary party. This model, whilst recognising internal and external pressures and acknowledging that change requires party actors to recognise those pressures, gives party decision-makers a fairly one-dimensional role. Cross and Blais (2012) assume that party elites will be resistant to change, wanting to hold on to power, and that members will want greater influence. Given these two static conditions, the question of change is reduced to an analysis of what conditions are sufficient to make party elites concede some of that power. This is useful for comparative analysis, but in simplifying party elites' (and indeed members') motivations, it ignores potentially conflicting motivations and reduces party actors' roles in shaping change.

Another model of party change focused on intra-party democracy is offered by Barnea and Rahat (2007). This model looks at motivational factors for candidate selection changes from a three-tiered perspective, categorising explanatory factors at the political system level, party system level and intra-party level. Political system level factors are those based in the political system encompassing the norms and conventions of the political environment such as the democratisation or personalisation of politics; party system level factors would include those affecting the party's competitive environment such as election defeat or government change; and finally, the intra-party level factors cover the interactions between individuals and groupings within the party, such as leadership change or factional changes. This model gives an explicit role to party actors in influencing and driving change, most particularly at the intra-party level. However, their decision-making is again reduced to rational actor type decisions (*'The interests of individuals are a calculated combination of their interests as team players (the party) and as individual players within the party'* (Barnea and Rahat, 2007, p.378)).

Gauja (2016a) draws on Barnea and Rahat's multi-level model to develop a comprehensive account of party reform which accounts for both environmental pressures and individual actions, but gives those individual decisions greater explanatory power. This constructivist version of an institutionalist analysis captures the importance of party decision-makers in recognising external and internal pressures and additionally, how they then portray those pressures in party discourse. This analysis highlights the importance of the 'discursive power' of party actors: how they shape their environments through their ideas and rhetoric. Gauja also highlights that it is not only party elites that have this power but also those around the party such as think tanks (2016a, p.13).

As well as explaining 'why' change, Gauja's model tries to capture the processes of change, utilising the 'swiss cheese' heuristic to explain how these factors combine to produce change. On this model, change is most likely when the 'holes' (motivational factors) within the three levels (political system, party system and individual party) increase in importance, multiply and line up (Gauja, 2016a, p.12).

Applying this multi-level model to the introduction of primaries in earlier work, Gauja (2012) finds that primaries are driven by party elites, not the grassroots of the party and are motivated by a range of factors at each of the levels. At the level of the individual party, motivations include the weakening of factions, increasing membership and improving the quality and representativeness of candidates; at the party system level primaries are seen

as giving electoral advantage (often as a contagion from other parties in the system); and at the broader political system level, reform is seen as legitimising the party, reconnecting it with citizens.

Gauja's (2016a) model of party reform brings us closest to a comprehensive account of party change but whilst it captures why change happens, and the processes of change, it sees this as a unidirectional process. The 'swiss cheese' model sees change (quite legitimately) as a linear movement. To understand multi-speed change, however, we need to consider both change and continuity; the pressure for change and the pressures for continuity. And whilst Gauja's model recognises the role of individuals in shaping the party environment and 'selling' the message of change (2016a, p.13), the norms and values that influence change are only explicitly captured at the political system level (values related to democratisation or personalisation in democratic practice), though the values of party leaders are noted within the other party-level analysis. In this way, this model itself may miss a significant part of the multi-speed picture. Scarrow's analysis of membership change highlights the importance of norms and values *within* the party (2015), which can be expected to work as a filter on their membership decisions.

Scarrow (2015, p.20) links a party's organisational choices to its values, arguing that the decisions party elites make are shaped by implicit or explicit 'narratives of legitimacy'. These narratives are used to identify the party's credibility but they may also shape how parties develop organisationally. Different narratives of legitimacy imply different roles for members; the value of members is not determined simply by a cost-benefit assessment, but by inherited traditions concerning the role of party members in the party. In cleavage representation parties, which represent group interests, members are the ties to those group and the role of member is as part of the community (2015, p.22). Cleavage representation parties may view mass participation as central to the party's legitimacy and these parties are likely to have rules that expect members to commit to party aims. Changing this model would necessarily pull against the party's 'narrative of legitimacy' and so for cleavage representation parties the move to multi-speed organising is particularly difficult. The widening of affiliation challenges this concept of political legitimacy. It represents a shift in who the party represents, who the leadership is accountable to and who should define the party's values. This relationship between the structures of the organisation and the values of those that lead it are therefore essential to any model of multi-speed change.

Constraints can also be structural, as Janda (1990) notes in his list of conservative forces. For Labour especially, these structural constraints have an impact on the freedom of its leaders in driving change. Affiliated trade unions and socialist societies have rights not just in leader selections but also in conference decisions: the vehicle through which constitutional change in the party must pass. Though there have been many changes to the original delegatory structures inherited from its trade union roots, the Labour Party still has a number of decision-making processes and sites of authority beyond the leadership (see Seyd, 1999) which again constrain change.

4.4 Modelling party change

The next section operationalises these explanatory factors and modifies them to create a specific multi-speed model of change with which to examine the move(s) towards multi-speed membership in the British Labour Party.

This analysis begins with two assumptions. Firstly, the analysis proceeds on the basis that both environmental exogenous and direct endogenous variables are relevant in the study of party change as are the ideas and actions of individuals at the decision-making level. Secondly, it is taken as self-evident that a change has occurred: the analysis presented here does not question *whether* party change has occurred or in what magnitude it has. The following discussion sets out the two key periods of change and why they should be understood as capturing a move towards multi-speed membership.

4.4.1 What change?

In understanding how the Labour Party ended up with an open form of plebiscitary intra-party democracy there are two key moments. The first, a decision initiated by the 'Refounding Labour' review (a party-wide consultation process, initiated by the party Leader in November 2010 and led by the party's Policy Chair, Peter Hain) which resulted in a change to Clause 1 of the party's rulebook (in 2011). Clause 1 changed from committing the party to winning elections to a broader definition which included, in addition, a commitment to 'bring together members and supporters who share its values to develop policies' and a commitment to 'make communities stronger through collective action'. This change to the party constitution made explicit the role of non-member supporters in achieving the party's primary goals. Whilst supporters had been included in party processes before this point, this was the formal recognition of a wider model of

affiliation. The final 'Refounding' document which was agreed at autumn party conference (on a take-it-or-leave-it yes/no vote) paved the way for proposals to involve supporters in leader selections within the existing Electoral College model, subject to their number reaching a critical mass (50,000). By formalising the role of non-member supporters in the party's rulebook and paving the way for supporter involvement in party decision-making, these changes (henceforth the 'Refounding reforms') mark a significant step towards multi-speed organising.

The second key moment was the ratification of changes to the party's selection methods which introduced one-member-one-vote rules for leadership selections, reforming the Electoral College and trade union affiliation rules and most significantly, including supporters in the selectorate. This change began with another party-wide consultation and review process initiated by the Leader of the party in July 2013 and led by former General Secretary of the party Ray Collins. It was this latter change that took the party from a wider affiliation model (commensurate with other parties), to a more radical version of plebiscitary intra-party democracy (von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017) that extended intra-party democratic rights to these affiliates and placed them on equal footing in leadership selection to 'full' members and union affiliates (henceforth the 'Collins reforms'). A further step towards multi-speed organising.

Therefore, in asking why the Labour Party adopted a multi-speed membership model, this section is really asking two questions: Why the Labour Party expanded its affiliation model and why the Labour Party then included these affiliates in party decision-making.

The change to the party's primary clause and change to its leader selection rules clearly meet the definition of party change as 'self-imposed changes in party rules, structures, policies, strategies or tactics' (Harmel and Janda, 1994, p. 277). Indeed this shift encompasses not only party change as party modification (a rule change), but could also be seen as a party trend (defined as a steady increase in the size of conventions) and a party event (Harmel and Janda, 1994).

In addition, it is important to consider why certain changes have *not* occurred. Multi-speed membership is a strategy not just of change but of continuity. The multi-speed party does not simply move towards a wider affiliation model; it also maintains its traditional membership model, 'layering' the new on top of the old (Scarrow, 2015). Therefore, in

understanding this move towards multi-speed organising, the analysis must also consider why the formal membership model has endured.

4.4.2 The model

This analysis will consider both environmental exogenous and direct endogenous variables as filtered through the perceptions of party elites but, taking a lead from Gauja's (2016a) approach, will not limit the role of party decision-makers to rational choice responses to these variables. Instead this analysis will explore the role elites and other individuals have in shaping the options for change and the ideological filters they may apply to their decisions.

Change doesn't 'just happen' and yet there are important environmental factors that create the conditions for change and which make it possible for agents to drive change. Likewise, agents do not operate free of the structures around them, structures that can enable or constrain. The environmental and purposive-action theories therefore do not necessarily contradict each other; a party may adapt gradually and then make different or further changes in response to new external 'shocks'; leaders may be instrumental in change and yet bounded by their environments.

Correspondingly, this analysis will address the environmental conditions for change, the organisational constraints and opportunities as well as the key moments (the 'external shocks') and the agents of change. These factors are not contradictory and can be reviewed alongside each other to provide a comprehensive analysis and permit some ranking of importance amongst the variables.

One of the risks of this approach is that by taking party change as the dependent variable, the analysis potentially includes a large number of independent variables which may have either direct or indirect effects. As Wilson sets out (1994), this list could include, 'socioeconomic change, political culture, constitutional or institutional change, change in terms of party competition, and the impact of party leaders or reformers' (p.263). However, this wider approach is only a problem when considering a variety of parties, party systems, or a long time period. Within single country, single party, case studies within a limited time period, this broader approach can be accommodated.

Authors of more narrowly focused analyses sacrifice completeness for order. In defending an earlier performance theory of change that focused on just three independent variables, Janda (1990, p.11) argues, *“The function of a theory in the social sciences, however, is less to account for all possible sources of variation than to impose intellectual order on the major factors in a situation of multicausality”*. Whilst a single narrow model provides a lens through which to study change, it is also a very limited one. In a multi-causality situation, as the application of a particular shaped cookie cutter produces a particular shaped cookie, so the application of a performance theory of change is likely to find a performance explanation of change. One is likely to find what one is looking for at the expense of other potentially influential factors. This approach is most suited to cross-national research on multiple parties over a longer period of time (See Harmel et al., 1995). By ignoring other potential causal mechanisms (and assigning explanatory weight to these variables only theoretically (Müller, 1997)), it fails as a causal analysis.

Muller (1997) argues that case studies can be used to establish causality by tracing causal mechanisms. For instance, they can establish the effect of leadership change by demonstrating whether leaders adopted a deliberately different strategy to their predecessors, or by ruling out the influence of technical or environmental changes by establishing if leaders supported this course of action before becoming leader. Case studies are also useful for establishing policy transfer or contagion.

Gauja's (2016b) strategy for establishing whether organisational transfer has occurred relies on three conditions: the party intends to change its practices; it is motivated to seek out information on other parties' practices; and the practices implemented resemble those of the party from which transfer is thought to have occurred. These conditions are best established with the depth of a case study strategy. Intention can be established by contextual analysis, motivation by interviews with party elites and party reform documents, and implementation by analysis of the changes enacted (Gauja, 2016b).

The case study approach within a single party, in a single country and within a specific and short period of time, opens up the possibility of a more in-depth analysis of potential causal mechanisms and the opportunity to provide an account that does not privilege one explanation over another. A thick-descriptive approach not only provides an empirical account of change but helps advance theoretical scholarship in the field (Gauja, 2016a).

Whilst it is useful to separate out different levels of explanatory factor, it is important to recognise that they do not operate in isolation of each other. Gauja (2016a) acknowledges that the 'Swiss cheese' heuristic doesn't fully capture the interdependence of these different levels. I have tried to remedy this by demonstrating how the different explanatory factors, and levels, are layered and filtered through each other but crucially all explanatory factors are filtered through the perceptions of elites.

Whilst it is important to capture both environmental conditions and external 'shocks' or catalysts, these explanatory factors do not create change on their own. Leaders and elites must recognise environmental conditions or events as necessitating change.

Environmental conditions may shape the direction of change or create a background pressure for change but alone cannot cause it. Likewise, external 'shocks' must also be perceived by leaders, weighed and considered damaging enough to warrant action. In addition, leaders and elites are often, in the case of intra-party democratic changes, those driving change, instead of being forced to change by pressure from the grassroots. Thus, the explanatory model developed here puts leader and elite decision-making at the centre.

4.4.3 An ecosystem of change

The model developed in this chapter presents the forces for change (and continuity) within a party as an *ecosystem* containing a range of individuals, group, organisations, structures, and ideologies all interacting with each other. This ecosystem contains a variety of processes too. It is an ecosystem where processes of osmosis allow environmental factors to seep into elites' decision-making calculations; where ideas from other organisms can pollinate in processes of contagion, and catalysts (external or internal) can disrupt the balance of the ecosystem, creating change.

This ecosystem model includes environmental conditions split into the political environment and separately, the membership environment. The latter includes both functional and legitimising membership concerns including membership numbers and related financial considerations, member voluntary capacity and contribution, member attitudes to reform and members' relationship to the party elite/leadership. This grouping of interconnected membership-related pressures I call the *ecology of membership*.

The political environment is the setting within which change occurs. This environment is the competitive situation parties operate in, where the most important influence is other

parties. Change in this arena can be from within and without the party system and includes the pressures of party position (whether in government or opposition), electoral outcomes and the transfer of ideas: contagion. This collection of political pressures, ideas and power relationships I refer to as the *political climate*.

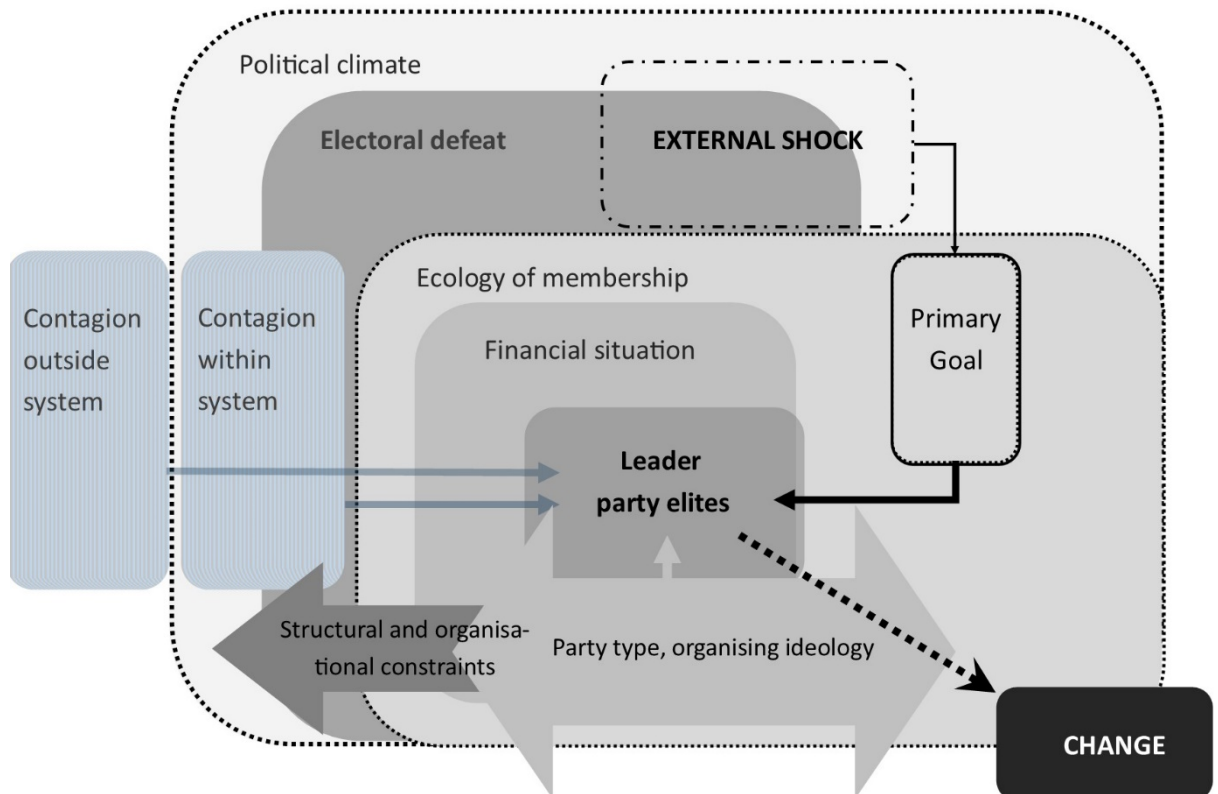
The model also includes the conservative and enabling forces contained in the party's structural and institutional setting including the formal decision-making processes. Linking party structures to elite perceptions and ideas are considerations relating to party type: the organising ideologies and understandings of the legitimate role for members and role of members in legitimising the party, that may encourage or suppress change. These considerations I draw together under the heading of '*party-type*' explanations.

The model also includes the three specific purposive-action type variables contained with the Harmel and Janda model (1994): leadership change, change in the dominant faction and external shocks. These factors emerge from within the party or within the ecosystem, and sit on top of the environment created by the political climate and ecology of membership. These catalysts must also be perceived by party actors and pass through their ideological filter.

The decision-makers at the top of the party are the *nucleus* of change in this ecosystem, rather than the party in its entirety. This is to recognise the role they have in effecting change compared to other party representatives and members. Members feature elsewhere in the system: as part of the ecology of membership and as part of organisational constraints. However, there is a boundary between what is internal to the party and what is external (the political climate sits outside the party whilst the ecology of membership and financial concerns sit within it).

By bringing together a range of possible factors within a single model, and putting leaders and elites in the centre, this approach facilitates an analysis of which factors provide the best explanation of change and an understanding of how they relate to each other: a reading not possible in more narrowly focused approaches. It recognises that whilst these factors are all linked, they are not all equally important.

Figure 2: The Model – *an ecosystem of change*



In this model the political climate is the environment in which change must necessarily occur. All parties will occupy a certain position within this political environment, the first boundary of which is the political system in which the party operates. This competitive system provides a number of pressures for change, the most significant of which are electoral outcomes. Sitting within the party system, and also outside of it, is the pressure for change in response to change in other parties. Contagion, the transfer of ideas from other parties, can effect change either because of a need to stay competitive in response to change in other parties within the same system or simply as a transfer of ideas and inspiration from parties outside the system.

The ecology of membership, the connected membership concerns, sit within the political climate. The role of members in financing the party is a primary consideration in this environment but the attitudes and relationship of the members to change within the party, and towards the leadership of the party and party decision-makers, is also key and form part of this environment. Though not a homogenous group, members' attitudes to reform are still significant and in party structures have a role to play in facilitating or preventing

change. The role members play in legitimising the party is an important part of membership environment but also feeds into the wider political climate: the perception of a party's legitimacy in the wider competitive system. This is a good example of why a layered model best represents the interactions between these factors.

Both the political climate and ecology of membership are the filters through which party decision-makers analyse options for change. These conditions cannot be ignored but at the same time, they alone cannot effect change. Their effect on the perceptions of party decision-makers is more like osmosis than a catalytic event.

Party structural considerations directly impact on decision-makers' options for change but they are also, for many parties, the gatekeepers: the doors to be unlocked before change can be enacted. Considerations of party type and the historical origins and structures of the party influence both the direction and extent of change. And whilst structural considerations may be obvious to decision-makers, the influence of party organising ideology may be less immediate. They are the implicit and yet embedded notions of the role of members and source of party legitimacy that restrict and shape change perhaps without any explicit recognition from decision-makers. Changes in the membership environment, political context and contagion effects must all pass through this ideological filter.

Finally, there is the direct catalyst for change in the form of an external shock. The external shock sits within the political system because the most common external shock is electoral defeat. However, party decision-makers perception of the external shock must be filtered through the party's primary goal; only if the external shock directly affects the party's performance against this measure (and is perceived as doing so by decision-makers in the party) will it effect change. If those conditions are met however, it is a direct cause of party change.

4.5 Applying the model

The following analysis applies the ecosystem model to the two significant rules changes within the Labour Party that ushered in a decidedly multi-speed approach to membership. This analysis is divided into three sections looking firstly at the environmental conditions, then the structural and party-type factors, and finally, the purposive-action variables. It is

acknowledged that separating these factors may create a false sense of independence, however, the analysis demonstrates that each of these types of change are interlinked.

The analysis draws on official party documents (in particular, the consultation documents and final reports of the two major reforms), interviews with the key decision-makers who designed the reforms and led them through the consultation and ratification processes (indeed those whose names are given to the reforms themselves), and other sources of party information such as minutes of National Executive Committee meetings and reports in the press. These sources are triangulated to give a holistic account of the changes and by focusing on the narratives of those involved in the changes, an insight into the values and norms shaping those decisions. Because of the central role of leadership decisions in this model, interviews with key decision makers and their writings on the subject are central to the research. They reveal which environmental conditions are seen as important and how these conditions are interpreted, which external events are seen as important and why, and they reveal whether ideological filters are shaping decisions and in particular, which narratives concerning the role of members are dominant.

4.5.1 Environmental conditions

4.5.1.i. The ecology of membership

In considering the environmental conditions for this transformation in the party, one of the most pertinent is clearly the membership environment. Party membership was on a long-term low ebb at the time of Ed Miliband's election as leader. There was a reported post-2010 election surge of 50,000 members (though 25% of these dropped off after a year) but the previous ten years had seen a steady decline throughout Labour's period in Government, reaching a low of just over 150,000 members at the start of 2010. Between September 2010 when Ed Miliband became leader and 2014, membership remained around 190,000. Though low, this figure did not put the Labour Party behind its competition. Figures published by the Conservative Party show Conservative membership was just under 150,000 in 2013. Other parties' membership numbers were far lower.

As Leader, Ed Miliband appeared to take an early interest in membership numbers reportedly saying to his first meeting with the NEC that he was 'encouraged by the surge in membership and renewed enthusiasm for politics' (Black, 2010). Membership also featured in the new General Secretary's bid for leadership in which he stressed he would treat members as 'a resource not a problem' (Black, 2011). Whilst these positive attitudes

towards party membership are to be expected from those leading a membership-based organisation, and whose jobs depend on support from the membership, they nonetheless evidence the gradual change in the demand side of party membership. It was an approach very different to earlier periods in the party in which membership had been seen as either redundant or a liability (Webb, 1992; Scarrow, 1996).

In November 2010, not long after his election as leader, Miliband appointed Peter Hain, Chair of the National Policy Forum, to lead a review into 'party structures and culture' (Labour Party, 2011a). The initial consultation document (Labour Party, 2011b) focuses heavily on building Labour's volunteer base: both members and other affiliates.

'Refounding Labour: a party for the new generation' sets out the scale of Labour's membership problem claiming despite the post-election surge that Labour is, 'still spread pretty thinly on the ground' (p12). The document references socioeconomic changes in the membership environment which have made membership less attractive:

"This widespread disengagement from party politics can partly be explained by the rise of the consumer society and competing pressures on people's time from work and study, obligations to friends and family, and other sport and leisure interests. People have also preferred to back non-party groups" (Labour Party, 2011b, p.12)

Declining membership (and affiliate) numbers are recognised as a problem for the party, *"declining individual and affiliated membership has narrowed the range of voices heard within the party's discussions and reduced the chance of a voter hearing the party's policies advocated in the course of everyday life"* (Labour Party, 2011b, p.12). Peter Hain, who personally led the review, puts membership decline at the centre of the arguments for reform: "I was concerned that the traditional party model was bust. A long term declining membership from the early '50s ... People were not relating to politics in the way that they used to. People might have been Labour supporters but they would not have dreamt of joining the party" (*Interview with Peter Hain*).

However, it is notable that the solution to declining levels of membership and affiliated support in the Refounding period is not to be found in reforms to increase either of these constituencies but in looking outward to other individuals and groups. The Leader's foreword in the Refounding consultation document calls on the party to 'widen our horizons' and 'look outward' (Labour Party, 2011b, p.12).

Despite a recognition of the decline in party membership, the focus is largely on drawing support from other places, rather than making membership more attractive. The

Refounding consultation document includes sections looking at links with non-member registered supporters, party affiliates, community groups and single-issue campaigning organisations but only a couple of paragraphs considering the cost and attractions of membership. There is consideration of the rights of members but little focus on the membership offer as a whole. The shift towards a wider model of support is pushed throughout the report and this suggests that the leadership of the party is leaning heavily towards a multi-speed membership model. Though there is a clear desire to find a solution to the problems declining membership appears to create, the Refounding reforms seek to resolve it through expanding non-member support, rather than trying to directly increase membership.

Whilst the focus in the Refounding reforms is on opening the party, it is also clear that the existing membership structure is not up for wholesale reform. In these reforms we see the beginnings of a distinctive shift towards a multi-speed model that seeks to 'layer' new affiliation modes on top of existing formal structures. Membership remains a very important construct throughout the reforms with no suggestion of fundamentally changing the model. It is suggested that the structures developed in 1918 are not appropriate for the party now, but the fundamentals of the ward, constituency and member-based structure are not challenged.

The dual strategy of the multi-speed membership approach (retaining the loyalty of existing members whilst increasing the party's appeal to supporters and wider affiliates) is recognised explicitly in the Refounding consultation text:

"The balance between constitutional structures and encouraging open participation requires careful assessment." (Labour Party, 2011b)

"We now need to cement that change by reaching out to new supporters, giving those we lost good reason to return and encouraging those who have stood by us to stay the course." (Labour Party, 2011b)

The impact on members' rights of the changes being introduced is a key concern in the consultation period. There is an explicit recognition of the challenges of pursuing this dual strategy in the final Refounding documents which note that the introduction of new supporter structures must be balanced against the rights of members:

"how can we maximise the potential for participation by 'Labour Supporters' – those who would not join the Party, but who could be mobilised to back and work for us? How do we manage this in a way that does not undermine the right of 'full' members" (Labour Party, 2011b)

“In order to safeguard the membership offer, there should be no formal rights for Registered Supporters in CLPs or Branches.” (Labour Party, 2011c, p.15)

The concern for balancing member rights with the new supporter schemes, meant that in the early proposals, supporters would only have gained a ‘fractional say’ in leadership contests (“I thought they could have a fractional say; it could be a small percentage like a tenth of the vote or something like that.” *(Interview with Peter Hain)*). The idea of extending rights to supporters was not the main focus of the reforms.

Yet whilst there is a recognition of the declining attractiveness of formal membership, and a clear aim to seek support from outside the membership, there is still suggestion that new support models may act as a gateway to formal membership:

“registered supporters will also be encouraged to join the Labour Party at the low local join rate of £15.” (Labour Party, 2011c, p.16)

“We may be able to offer them [Labour supporters] a pathway into Labour membership through other avenues, including through trade unions but also socialist societies, by first signing them up as supporters.” (Labour Party, 2014, p.18)

However, overall during the Refounding reform period, whilst it is envisaged that the registered supporters scheme could provide a gateway to membership it is recognised that the membership environment has changed and the traditional membership model needs reform (“what we had to do was transform the party into what I call a ‘movement’ rather than a party in the traditional sense” *(Interview with Peter Hain)*). The idea that the traditional model is ‘bust’ shapes the direction of these reforms away from membership and firmly into multi-speed organising.

Financial and campaigning resource

The Refounding consultation highlights that membership dues contributed £7.3 million to party funds in 2010. Whilst membership revenues are not the party’s primary source of income in this period, at around £5 million per year¹³ they represent between fourteen and seventeen percent of overall income and dwarf other parties’ membership revenues (the Conservatives’ income from membership dues drops below £1 million after 2010 (£863,000) and continued to decline). For Labour, member subscriptions in this period (2010-2014) are providing an increasing amount of funding and an increased percentage of overall income (though outside of an election year individual donations would be

¹³ Data retrieved from party accounts submitted to the Electoral Commission.

expected to provide less of the party's funding) but also income which (especially after the party attracted criticism of the role of large donations in funding the party in the past) is untainted by suggestion of giving advantage to vested interests and therefore increases party legitimacy.

Prior to Refounding, reducing membership fees and finding new member incentives were considered to be the way of attracting more members (Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2013). Yet it is clear that the party is increasingly reliant on fees, creating an environment where attracting new members with lower rates would be less attractive than creating a new category of affiliate (with a financial contribution attached). However, the reliability of membership dues is also a consideration. The party's Treasurers' report submitted to the Electoral Commission in 2010 cites membership revenue as a source of 'reliable income' that can be used to cover fixed organisational costs (Labour Party, 2010). It might be concluded that whilst supporters present a financial opportunity, it is one that cannot be exploited at the expense of membership revenues.

And yet, whilst supporter registration fees did end up contributing around £364,000 to party funds in 2015 and over £4.5 million in 2016¹⁴ (after the registration fee was increased), the initial proposals that introduced supporter rights in leadership selection required no such contribution. The level of fees (if any) required to register as a supporter and take part in the leadership contest (along with registration and freeze dates) was left to the NEC to decide after the reforms had been agreed. Therefore the idea that these changes were introduced in the Labour Party with the aim of providing the party with additional funding can be discounted.

Preserving formal membership and constituency party structures is seen as important in keeping 'the party going through bad times and troughs in membership' (Labour Party, 2011b, p.17) demonstrating an awareness of the disproportionate voluntary capacity that stalwart local activists provide. However, it is also clear in Refounding that the party sees many primary party functions being ably carried out by non-members. The report highlights successful constituency campaigns that have involved non-member volunteers, joint campaigns with non-party groups, as well as ambitions to source Labour candidates from outside the party. The value of non-member supporters in party political campaigning, whilst probably always present in some form, had begun to be explicitly

¹⁴ Based on 121,295 £3 registrations in 2015 (fees were not refunded to those who were subsequently disqualified) and 183,541 £25 registrations in 2016.

recognised within the party. The Refounding consultation points to the Edgbaston campaign which mobilised extra volunteers during the election through links to community groups. Whilst the value of on the ground campaigning by volunteers is repeatedly recognised as a crucial election fighting tool (particularly against a better funded Conservative party) it is also clear that the party does not see this as an exclusively member domain.

Member attitudes to reform

Another aspect of the membership environment is members' attitudes to reform. Constitutional change in the Labour Party was initially raised and driven by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD), an organisation formed in 1973 initially to campaign for annual conference policy decisions to be binding, and then for mandatory reselection of MPs. As part of a wider campaign group of affiliated Labour organisations, the CLPD were instrumental in marshalling support amongst CLPs for member rights in leadership selection (Seyd, 1987; Russell, 2005). Their efforts secured the introduction of the tripartite Electoral College in 1981 which introduced member and affiliate votes (prior to these reforms leaders had been selected by the Parliamentary party). However, after this point, pressure for further changes to leader selection and the Electoral College came to be driven by the leadership of the party (and a few supportive organisations). This is in part because changes to OMOV for parliamentary selection was seen as a way to wrestle back control after the introduction of mandatory reselection (Russell, 2005). The CLPD opposed these reforms though support for change amongst members of the party was increasing (Russell, 2005).

Returning to the period of reform in question, pressure appears to come from the top rather than the grassroots of the party. Yet, whilst there was no great campaigning movement amongst the grassroots of the party for the change, 76% of CLP votes were cast in favour of the Collins reforms at the special conference. The CLPD mobilized against the reforms encouraging CLPs to oppose primaries and defend the union link but with little impact.

With the Refounding reforms it was felt that, whilst the reforms had been agreed and adopted in principle, the reality was that very few constituencies really bought into the changes and few made any substantial change to the way they organised and campaigned. Whilst the local structures of the party supported the leadership in the ambition of the reforms, actually significant change at the grassroots level was minimal.

Members and their leader

The membership environment for the leader personally is also important during this period. Accounts of the September 2011 National Executive Committee meeting report Miliband saying he 'wanted to give members more of a voice, even if this was inconvenient for him personally' (Black, 2011). Indeed he must have been all too aware during the early period of his leadership that the membership environment was already 'inconvenient for him personally' having not received a majority of member votes in his election in 2010. Only 10 percent of the member section of the Electoral College gave him their first preference (the largest vote, 14.7 percent, went to his brother David). In the fourth and final run off round between the brothers, David Miliband was the preferred candidate amongst the membership by 54.4% to 45.6%.

Summary of the ecology of membership

The membership environment prior to and during both sets of reforms serves to create a situation in which a shift to multi-speed organising was met with little opposition. It was perhaps the emphasis on supporters as a resource to help in elections and the modest proposals to reform party structures in the initial Refounding reforms (the balancing of the multi-speed membership dual prongs) that meant the initial reception to these proposals was fairly warm. NEC member Ann Black writes that 'maintaining lists of people who will help with campaigns, and inviting them to social events and local policy discussions, seems uncontentious' (Black minutes July NEC 2011). This may also have been because at this stage there was less discussion of voting or political rights being extended. There is suggestion of a 'recognised consultee' option for campaign groups that are not affiliated, and the possibility of their members participating in party decisions, 'in a way that did not undermine or discourage fully fledged members' (Labour Party, 2011b, p.19). However, the suggestion of supporter involvement in leadership elections is only hinted at in the final pages of the Refounding consultation document and would have only have ever been a 'fractional say'. The involvement of registered supporters in leader selections only appears in the final 'Refounding to Win' summary document (Labour Party, 2011d) presented to conference in a 'take-it-or-leave-it' yes or no vote.

The membership environment during the course of these reforms in the Labour Party is one of declining or at best, stagnating membership numbers, though membership is still substantial enough to provide the party with a significant (and stable) income and a reliable campaigning resource. However, it is also an environment in which members are

increasingly not seen as the exclusive source of these goods. In the Refounding reforms especially, the party is recognising the shift in the membership environment and seeing the future of party support elsewhere.

Yet whilst the party clearly sees a value in non-member support there is still an emphasis on traditional formal membership. The primacy of membership is stressed throughout these changes and evidenced in the desire to allow supporters only a 'fractional say' in party democracy initially. The party also continues to present supporter status as a gateway to membership. These limits on supporter status may have been a tool to keep members onside with the reforms but it seems also to be based in practicality: members are providing a substantial financial resource and a stable base in the constituencies (keeping the party going). The stalwarts are still of value to the party functionally. Yet the functional explanation alone does not quite capture the emphasis on party membership numbers in these reforms. A commitment to the mass party model, and the value of membership numbers in that, is clearly deeply embedded in the party's organising ideology (see section 4.5.2). The difference is that the party is now clearly seeking the legitimacy of numbers from outside the membership too.

4.5.1.ii Political climate

Starting with the premise that the most relevant political environment for parties in a competitive system is other parties, this section will consider the tactics and strategies of other parties and their impact on Labour, as well as the possible influence of tactics and strategies from parties outside the party system. Electoral defeat is also a significant consideration: the political environment that Labour found itself in during this period of reform is one of being a party of opposition for the first time in 13 years.

Electoral defeat and opposition politics

Following defeat in the 2010 general election, the Labour Party entered its first period of opposition since 1997. The failure of the Conservatives to win a majority¹⁵ suggested that this period of opposition could be short-lived and the new Labour leader was setting a path to return to power in 2015 (Bale, 2015) if not sooner. Indeed, the reforms to party structures in the early part of Miliband's tenure were presented as a vehicle to achieve this aim. The Refounding consultation opens with a review of the party's loss of electoral support entitled 'Facing the facts' (Labour Party, 2011b). The impact of electoral defeat on

¹⁵ Twenty seats short of a majority the Conservatives formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats in the first full coalition government in the Westminster parliament since 1945.

the party's need to reform is clear. When the consultation document returned as a set of proposals, '*Refounding Labour*' was rebranded as '*Refounding Labour to Win*'.

Opening with a recognition that 'the Labour Party was badly beaten, recording our lowest share of the popular vote since 1983' (Labour Party, 2011b, p.2), the Refounding consultation and resulting recommendations, whilst about widening participation and the party's relationship with communities generally, are focused on doing so to win back support for future electoral success. The '*Refounding Labour to Win*' document states that the innovations in local party organisation that the reforms seek to expand were 'producing results in terms of membership, campaigning and electoral success' (Labour Party, 2011c, p.5). The review cites a number of CLPs that had defeated the odds in the 2010 general election.

The Collins Review published four years after the general election presents reforms as 'broadening and deepening the party's relationship with ordinary men and women in communities across the country' (Labour Party, 2014, p.5) and seeking to widen support in order for the party to 'survive and prosper' (Labour Party, 2014, p.16). The political environment is still one in which the party is rebuilding as an opposition seeking a return to power but it is by this stage also one where the party appears on the back foot, during a period in which its internal structures appeared to threaten its electoral success. But electoral success still forms the foundation of reform, as Ray Collins notes:

"the first test of any new system would have been the Mayoral primary which we could have used to reach out to supporters and build committed votes for the subsequent June election." (Interview with Ray Collins)

Contagion (from the right?)

The political environment in the British party system at this time was shifting towards opening up party procedures. But it was the Conservative party that led the charge in opening up voting rights to non-members by experimenting with primaries for parliamentary and mayoral candidates.

Almost a decade before Refounding, primaries were being advocated and trialled within the Conservative Party. Following a couple of pilots and with the backing of the new party leader David Cameron, over 100 'primaries' for parliamentary candidates were held between 2006 and 2009 (Williams and Paun, 2011). These were 'primary meetings' involving members and non-members with a hustings followed by a ballot. In 2009 the Conservatives held two full 'postal primaries' in the Totnes and Gosport seats in which

ballots were sent to all registered voters in the constituency. These fully-open primaries were seen to be successful by selecting popular local candidates who went on to be elected as MPs. A primary was also held in 2007 to select the Conservative candidate for London Mayor in which London residents could vote by phoning a £1-a-minute phone line. Boris Johnson was selected and went on to win the 2008 contest.

The move towards more open selection in the Conservatives had been developing for some years prior to the 2008 Mayoral primary, attributed to Conservative MP Andrew Tyrie who began advocating for primaries in 2001 (Gauja, 2012). For the Conservatives, the reasons for expanding selection were focused on electoral competition: primaries provided a route to finding candidates that would attract greater electoral support (Gauja, 2012).

When in 2011, the Labour Party began to consider the use of primaries, the Conservatives had almost a decade of experience in this area. Particularly in the case of primaries, the Labour Party took note of this experience. Ray Collins met with the Chief Executive of the Conservative Party to find out about the Conservative Party experience of primaries during the Collins Review (*Interview with Ray Collins*).

Contagion from within the party system is also seen in the comparative data. The use of leadership ballots (across a range of parties in different countries) more than doubled in the latter half of the period 1990-2012. Their growth is not evenly spread across parties in this data: in some countries, no party had used leadership ballots, in others, several parties had used them, sometimes more than once (Scarrow, 2015). This is also supported by Cross and Blais' (2012) five country study.

In widening participation in leadership selection there is considerable evidence of contagion within party systems. For Labour, the adoption of more open leader selection may have, in part at least, been a case of 'contagion from the right'.

Contagion from other party systems

Whilst within-country contagion is a likely source of pressure for change, contagion can also travel. Whilst parties from outside the British party system do not form part of the competitive political environment (and therefore the tactics of these parties cannot be seen as forming part of the 'competitive situation' (Wilson, 1994) in which Labour

operates), they do have influence. For the agents involved in this change within the party, the sources of inspiration they refer to are almost exclusively from outside the UK.

Labour Party documents explicitly refer to countries outside of the UK as examples to learn from. The Collins Review notes that evidence from Australia, Italy, Canada, the US and France (specifically on primaries) featured in submissions to the review. However, it is the United States and the 2008 Obama presidential campaign that dominates in this period. The timing of this successful and much discussed campaign makes it an obvious source of ideas coming shortly before the early part of Ed Miliband's tenure. Indeed, Miliband went as far as to employ both Arnie Graf, Obama's community organising mentor, and his campaign strategist, David Axelrod, in the run up to the 2015 General Election and during the Refounding review period, Peter Hain also spoke to the Obama campaign and took inspiration from their model of organising (*Interview with Peter Hain*).

Even before Miliband's election as leader, publications from Labour affiliated organisations were calling on the party to adopt methods employed by the Obama campaign. Published in 2009, a Fabian Society publication entitled "*The change we need: What Britain can learn from Obama's victory*" (Anstead and Straw, 2009), featuring a foreword by then Prime Minister and leader of the party, Gordon Brown, advises on the campaign structures, volunteer recruitment, organising, fundraising and online strategies of the Obama campaign. This pamphlet urges the party to '*transform the role of their members and supporters ...The American election showed the way for genuine movement-based democratic change. It is now Britain and Labour's turn to emulate that extraordinary success.*' (Anstead and Straw, 2009, p.4).

Under Ed Miliband, the biggest influence from the Obama campaign came in the shape of community organising: a grassroots mobilisation strategy that seeks to build support at a local level around community specific issues. The Refounding reforms mainstreamed community organising in the party, changing clause one of the party's rule book to include a commitment to, '*make communities stronger through collective action and support*'. It was clear from the initial consultation that community organising would feature in the final recommendations, with a whole section dedicated to it in the consultation document. The final Refounding summary document advises that, '*There is wide recognition of the need to learn from the approach to Community Organising in the US*' (Labour Party, 2011d, p.5). As a fairly uncontentious change, supported strongly by the party leader and new General Secretary, and something that would be considered best practice by most local parties

anyway, it is unsurprising that the party emulated the US experience of community organising. Yet, whilst uncontentious, as a mode of political mobilising that seeks to move supporters to activism with no requirement for membership, the interest in community organising shows the party moving towards a position that sees activity within the party as more important than type of affiliation: a fundamental shift towards the multi-speed way of organising.

Whilst the party was comfortable with widening participation in campaigns, there was notably less enthusiasm for widening participation in party decisions. International experience of primaries features in the review period, but emulating these models of candidate selection is more contentious. The Collins Review notes ‘a majority against the widespread use of this process’ in submissions with some ‘absolutely opposed to the use of primaries in any form’ (Labour Party, 2014, p.33). NEC member Ann Black notes in her minutes of the meeting to discuss the Collin Review recommendations that ‘this was an understatement: I found only a handful of support’. Black cites the objection to primaries as ‘undermining the value of membership, the cost for candidates and making infiltration easier’ (Black, 2014). Opposition to the US model (primaries but also the widening of non-member participation more generally) is forcefully put in a 2006 Compass publication which argues:

“the prevailing views of senior party figures seem to be in favour of what we would term a pseudo-democratic monolith: a tightly drilled central bureaucracy, supported by a loosely defined membership – increasingly drawn from a so-called Supporters Network Throw in vogueish talk about adopting the US model of primaries for the selection of both candidates and leaders, and you may start to feel very anxious: Labour’s proposed solution may be a system of party organisation that, if America is anything to go by, will kill the idea of the party as a meaningful membership organisation....” (Cruddas and Harris, 2006)

The Refounding review process is cautious around the issue of primaries of any form, recommending in the final summary document that ‘further consideration’ (Labour Party, 2011d, p.5) be given to involving supporters in leadership elections. Indeed prior to Ed Miliband’s St. Bride’s speech in July 2013 which introduced the idea of a primary to select Labour’s candidate for London Mayor, primaries (which were increasingly being used in other party systems as well as by the Conservatives) were not enthusiastically promoted in the Labour Party.

Two notable exceptions to this come from Labour member organisation Progress which published a pamphlet in 2009 arguing for primaries to be used for the candidate for

London Mayor in 2012 and for parliamentary candidate selection (Straw, 2009). This draws on the US experience but also on the Conservatives' primaries in Totnes and for London Mayor. More evidence of contagion in the case of primaries comes from leadership candidate David Miliband who, in 2009, wrote an article for *Tribune* magazine advocating emulating the US system, 'why not adopt a system of registered voters, as in the US, to create the basis for primaries?' (Miliband, 2009).

It is interesting that the US provided the more dominant source of inspiration in this period rather than European parties, also experimenting with primaries and opening affiliation, and whose organising structures would have more closely matched the UK model. It was an interest no doubt driven by the Presidential candidate at that time but Labour had every reason to have reservations about full-scale adoption of a US style registered voters and primaries system. The American model, based on a system with no formal membership, has limited direct application in a membership party. The organisational considerations in adopting some of these strategies for Labour would have been complex. The need to balance opening up the party and widening involvement against retaining exclusive rights for members (the dual strategy of the multi-speed membership party) is addressed throughout party reform documents particularly in reference to primaries. In his St. Bride's speech introducing the London mayoral primary, Ed Miliband stated: "As we reshape our Party for the future, we must always value the role of Party members".

Yet the party appears at this stage to becoming increasingly comfortable with supporter structures more similar to the US and elsewhere. David Miliband in his *Tribune* article of 2009 suggests adopting a supporter structure akin to Pasok in Greece. In this article Miliband writes, Pasok has also gone furthest in party reform, opening up the party so that more than 900,000 Greeks, out of a population of 11 million, have equal rights as members or "friends" (Miliband, 2009).

Contagion from within

One further source of contagion is previous party leaders. This ecosystem model places party leaders and elites at the centre of change, rather than the party as a whole. By doing so, it makes it possible to consider the effects of contagion within the same party, across different leaderships.

Though not given 'equal rights', supporters were already part of Labour's structures before the change to Clause 1 formalised this role. Through the Labour Supporters' Network, introduced several years earlier under Tony Blair, Labour supporters who didn't want to join as members could sign up for free and had been invited to contribute to policy discussions. The opening and widening of party affiliation had therefore begun long before the Refounding process. In some ways then, this period of reform can also be seen as contagion within the party, across party leaderships. Responding to the Collins Review recommendations, former Prime Minister Tony Blair said of Ed Miliband, "he's carrying through a process of reform in the Labour party that is long overdue and, frankly, probably I should have done it when I was leader" (Wintour, 2013a). Though this remark is in response to the package of measures as a whole, not just those relating to membership rights, it does indicate that there is a long running movement in the party in this direction that pre-dates Miliband's leadership. Blair's successor Gordon Brown was also involved in moving the party towards a more direct membership model. In 1993 he authored *Making Mass Membership Work* aimed at attracting trade union members to party membership and later as Prime Minister he wrote in a Progress pamphlet of the need to expand the party's connection with local organisations and supporters (Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2013).

There is also the possibility of contagion from even closer to home. During the leadership contest, as well as supporting wider affiliation options and primaries, Ed Miliband's brother David (also a candidate for leader) set up Movement for Change. Movement for Change was a community organising initiative that would certainly have been integrated into Labour's activities had David Miliband become leader. Instead it was his brother who took over bringing Movement for Change under the Labour Party's wings in March 2011 (Stratton, 2011).

Political climate summary

The political environment for Labour following electoral defeat in 2010 was one of newly found opposition, led by a new party leader. The party of government for thirteen years now had to rebuild and rebrand itself and get used to being in opposition for perhaps the next five years. This political environment is one ripe for self-renewal and the party is clearly looking elsewhere for inspiration in that endeavour. Yet the arguments for opening party democracy and emulating the successes of the Obama campaign appeared well before the 2010 election defeat. The direction of travel within and without the party system in the period up to these reforms is towards opening up party models either

through greater supporter mobilisation or primary mechanisms. Reforms to bring non-members into party activity had begun years before under the leadership of Tony Blair.

Contagion from outside the party system played a part in the reforms at this time, repeatedly referenced in party documents and by party personnel and affiliated organisations. The US and particularly the 2008 Obama presidential campaign provides a source of organisational reform ideas in this period and although primaries were not enthusiastically promoted, the model of registered support (a model most familiar in the United States) becomes increasingly central to organisational reform.

Yet whilst party elites and other influencers within the party claim inspiration from abroad, the most relevant and closest example of widening participation comes from closer to home. Whilst not referencing the Conservative experience of primaries in party documents, the Labour Party was well aware of their use and their effectiveness in selecting successful candidates, most notably in the 2008 London Mayoral contest. Introducing the recommendation that the party should hold a primary for the Labour London Mayoral candidate in 2015, the Collins Review cites evidence of the Australian Labor Party's mayoral primary in Sydney. It is perhaps understandable that party elites would not draw explicitly on their rival's organisational reforms publicly, especially when trying to persuade party members of their value (and crucially of their place within *Labour* structures and traditions) but it is clear that the Australian experience was not the sole source of contagion in the decision to adopt a primary for London Mayor, a decision that moved the party closer to formal supporter involvement in leader selections.

Charting changes in the political environment shows that contagion within and without the party system, and within the party itself, is a strong driver of change. It meets the first two of Gauja's (2016b) tests for policy transfer: the intention to change is clear and the party is clearly motivated to seek out information on the practice of other parties. However, the resulting changes do not closely resemble those of other parties. Instead, the party landed on a very Labour-specific model. The explanation for this lies perhaps in the party's existing structures and the role of alternative sources of party authority in shaping the reforms (see section 4.5.2).

During both reforms however, the move to extend political rights to supporters was still contentious. There is clear opposition within the party for expanding political rights to non-members. This opposition is acknowledged within the final Collins Review report

which recommends both a primary for London Mayor and allowing registered supporters to vote in the next Leadership contest. Whilst these reforms came on the back of strong contagion effects and party debate, they were not uncontentious. Pressures pulling against change are evident even in the final reform document itself and suggest that contagion effects were limited by organisational norms concerning the role of members. The dual multi-speed strategy again evidenced in these reforms.

4.5.2 Party type, organisation and structures

For the Labour Party, there are specific decision-making structures (derived from the party's origins in collective and delegate structures of representation) through which change must necessarily pass. These structures, which give power over organisational change to the party's affiliated organisations, are a significant consideration in the analysis of change. Yet, according to Scarrow's theory (2015) the party's origins have a further role. They not only shape the decision-making structures but also the organising rhetoric of the party, the 'narratives of legitimacy' it draws on. These narratives not only set the context for reform but also influence how far the party feels it can change its structures.

'Narratives of legitimacy'

Whilst Labour has moved some way from a traditional cleavage representation structure in its various modernisation programmes, the party's origins as a cleavage representation party would be expected to have an influence on the 'narratives of legitimacy' that it draws upon, and may act as a conservative force against changes to membership.

The Collins Review, which introduces the most significant changes to the party's structures for decades, begins with an analysis of the origins of the party in which the link between individual party membership and the development of the party is made:

"The party leadership also believed that to gain electoral support Labour had to attract a wider body of people into its ranks. A structure that only allowed individuals to join the party indirectly, through an affiliated trade union or socialist society, placed a barrier to achieving that goal. So the introduction of individual party membership was integral to Labour's plan to reach into all communities ...So the 1918 constitution created separate individual and affiliated sections which were both represented in the party's structures bequeathing an organisational blueprint that remains relevant today." (Labour Party, 2014, p.11)

The party's history is shaping the narratives of change, they are the background to which change must pay homage and which 'set the blueprint' for the direction of that change. Ray Collins describes the influence of the party's origins on the direction of the Collins review:

"The Tory Party of course doesn't have quite the same problem as they are a parliamentary party primarily... we start off as a party outside parliament, trying to seek representation in it, and the Tory party, the other way round." (Interview with Ray Collins).

The party's beginnings are still important for those leading change within it. The origins of the party as one based in collective organisation outside parliament, with strong roots into society through the unions and seeking representation for those groups within Parliament, still shape how the party views its position today.

Party history and collective affiliation

The British Labour Party has never been a mass membership party in the style of Western European social-democratic parties. Individual membership of the Labour Party was not introduced until 1918 and prior to this, most people participated as union delegates or members of the affiliated Independent Labour Party (Tanner et al., 2000). Having been founded on collective affiliation rather than direct membership, the member and support distinction has always been more complex in the Labour Party than other parties. Non-member affiliates have always held rights to internal decision-making within the party and the number of affiliated trade unionists have always vastly outnumbered individual members. Yet because of these links, and the size of party affiliation, the party has had a claim on mass party status, even after membership numbers dwindled. In other words, numbers matter in the Labour party: *"at the end of the day we went out and asked 3 million people who we want to lead our party"* (Ray Collins interview discussing 2010 election)

In both the Refounding reforms and Collins Review, narratives of mass participation are utilised not only in emphasising the role of members within the party but in justifying the need to change the member structure, and to expand the support structure.

"We must rebuild as a mass movement ... our individual members will always be at the heart of our party ... But in order to create a mass movement we need to reach out to a wider range of supporters, community groups and national organisations" (Labour Party, 2011, p.5) - Refounding

"Ed's central objective is to transform Labour so that it becomes a genuinely mass membership party reaching out to all parts of the nation" (Labour Party, 2014, p.5) - Collins

The focus on strength through numbers dominates both sets of reforms, and in this, there is clear evidence of a concern for declining participatory linkage. Sections of both the Refounding consultation and Collins Review are dedicated to examining the decline in party membership numbers and also the decline in trade union membership.

Linkage and mass membership

Parties in the cleavage representation model draw legitimacy from involving and building ties to the people they seek to represent. Linkage is therefore an important concept for the cleavage representation party. In both Refounding and the Collins Review, the concept of linkage, (understood as participatory linkage in which the party provides a channel for popular participation in politics) and concern for its decline, is used as a justification for the reforms:

“A new Clause 1 should set out our desire to build a party fit for the future; a genuine movement where the connection between the party and the public is strong” (Labour Party, 2011c, p.11)

“Building a better politics starts by building a Party that is truly rooted in every community and every walk of life.” (Ed Miliband, St. Bride’s Speech, 2013)

Throughout both sets of reforms there are repeated references to the representativeness of the party (to concerns that party reflects those it seeks to represent) and to what could be understood as ‘policy-responsive’ linkage, in which the party responds to the interests of those it seeks to represent. Both of these outcomes are seen as deriving from strong participatory linkage: a strength of the mass membership party. What marks out these reforms is that the party is shifting away from membership being the source of that linkage. This could suggest that either party leaders are concerned that party membership is untypical of party support (as hypothesised in May’s Law (1973)) or that the party does not feel that a return to mass membership is a realistic prospect.

A concern for linkage is also seen in the suggestion initially put forward in the Refounding proposals for a new ‘recognised consultee’ status for non-affiliated organisations. These proposals would have seen non-affiliated unions and civil society organisations given the option of having a formal link to the party and a formal role in policy consultation, “We would be offering an open door where they would have a formal role in the policy consultation process and in that way I thought we could really deepen our links into civil society” (*Interview with Peter Hain*). In a way this dual pronged individual supporter and consultee groups structure mirrors the individual member and affiliated unions structure

introduced in 1918, but in a much looser (more multi-speed) format. It was a suggestion however that did not make the final reform proposals.

Whilst strong representativeness and policy-responsive linkage is an important way of ensuring government responds to citizens, it is also beneficial for parties, ensuring party platforms are attractive to those whose votes a party seeks. Representativeness helps convince voters that the party speaks for those it claims to. These dual aims are expressed throughout the reform documents:

"We need to strengthening [sic] our long term relationships in the local community, not just to enhance our short term electioneering capacity, but to be a party more representative of the communities we seek to represent." (Labour Party, 2011b, p.7)

"Declining individual and affiliated membership has narrowed the range of voice heard within the party's discussions and reduced the chances of a voter hearing the party's policies advocated in the course of everyday life" (Labour Party, 2011b, p.11)

The concept of 'ambassadors in the community', party members conveying the parties aims through contact with friends, family, colleagues, is also found in the reform documents. Reaching out beyond membership to not only ensure that policies are in line with voter preferences and credibly supported by those in whose name they are made, but that they are advocated by a wider network too.

"..our policies and promises may command more credibility if they are promoted enthusiastically by volunteer party members on the doorstep, backed by a local network of Labour supporters..." (Labour Party, 2011b, p. 14)

Throughout this period of reform, party elites draw heavily on the concept of participatory linkage. The idea of Labour as 'The People's party' (Labour Party, 2011b, p.3) and a desire to create a 'movement' ("*Today if you vote for these reforms you will be voting for Labour to be a movement again*" (Ed Miliband, Speech to Special Conference, March 2014)) draw on ideas of the mass party that relate directly to Labour's origins. The idea that party strength is to be found in the size of its membership is commensurate with the party's collective beginnings and typical of the cleavage representation party type. Whilst representativeness and policy-responsiveness have electoral benefits too, it is clear that these linkages also serve to legitimise the party and crucially in this period, are employed to legitimise change within it. Peter Hain explicitly recognises the role of extra-parliamentary support in advancing the party's goals, "I believe change comes in the combination of extra-parliamentary pressure and parliamentary pressure" (*interview*).

The Party still sees itself in the mass membership model yet mass integration narratives are used not only to highlight the problems of declining membership but also to rationalise the change to the membership model. In this approach there is a distinct shift, whether deliberate or not, from the cleavage representation party type. Whilst a cleavage representation party would be likely to set a high bar to membership and expect membership to be enduring, by looking for support outside membership (looking to create the 'mass' of 'mass membership' through supporters), the Labour Party is taking a step towards a political market type arrangement in which the party is representing the voter and membership rules are loosened to increase participation (see Scarrow, 2015, p.21). Concern for 'broadening the mandate': "You want to expand the party's reach, involve more people in policy debate" (*Interview with Peter Hain*), show the party making distinctly political market party type decisions.

'Layering' of new affiliation structures

For Scarrow (2015), parties shifting to multi-speed membership tend to add new affiliation models on top of existing ones: retaining formal membership whilst also trying to reach out to new support. The new affiliation models are 'layered on top' of old ones. In the Collins Review there is evidence of the party taking this approach. Whilst recognising the need for reform, the origins and traditions of the party are respected, and therefore reforms seek to layer rather than reform wholesale:

"Ed Miliband is clear about the direction in which he wishes the party to move. It is a direction of travel that builds on the party's historic foundations but responds to the world as it is today." (Labour Party, 2014, p. 18)

"So the starting point of this report is a clear recommendation that the federal structure which enables individuals and organisations to have a voice inside the party should remain the bedrock of Labour organisation." (Labour Party, 2014, p.20)

The Collins reforms in particular are an accommodation of the dual structure of the Labour Party:

"how do we deal with this apparent dialectical problem of trade unions, collective organisations, seeking representation for their members, with individual members whose main responsibility is to win representation. Because in winning representation they're in constant contact with the people who are the deciding factor - the voter." (Interview with Ray Collins)

"The practical dilemma is how to give effect to these objectives without undermining the principle of collective affiliation" (Labour Party, 2014, p.20)

In addition to ideological considerations relating to party type and the role of members within these narratives, there are specific existing structures through which change must pass.

Union influence and structural constraints

‘Undermining the principles of collective affiliation’ was certainly something the leaders of those collectively affiliated would be expected to want to avoid. Particularly in the case of the Collins reforms which directly addressed the party’s relationship with the unions. These reforms came up against structural constraints created by the role of trade unions and affiliated societies who not only have a link to the party’s origin and ‘narrative of legitimacy’, but also a vested interest in its political direction. The final form the Collins reforms took is as much to do with negotiating something that was palatable for all involved as it was to do with keeping within the party’s membership traditions.

The initial union response to Ed Miliband’s St Bride’s speech saw some major unions cut their affiliation fees. This was either as a warning shot at Ed Miliband or potentially because they had a longer term goal of disaffiliation (Bale, 2015; McHugh, 2015). Turning the proposals into something that could pass a vote at conference (a vote which would include union delegates) meant finding a compromise. The eventual move to OMOV can be seen as a result of trying to find that compromise:

“The initial plan, agreed with the leader’s office, was to press for a new college based on one-third MPs and MEPs, and two thirds members and affiliates. Two problems immediately arose. One was the complicating factor of (non-trade union) registered supporters, whose potential presence in the leadership ballot had been established under Refounding Labour. The other more serious issue was trade union opposition to the dissolution of the affiliates’ section. That was ultimately only overcome by agreeing to dissolve the entire college and removing the MPs as well.” (McHugh, 2015)

The compromise worked and the reforms (which amongst other things involved changing to an ‘opt in’ for union affiliates as well as a change to leadership elections) were passed 86 percent in favour (96% of the union votes and 76% of CLP delegates (Sparrow, 2014)).

The Labour party has very specific structural constraints that can provide either enabling or constraining forces. Affiliated unions are not only the foundational origin of the party (woven into the ‘narrative of legitimacy’ the party draws on) but also more practically, the provider of party funds and have specific rights in party decision-making. Labour leaders are constrained by this sharing of power which limits the extent and shape of reform. As Meg Russell (2005) notes of the adoption of OMOV within the Electoral College and

parliamentary selection, a decade previously, reforms took ‘over 10 years of painful negotiation’ and resulted in reforms that ‘fell far short of what leaders had originally wanted’ (Russell, 2005, p.60). These same structures worked to both constrain the eventual form the Collins reforms took, but also enabled the reforms to go ahead once the leaders of the party’s power bases found enough in the changes to suit their purposes.

Organisation, structures and party type summary

Throughout both sets of reforms, the party’s history of collective affiliation and mass integration shape how reforms develop by providing the structures through which change must pass and the ‘narratives of legitimacy’ that reform proposals must conform to. There is no evidence that the party is contemplating wholesale reform of the membership model but instead ‘layering’ new on top of old. Indeed, a ‘narrative of legitimacy’ that sees mass participation as legitimising the party, is used not only as the starting point for reform but also as the rationale for the set of reforms being introduced.

Labour’s ‘narrative of legitimacy’ based in the notion of mass integration and linkage creates a contradiction in this changed membership environment. Whilst declining party membership and declining trade union membership forces the party to seek support elsewhere in order to maintain a degree of ‘mass’ support and linkage, the origins of the party, based on interest representation and collective affiliation, make widening support difficult. For cleavage representation parties, support comes from those whose interests you represent. Tight rules on who can join, an expectation of loyalty from members, and commitment to the aims of the party go alongside this (Scarrow, 2015). A looser model of support cannot make such demands of supporters or ‘friends’. Widening affiliation therefore, whilst providing greater linkage in some forms, also challenges the traditional model of party. Yet the collective roots of the party also help make this transition easier. Not all union affiliates were party supporters under the previous arrangements so whilst a traditional cleavage representation party might expect a firmer commitment, the Labour Party’s arrangements have always included ‘looser’ support.

Labour’s origins as a cleavage representation party are exerting both a conservative influence, preventing wholesale reform of the membership and affiliation model, and also legitimising its reform, through the promise of improved representational and participatory linkage. The fact that both sets of reforms involved member and affiliate consultation periods, and required ratification through a conference vote, demonstrates the central place that membership and affiliation hold in party structures. The role of

membership and affiliation in legitimising the party explains the dual strategy the party adopts and the continued (as one member interviewee described it) 'sovereignty of the membership' within the party.

The weight of party history is enabling and constraining change, both directly through the structures of ratification built into party rules, and through the 'narratives of legitimacy' that shape the way party elites think about change, long before any such change is formalised and agreed.

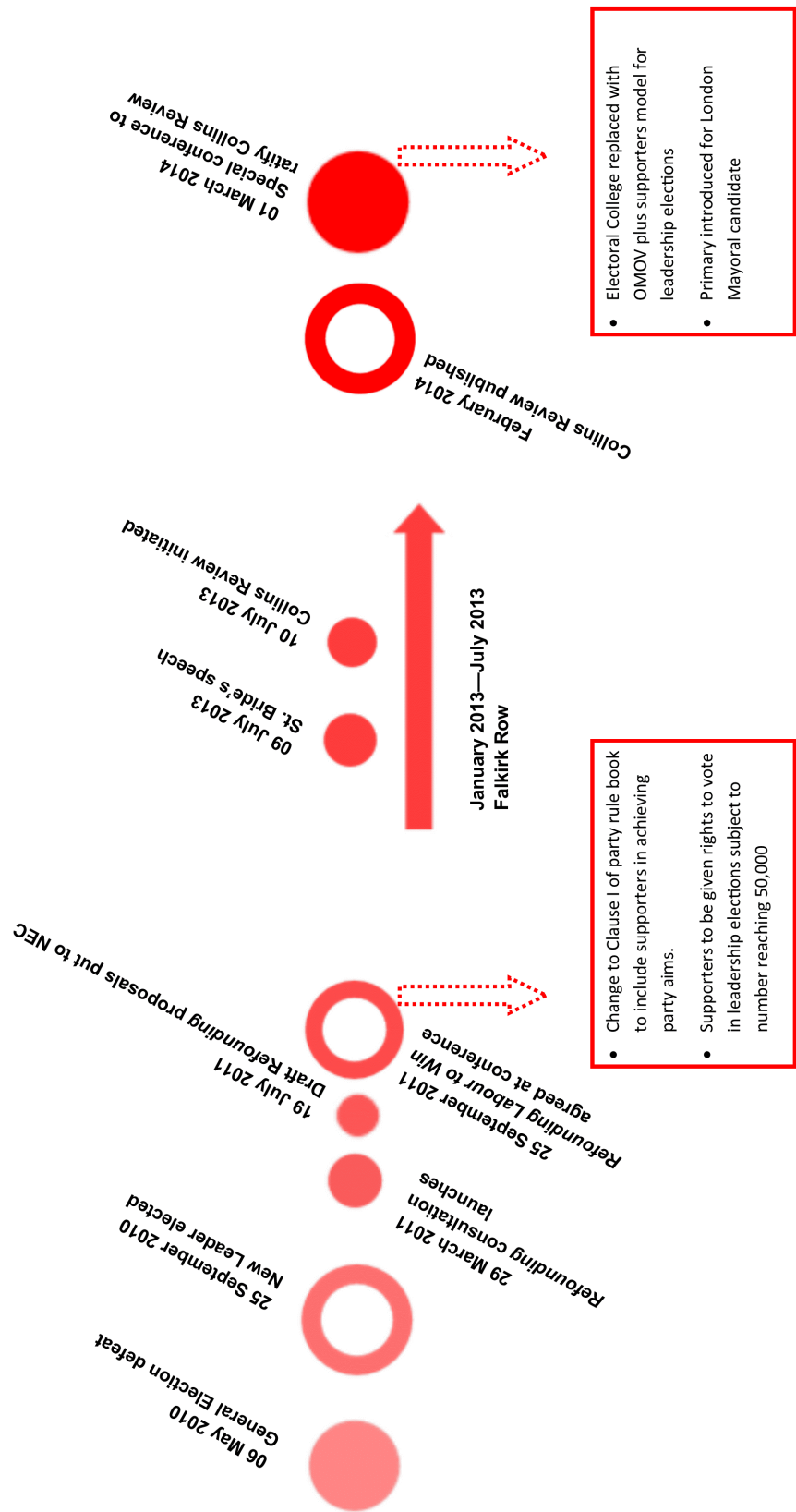
4.5.3 Purposive-action approach

Having explored potential environmental factors, this chapter will now consider the three variables set out in Harmel and Janda's (1994) purposive-action type model: leadership change, change in the dominant faction and 'external shocks'.

Central to the measurement of causality in the Harmel and Janda (1994) model is the timing of events. A two-year timeframe is theorised as providing evidence of causality from one of the aforementioned variables to the change under scrutiny (Harmel et al., 1995). A timeline of the key events, publications and decisions of both the Refounding and Collins reforms is set out below in figure 3.

These key moments will be explored in more depth throughout this section but it is worth noting initially that whilst the Refounding reforms appear very shortly after Ed Miliband was elected as leader and the party suffered an electoral defeat (within one year), the Collins reforms are made much later (beyond the two-year timeframe).

Figure 3: Timeline of change



Leadership change

Change in leadership in the party in this period is closely tied in to both electoral defeat and change in the dominant faction. It is common (though by no means necessary) in the Labour Party that the leader steps down after an election defeat. Following the party losing its majority in the 2010 General Election, the then Leader and Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, resigned on 11 May 2010 triggering a leadership election which concluded with the election of Ed Miliband on 25 September 2010. The Refounding reforms were officially launched in March 2011, six months later. This transition from election defeat to new leadership in the party most closely fits what Harmel and Janda (1994) call 'incidental' leadership change: it comes as a result of an unexpected departure rather than through a commitment to change.

This particular change in leadership presented a greater shift in the party than the election (unopposed) of Gordon Brown two years previously. Brown, having been part of the genesis of New Labour and serving as Chancellor for the duration of Labour's three terms in office, whilst seen as a departure from previous leader Tony Blair, was also very much a continuity candidate. Brown's resignation appeared to open up the possibility of change within the party. There were candidates who represented a continuation of the New Labour decade, such as David Miliband (who had worked as Tony Blair's policy advisor and had contributed to the 1997 Labour party election manifesto) however, there were others who offered an alternative. Ed Miliband was seen as the change candidate offering a fresh-start with a more socially liberal and socially democratic approach (Bale, 2015, p.22).

Ed Miliband's influence as leader is seen clearly in the Refounding documents, particularly in the focus on community organising. Whilst these reforms are led by others in the party (Chair of the National Policy Forum, Peter Hain), the leader has clearly set the parameters of the reforms which embody his 'political vision' (McHugh, 2015). By falling within the two-year timeframe, these reforms can be linked to leadership change. In the Collins reforms however, the influence of the leader is more clearly felt, not least in the fact that many of the final recommendations for reform are outlined by Ed Miliband in a speech to *launch* the consultation. It was the job of the review to turn 'the St Bride's speech into practical reality' (McHugh, 2015). These reforms however, occurring past the two-year mark, may owe less to a change in leadership than another explanatory variable.

Formal structures need to be considered in relation to leadership change. In latter formulations of the model, Harmel et al. (1995) hypothesise that ‘the relationship between leadership changes and party change is stronger for parties with strong leadership structures than for parties with severely limited leaders’ (p.7). For Labour particularly (as noted earlier) the ability to drive change is limited by formal structures that give significant power to affiliated organisations.

Harmel and Janda argue (1994) that with incidental leadership change, new leaders can advocate and bring about change without an external shock, but it is an external shock that creates the ‘clear, broad mandate’ for change. Leadership change is sufficient but not necessary: the extent of change is dependent on the scope created by change in the dominant faction and formal structures. Ed Miliband’s election as leader clearly creates the space for change but alone does not drive change in the party (particularly in the latter reforms which fall outside of the two-year period). Indeed, in this case of leadership change, it is difficult to assess the impact isolated from other variables, particularly change in the dominant faction.

Change in dominant faction

The leadership election contest in 2010 was seen as a battle between New Labour, represented by David Miliband, and a change in this dominant faction (which had led Labour to power in 1997 and remained the dominant faction for the next 13 years) represented by Ed Miliband. If Ed Miliband’s election as leader marked the end of New Labour and a switch in the dominant faction, most significant in the analysis of this change is the nature of the election contest and the source of his support.

Leadership elections in the Labour Party in this period are conducted under a reformed version of the tripartite Electoral College in which MPs have nomination powers and votes are divided into equal thirds MPs (including MEPs), individual members, and individual levy payers of affiliate organisations (trade unions and socialist societies). Votes are counted on a one-member-one-vote (OMOV) basis within the Electoral College but each section of the college counts as a third of the vote. The vote is then counted under the principles of the Alternative Vote (AV) in which the second preferences of the lowest scoring candidates are redistributed until one candidate secures a majority.

Having led the contest within the MP and member sections of the Electoral College, David Miliband was the favourite to win. However, strongly backed by the unions, Ed Miliband

was favourite in the affiliates section. In the final run off, Ed Miliband secured enough second preferences to win despite David Miliband still leading in the MP and member sections. Miliband's victory on the basis of a strong union vote cast him in the role of representing the left of the party (old Labour) and providing a distinct break from New Labour. This victory was not without controversy however, in part because David Miliband had been the clear favourite amongst MPs and members, but also because two of the unions backing Ed Miliband had seemed to run against the spirit of election rules in their support of him (by including candidate-promoting material in the same mailing as the ballot papers).

Disquiet in the party following Ed Miliband's election as leader was subsequently recognised in the Refounding consultation which begins a section on leadership elections with the statement: 'Questions have been raised about the system for electing our Leader and Deputy' (Labour Party, 2011b, p.24). This recognition is followed at the end of this section with the suggestion of including registered supporters in leader selections. It is clear from the coupling of disquiet within the party over the nature of that victory with the proposal to widen the affiliation model, that Labour's move to multi-speed membership has a clear link to leadership change and change in the dominant faction.

Yet in this case it would seem that it was the threat of change in the dominant faction, rather than an actual change in the dominant faction, that provided the catalyst for change. The divisive, factional nature of the leadership election ensured that the new leader saw pulling the party together to be a central task of his leadership (Bale, 2015); something he was praised for achieving. Instead of resulting in a change in the dominant faction, leadership change had a conservative effect, preventing the leader from moving the party decisively in a new direction. So whilst the purposive-action model suggests that, 'when a new party leader assumes the position by virtue of being the head of a victorious faction after a bloody internal dispute, that leader is likely to pursue the change closest to the hearts of the faction' (Harmel and Janda, 1994, p.266), the factional nature of the contest actually limited party change. The nature of the leadership contest and pressures on the leader from those who had backed him and those who hadn't, did create an environment for change. However, it was one in which the leader felt compelled to act against those who had backed him.

External stimuli and external shocks

In Harmel and Janda's (1994) model, an external shock is an external stimulus that directly affects a party's performance according to its primary goal: a shock so significant that it causes a party to re-evaluate, 'the party's effectiveness on that goal dimension' (p.268). Whilst this model permits that parties may have more than one goal, there is always one that is more important than others. To assess whether Labour and its new leader felt the pressure to change from an external shock, we must first establish the party's primary goal.

Of the four primary goals elaborated by Harmel and Janda (vote maximising, office seeking, representation/participation of members, and policy/ideology advocacy), vote maximising would appear the most likely candidate. Though this period of change occurs shortly after an election, it is clear from the reform documents that rebuilding the party to ensure victory at the next general election is the main focus of the party at this time. The party's rulebook states, 'Its purpose is to organise and maintain in Parliament and in the country a political Labour Party' (Labour Party, 2016).

Considering the alternative primary goals, it would seem that office maximising is an unlikely candidate for Labour or indeed any UK-wide political party. Office maximising is listed separately from vote maximising in the Harmel and Janda model because parties in systems where coalition government is the norm do not necessarily need to win elections to get into office. Despite 2010 heralding the first coalition government in the UK for over sixty years, coalition government is not, up to this period, a common feature of UK politics. Even after the 2010 election, the culture and electoral strategy within the Labour Party does not shift to see office as anything other than the end result of winning a majority of seats. In the 2017 General Election the party strongly condemned moves to create 'progressive alliances' with other left-of-centre parties. Party spokespeople also strongly denied any coalition plans pre-election, suggesting that coalition was still seen as alien to Labour party culture. We can therefore discount office maximising as a separate category of primary goal in this context.

Another option of primary goal is policy/ideology advocacy. Harmel and Janda (1994) argue that some parties seek to advance their cause over and above winning office to do so. Undoubtedly there are those in the Labour Party who see 'policy purity to be more important than winning votes or gaining access to the benefits of office' (Harmel and Janda, 1994, p. 270). However, withstanding the narrative of creating a 'movement' that

dominates this period, there is no suggestion that the movement is desired for its own sake; party elites see the 'movement' as a vehicle for winning the next election.

To the final option, maximising intra-party democracy. Clearly intra-party democracy is a key concern of the reform period; however, as the dependent variable in this model, intra-party democracy cannot also stand as an independent variable. There is also little evidence that intra-party democracy is valued on its own, or as the core aim of the party. In the Refounding reforms, intra-party democracy is presented as an aid to vote maximising. The Collins reforms aims are more inward-looking but not to the extent that maximising intra-party democracy had taken over from vote maximising as the party's primary goal. Indeed, as consideration of external shocks will demonstrate, maximising intra-party democracy could, by the Collins Review, be seen as wholly aimed at vote maximising (or rather, avoiding the opposite).

External shock - election defeat

Taking vote maximising to be the primary goal of the party, the 'performance criterion' on which the party is judged is winning votes and seats. External shock therefore comes in the form of electoral defeat. This chapter has already noted the role of electoral defeat as an environmental factor. This section has also noted how electoral defeat is closely linked to leadership change in the Labour party context and how the election shapes the reforms in the Refounding period immediately afterwards. Yet whilst the Refounding reforms occur in the aftermath of electoral defeat, the ideas begin within the party well before May 2010, when Labour are still in government. And whilst electoral defeat leaves a clear imprint on the first period of reform, it has less of an influence on the Collins Review. We need therefore to look elsewhere for the catalyst for the latter reforms.

External shock – Falkirk scandal

Two years after Ed Miliband's election as leader and the criticisms of union influence in that process, the party's rules and the influence of the unions in the party were brought again into the public gaze and into the party leader's in-tray. Concerns were raised about union influence on the selection of a Labour prospective parliamentary candidate in the Falkirk constituency. In the period between the existing Falkirk MP standing down and the constituency selection contest to replace him, affiliated union Unite were accused of seeking to ensure their favoured candidate was selected by signing up Unite members as individual members of the party (within rules that allow for unions to pay membership costs initially), in some cases without the knowledge of those being signed up (see Power,

2017). Widespread media coverage of the 'vote-rigging scandal' and suggestion that many other seats were being targeted (Pickard, 2013) increased the pressure on Miliband who was seen as too weak to stand up to Union influence (Bale, 2015).

Pressure on Miliband mounted from within the party (Wintour, 2013b) and from the Conservatives who made the most of the political advantage offered. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, referred to union influence several times when he faced Miliband over the Despatch Box immediately after the Falkirk scandal broke claiming that, "they [unions] have taken control of the Labour party" and referring explicitly to the nature of the leadership election: "all done by the man, Len McCluskey, who gave the right hon. Member for Doncaster North his job" (Hansard, 03 July 2013). There can be no doubt that Miliband was under significant pressure to act and to prove that he was not in the pocket of the unions nor too weak to act against them.

The Falkirk scandal clearly threatened the Labour party's performance on the primary goal of vote winning. The apparent influence of vested interests and conflicted position of the leader in standing up to them created an electoral problem for the party. The Falkirk scandal hit Labour on its key electoral weak spots: the potential for a move to the left because of union influence and the perceived personal weakness of its leader. Despite Labour leading in the polls, Ed Miliband's approval ratings had been on a steady decline for the first half of 2013 (Jordan, 2013). The Falkirk scandal meets the criteria of an 'external shock', directly affecting the party's performance on its primary goal by threatening the party's electability. This 'external shock' led directly to the Collins reforms later the following year and whilst the party's response to Falkirk did little to improve Ed Miliband's ratings (Bale, 2015), the reform process was already in place.

The director of the party's constitution unit, working alongside Ray Collins on the reforms, describes the influence of Falkirk in the decisions made:

'The new supporters section would most likely have withered in the vine – had it not been for a row over selecting a parliamentary candidate in Falkirk' (McHugh, 2015)

His analysis of the decision also supports the view of Falkirk as providing the catalyst for change, an 'external shock':

'it [Collins reforms] was not the culmination of a carefully crafted modernising plan. Rather it was the product of political panic, damage limitation and – ultimately – a deal with the unions.' (McHugh, 2015)

There is also evidence then that these reforms meet Harmel et al.'s (1995) hypothesis that formal structures constrain and limit change. Support from the unions allowed the reforms to pass but also had a role in limiting the form these reforms could take: moving to a pure OMOV model was not an option.

The timing of the reforms also supports this argument. Ed Miliband's St Bride's speech, which set out how he was going to address the questions raised by the Falkirk scandal and which he uses to introduce the primary for London Mayor, occurs four days after he had referred the Falkirk incident to the police (13 July 2013).

Purposive-action summary

This section has considered the three key variables in Harmel and Janda's (1994) model of party change: leadership change, change in the dominant faction and external shock. From this analysis it is clear that although these three factors do not encompass the sum of internal and external pressures for change, they do comprise the most important ones, at least for the latter reforms.

This analysis has shown that leadership change, change in the dominant faction, formal structures and electoral defeat are all closely related in the Labour Party's case, each variable leading to and influencing the other. Yet electoral defeat is not the most important 'external shock' in this analysis, despite the party fitting into the 'vote maximising' type. It is the party's own internal procedures (and their misuse) that causes the greatest 'external shock'. Whilst the actual effect of the Falkirk scandal on the Party's electability may have in fact been minimal, it is the leader's perception of its influence that is important.¹⁶

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter began by setting out the two key reforms within the Labour Party that evidence the party moving into a multi-speed membership organising model: the Refounding reforms (which saw the party change its rulebook to officially mark the role of non-member supporters and open up the possibility of them having a say in leadership

¹⁶ This is commensurate with Harmel and Janda's (1994) approach which argues that external shocks need to be recognised by party decision-makers as impacting on a party's effectiveness against its primary goal in order to effect change. On this model, the perception of a threat is just as likely to effect change as any actual effects.

elections) and the Collins reforms (which replaced the Electoral College for leadership selections with a One-Member-One-Vote model that would include non-member supporters (as well as introducing a primary for London Mayor)).

These two critical changes were analysed using an ecosystem model which combined environmental, structural and ideational, and purposive-action variables. By looking at these two specific changes in detail, the causal mechanisms are revealed. It is clear that a range of explanatory factors are involved but that the two periods of reform have different primary explanatory variables.

In the Refounding reforms we see a new party leader keen to make his mark on the party with a vision of 'movement' politics and enthusiasm for community organising inspired by the 2008 Obama campaign. Yet as much as leadership change and contagion from the United States have an influence, the Refounding reforms are building on the general direction of travel not just within the party but within the party system and beyond. Ed Miliband was supportive of community organising and supporter involvement but was not the only leader in the party to move in that direction. The movement towards looser affiliation and supporter registration can be seen as early as Tony Blair's leadership (under which the Registered Supporter scheme was introduced) and had been occurring in parties across Europe and beyond. The move towards more open affiliation is not just a trend but rooted in the (then) widespread decline in membership numbers (and decline in trade union member numbers). The membership environment and its financial implications are key to this change, they provide a reason to reform and a justification for that reform to face outward, beyond the membership. Leadership change mattered but the ecology of membership and contagion within and without the system contributed too.

The political environment (electoral defeat) also enabled the party to reform by facilitating a change in leadership and creating the rationale for reform. Refounding reforms therefore, can be explained by the combination of the ecology of membership and political climate with a particular emphasis on contagion. These predominantly environmental factors created the space for reform and encouraged the reform in a particular direction.

The analysis of this period of reform also highlights the importance of the party leaders in shaping reform (Tony Blair's focus on membership and support, Ed Miliband's commitment to Community Organising). This supports the ecosystem model of change as

these elites are not simply responding to changes in the environment (not simply making rational actor decisions) but actively shaping that environment, pollinating the party with ideas picked up from other parties, think tanks and indeed from other elites and leaders.

Turning to the Collins reforms, the picture fits more closely a purposive action model. The Falkirk scandal, and the immediate and far-reaching response of the party leader, fits perfectly the model of an external shock which is perceived by party elites to affect the party's performance against its primary goal. Change in the party can be seen as emanating directly from the crisis. But we can also see how structural constraints affect the shape of the reforms that are eventually put to the vote. As much as the party leader is central to driving the reforms through, he is also constrained by the political coalition he needs to build to get them passed. And the nature of those changes are also constrained by the affiliation environment, the environment created by the Refounding reforms which had already introduced the registered supporter category and the notion of involving supporters in leadership elections. The ecology of membership for the Collins reforms had been set by the Refounding reforms that preceded them.

Again, in this second period of reform, the ecosystem model provides a useful way of understanding change. A purely purposive-action model can explain the adoption of the Collins reforms, but as noted at the beginning of this chapter, those applying a 'purposive-action'-shaped cookie cutter will always get a 'purposive-action'-shaped cookie. The Collins reforms would not have been possible had the supporter category and precedent of giving supporters a say in intra-party democracy not previously been established under the Refounding reforms. These significant environmental considerations would not have been captured in a model that doesn't consider the full range of explanatory variables. But this finding also suggests a new factor needs to be added explicitly to the ecosystem: the environment created by previous party reform.

Multi-speed membership in the Labour Party has been a gradual process driven by party leaders in response to the membership environment which itself has been shaped by contagion from the left and right, and shaped by party elites themselves. Throughout these gradual shifts a clear commitment to membership and the role membership plays both functionally in providing resources and in legitimising the party can be felt, demonstrating the importance of the link between organisational structure, membership decisions and 'narratives of legitimacy' (Scarrow, 2015). These narratives of legitimacy are employed both as a starting point for reform and to justify the change, but it is also evident that they

can be a constraining force too. This analysis suggests that in future work on party change, particularly in relation to multi-speed membership change, attention to party elite rhetoric and these narratives of legitimacy is important. It also demonstrates that considering forces of continuity as well as change provides a more complete picture.

Later reforms, the decisive step towards a more extreme version of multi-speed membership, owe much to internal party crisis and the response of a leader constrained by specific power bases in the party. Here a key external shock and leadership decision are layered on top of the environment created by previous reforms creating a significant rule change. If the membership and party environment help explain why the Labour Party edged towards more plebiscitary intra-party democracy with the Refounding reforms, the Falkirk scandal explains why the party ended up diving headfirst into an extreme version of it.

Developing and applying an ecosystem model of multi-speed change has facilitated an in-depth analysis of these significant changes in the party. Building on previous models of party change, this model has sought to clearly set out the way environmental factors (within the party system and within the party) interact with party actors who are not simply responding to change but instrumental in shaping it; how key decision-makers not only assess theirs and the party's interests, but bring with them established ideas about the role of membership within a party (ideas influenced by party origins and type). It has demonstrated the value of considering both forces for change alongside forces for continuity when analysing multi-speed membership. This model has brought together structures and agents, exogenous and endogenous factors, rational decisions and ideological ones, and shown how they link together. In doing so this analysis of change has shown how multi-speed membership change has occurred in the Labour Party and created a multi-speed model of change which can be applied to other party case studies.

Chapter 5: The supply side of party membership

To understand multi-speed membership as a strategy it is important to examine its impact through the eyes of the membership. The dual multi-speed approach of appealing to both traditional members and more loosely attached supporters can only succeed if the new multi-speed structures do not adversely affect the traditional membership model upon which they are 'layered'. Therefore, to understand its impact, we need first to understand the dynamics of membership in depth. Correspondingly, this supply side analysis of multi-speed membership focuses on the dynamics of party membership and on the dynamics of the traditional member model.

The headline organisational consequences of adopting multi-speed membership for Labour have been a significant increase in affiliated support (both registered supporters and membership) and an increased stream of funding. Yet from the analysis of demand-side motivations for change presented in chapter 4, we see that financial decisions alone did not drive the change (decisions about costs were made independently of the decision to open political rights to supporters). The legitimacy provided by numbers is important for the party but what the party expected from the shift to wider support is clearly derived from expectations of linkage and legitimacy. So multi-speed success for Labour cannot be understood in terms of increased revenue alone; nor does success depend purely on increased numbers. As discussed in chapter 4, linkage is more than just numerical strength: it is connected to participation. To understand the success of multi-speed membership in the Labour party, we need to look beyond finances and numbers.

Previous studies have shown (see section 2.6) that increases in membership numbers following past party experiments in expanding plebiscitary options, did not lead to an increase in active membership. There is a risk that, should new affiliation options not lead to more active support or increased active membership, and at the same time negatively affect the motivations and benefits of existing active members, a multi-speed strategy could be damaging for the party. The increase in affiliated support as a result of the party's multi-speed membership strategy may also come with a 'cost' for membership.

It is clear from the analysis of why multi-speed membership has been pursued in the Labour party, that it has not been introduced with the aim of replacing formal membership. This is seen in the frequently stated desire to protect the status of member and in the party's claims that supporter affiliation could be used as a gateway to full

membership. This again suggests that a focus on the impact of multi-speed organising on traditional membership is necessary to understand the success and sustainability of such a move.

In this chapter I present findings from interviews with members of the Labour party who are, or had at one time been, active in 'high-intensity' activities for the party. I analyse what motivates party members to join, become active, and stay active and engaged within the party and I assess the impact of multi-speed membership on these membership dynamics.

5.1. Why do party members join, what do they do, and why?

This chapter answers two central questions regarding the supply side of party support in order to assess the consequences of making changes to that model:

- What reasons do party members give for joining the party and becoming active?
- Do, and if so how do, those motivations change during active membership? How does the party-member relationship develop?

Consequently, are these motivation structures affected by expanding affiliation options and political rights to non-members?

The first section of this chapter explores the routes that people take to party membership. It looks at the motivations party members offer to explain joining the party and becoming active. It explores how party members came to join and what they did after joining. The analysis of members' paths to party membership also includes consideration of interviewees' wider political activities and the relationship between party support and party membership.

I examine the range of motivations and experiences members draw on to explain their entry into party politics. These paths to party membership, though individual, share much in common. A pattern which incorporates social norms, political values and selective process and outcome incentives emerges from these interviews and is common to nearly

all member narratives. This in-depth analysis of party membership reveals the significance of selective incentives and how party culture may be shaping how motivations have been presented in quantitative research to date.

The findings of this study also challenge the dominant view of the relationship between party membership, activism and partisan identification, suggesting that activism often precedes membership and that partisan identification is more fluid amongst party members than previously understood. This adds to the growing literature that recognises the importance of non-member party activity. These findings raise important questions for how parties structure opportunities for partisans and what they can expect in return.

The second section of this chapter considers the question of ‘what next?’, looking at the nature of party membership: how it develops and shapes members’ motivations and relationship with the party, and sustains (or not) their activism. Taking an open and inductive approach (see research design chapter, section 3.4.3) to analysis of party members’ experiences of party membership reveals the importance of socialisation and solidary incentives derived from social networks (social ties). Solidary (social) incentives are shown to encourage active participation and potentially dissuade members from exit. I find strong evidence of members’ relationship with the party cementing over time through the creation of social networks, with the party becoming intertwined with members’ lives outside of politics. This party network keeps members engaged with the party which in turn makes activism more likely.

A second related process is that of socialisation. There is evidence of strong socialisation effects which help members to learn the rules and norms of the party. I find that this socialisation process is particularly important in the development of shared language and skills, both of which reduce the barriers to active participation. Thirdly, I find suggestion of ideological convergence at the local level. Interviewees revealed an awareness that at the local level, shared language and skills often seep into shared ideas. Understanding the ideological positioning of the local party helped with active participation but was also identified as potentially off-putting for newer recruits.

Together, the socialisation process and development of social ties provide a bond that both activates and keeps members active within the party. They are therefore essential components of organisational coherence and viability. However, these processes could also prove exclusionary to more loosely affiliated supporters. Likewise, expanding the

membership model to include non-member support has the potential to disrupt socialisation processes and social ties. For the multi-speed membership party, retaining active members whilst encouraging non-member active support is a very fine balancing act.

5.2 Party members - Incentives and motivations (background literature)

Much of what we know about party member attitudes and activities has been shaped by Seyd and Whiteley's general incentives model (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Whiteley et al., 1994; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Building on the tripartite scheme developed by Clark and Wilson (1961) which categorises incentives as material, solidary and purposive, Whiteley and Seyd's general incentives model of participation combines these aspects of the rational choice approach with a social psychological understanding of action. Incentives are categorised as selective incentives (those with private benefits) and collective incentives (those that are aimed at collective benefits). Selective incentives can be either selective process incentives, derived from the process of participation, such as 'meeting like-minded and interesting people' (1992, p.60) or the enjoyment of politics in itself (similar to Clark and Wilson's solidary incentives), or selective outcome incentives, most frequently conceived at career benefits (those categorised as 'material' under Clark and Wilson's scheme). Whiteley and Seyd argue (1992) that no account of collective action can be complete without allowing for situations in which the individual thinks collectively (p.61). Thus, the model contains collective incentives both positive, aimed at achieving collective 'goods', and negative, aimed at preventing collective 'bads'. In these, the participant has made a collective cost-benefit assessment of the utility of their participation.

To these rational individual benefits and collective benefits, they add two which do not contain a cost-benefit assessment: altruism, initially defined by Whiteley and Seyd (1992, p.63) as a contribution from, 'a sense of loyalty or affection for the party. They have an emotional attachment to the party' (in later texts this appears closer to a sense of duty: 'Individuals can devote hours of their time out of a sense of conviction that it is their duty to get involved in politics in a democracy' (1994, p.86)), and social norms which sees participants as motivated, 'by a desire to conform', perhaps following family traditions. In later texts (1994, 2002) two further categories are added to the model; selective

ideological incentives (a process incentive) which uses May's Law¹⁷ as a theoretical explanation of party activism, suggesting the more radical will be more motivated to participate as it gives them opportunity to 'give expression to deeply held beliefs' (1994, p. 85), and 'expressive or affective evaluation' which appears to take the place of altruism as previously defined: they are motives 'based on the strength of the member's emotional attachment to the party' (1994, p.86). Tested against other theoretical models of political participation, examining not just why people join parties, but why some are active and some are not, the general incentives model, including both rational choice and social psychological elements, proves the best fit.

Whiteley and Seyd's general incentives model has been hugely influential in understanding party membership, but also in shaping how political science has conceptualised and measured political activism in parties. Yet there are some problems with this model and its indicators (Granik, 2005). There is potential for overlap between categories: 'social norms', which includes influence of family and friends, could easily be understood as a selective outcome incentive (the social approval gained from the act could be seen as a personal benefit). Some surveys have classified the role of family (as party members or party membership as a family tradition) as a process incentive rather than as a separate category of social norm (Baras et al., 2015; Bennie, 2015; Heidar, 2015; Sandri et al., 2015; van Haute, 2015), perhaps seeing family not so much as setting the background normative value of party membership but as the 'likeminded' individuals one would participate with.

There is also potential cross-over between those incentives described as altruistic and those considered collective incentives; a sense of duty to promote social justice might equally be described as a commitment to certain social policies. Where there is potential for overlap, it cannot be assumed that researchers and respondents ascribe the same meaning to survey answers, and this is problematic.

The measurement of selective outcome incentives is also problematic. Admitting to political ambitions is often seen as unacceptable in party politics. Whiteley and Seyd acknowledged this may have resulted in a lower proportion of respondents reporting selective outcome motivations in their surveys (1992, p.76). In later studies they have

¹⁷ May's Law of curvilinear disparity (1973) contends that those most active in a party are more ideologically extreme than the voters and party leadership, creating a curvilinear relationship between position in the party hierarchy and ideological radicalism.

tried to overcome this by using an indirect measure, whether the respondent sees ‘a person like me’ as suitable for elected office (1994). This indirect measure would appear to capture feelings of personal efficacy rather than selective outcome incentives. More recent surveys have overcome this problem by asking respondents to rank how important each incentive is. This has enabled respondents to acknowledge selective incentives for the decision to join, without them having to say such incentives are their most important motivation (Poletti, Webb and Bale, forthcoming).

There is also variation in the use of ‘ideological’ to describe motivations. ‘Ideological’ is often used to mean policy goals or political values which would be categorised as collective motivations under the general incentives model rather than as the specific measurement of partisan radicalism labelled ‘ideological’ in the general incentives model. However, some surveys (see for instance Spier and Klein (2015)) do use ‘ideological’ as a separate category to collective incentives, picking up on factional motivations (‘to support a specific wing of the party’; ‘to influence the political course of the party’ (Spier and Klein, 2015)).

These difficulties suggest that whilst member surveys can helpfully reveal member attitudes, more in-depth research might be utilised to test and expand on these findings, getting underneath the meanings respondents ascribe to their membership.

Permitting respondents to select just one primary (most important) motivation can also limit our understanding of member motivation structures. Whiteley and Seyd (1992), admit this approach has potentially underestimated the importance of other motivations (1992, p.76). Other studies of party member motivation (McCulloch, 1990) suggest that motives are complex and volatile. Restricting the reasons people join and stay in political parties to a model that offers a constrained range of explanations may be too limiting. Given the ambiguities of measuring some of those elements, it is important to get beyond the limitations of the formal quantitative models. A more in-depth approach would expand our understanding of what drives party membership, as well as what sustains it.

Intra-party democratic rights are not featured as a separate category in the general incentives model. These ‘political rights’, which are selective and inclusive, are the rights that are increasingly available to parties to offer potential members (Scarrow, 2015). They could perhaps be categorised as selective process benefits (Cross, 2015; Rahat and Kenig, 2015; Sandri et al., 2015), but they are not related to the benefits of collective, group

activities (joining in with like-minded individuals). Instead they are individual rights such as having a vote in leader selection or policy within the party. Often these rights are plebiscitary rather than assembly-based (von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017) increasing their individualised nature. Consequently, their role in members' motivations for joining deserves more detailed consideration.

5.2 Interviews

To understand the relationship between members and their parties, we need to look in more depth at how members come to join, why they join, what they do, and crucially how that relationship develops. Only then can we assess the way party organisation, in particular the multi-speed membership way of organising, relates to partisan behaviour.

These interviews with party members explored participants' routes to political and partisan activity: when, how, and why they joined; their expectations and first impressions; what they did; what it means to be a party member and what they think about political rights, specifically, how they feel about these rights being extended to supporters. By setting the act of joining in context, giving interviewees the opportunity to talk in more depth about their party membership, these interviews offer a more detailed and arguably, accurate picture of the motivation structure behind party membership. Though details may be inaccurately recalled (as indeed survey responses may be) these narratives reveal a lot about the processes of party membership and about members' personal relationship with their party. Taking a qualitative, inductive approach has revealed the complex motivational structures behind joining and activism, the potential influence of party culture on responses, and revealed the importance of social ties and socialisation processes in keeping members active. Exploring joining and activism as a narrative and a process has added depth to understanding of the supply side of party support.

Results: Section One

5.4. Why do party members join and become active?

5.4.1. Paths to party membership

The findings of this research do not suggest that categories of motivation beyond those developed in the general incentives model are needed to explain the multiple reasons

party members offer to explain joining the party but rather that the existing categories can be understood better by giving interviewees space to discuss their motivations in depth and to discuss joining as a process not a single event.¹⁸ To capture the multi-dimensional nature of participants' attachment to the party, analysis of interviewees' incentives was not limited to just one given reason. Instead, participants' responses were analysed to capture all, additional or alternative reasons. After coding interviewees' incentives, their 'joining narratives' were explored to better understand the process as a whole and how these motivations fit together.

Membership surveys across a number of countries have been surprisingly consistent in identifying which incentives party members find compelling. Consistently, selective material and social benefits are found to be far less important than collective (sometimes referred to as ideological¹⁹) incentives (Pedersen et al., 2004; Heidar, 2014; Scarrow, 2015; van Haute and Gauja, 2015).²⁰ Though there are exceptions (notably Bruter and Harrison (2009), who look specifically at younger members and find that there are 'professional minded' younger members with clear selective (material) benefits in mind), the dominant view in quantitative studies is that collective benefits are key to explaining member motivations.

The interviews I conducted with party members reveal that collective incentives were not the predominant motivation. Whilst participants did mention either specific policy goals (feminism, anti-war) or a desire to oppose others (Boris Johnson, the Coalition government) these collective incentives were not the only incentives contained within members' membership narratives. Understanding members' joining behaviour as a process rather than static moment in time reveals a more complex motivation structure which includes strong selective and social incentives.

¹⁸ See research design (section 3.4.2). In analysing members' reasons for joining, a process of analytic induction instead of grounded theory was used. Whilst open to finding and capturing categories of incentive not present in the general incentives model, the aim of this section of the research was to build on the existing theory rather than develop an alternative account. However, the analysis was also open to new concepts and reviewed the data as a narrative in addition to coding incentives in order to expand on the theory.

¹⁹ 'Ideological' is used here to mean policy goals or political values which would be categorised as collective incentives under the general incentives model.

²⁰ In contrast, altruistic incentives are the most frequent in Seyd and Whiteley (1992) followed by selective process incentives, though some of those categorised as altruistic could be interpreted as collective.

Though participants often initially cited collective incentives as their reason for membership, further discussion of interviewees' aims and actions revealed other motives. A commonly occurring pattern was for members to name a specific political moment that prompted them to join (the election of Conservative governments, war), reflect on the influence of their family background or friends, and then discuss the personal aims that led them to join (the opportunity presented by an election, union membership, candidacy). Whilst every story is different, this pattern demonstrates that it is rare for members to have just one motive for joining. This pattern also suggests a process which links these various motivations together. First, the background conditions for membership are established through the transmission of social norms, then the broad values of the individual emerge, then a specific event happens, or the possibility of a selective benefit become apparent (a trigger), which prompts the decision to join.

"There are certain political milestones that push you to become more involved. Like when there's a world cup everyone plays football. And a general election is one of those things that pushes you to get more involved to a point where you become a member."
(#02, member < 1 year)

Figure 4: The process of joining



As might be expected with active or formerly active party members, selective incentives were significant. A desire to get involved in an election, a campaign, or union activity (selective process incentives) or the opportunities participation might create in terms of careers or skills (selective outcome incentives), formed some part of nearly all interviewees' stories. The importance of selective incentives is a notable divergence from most survey findings (though there are some exceptions (see Bruter and Harrison, 2009; Poletti, Webb and Bale, forthcoming; Young and Cross, 2007)).

Figure 5: Joining incentives – example coding decisions

Incentive for joining	Examples from the data
Collective incentives (positive)	"It was single issues and it was in general things [like] poverty, class"

	<p>"For us in those days, we wanted to change the world"</p> <p>"It seemed to me to be the party that was more interested in equality"</p> <p>"I had worked in the voluntary sector on issues like rough sleeping, the impact on women, global issues, austerity."</p>
Collective incentives (negative)	<p>"I had all sorts of problems with the Coalition government and having a Conservative government"</p> <p>"Boris Johnson became Mayor of London and it was the last straw"</p> <p>"I was inspired by being pissed off with the Conservatives"</p> <p>"[there were the] education changes under the Conservatives - and then the Labour alternative looked much more appealing"</p>
Selective incentives (process)	<p>"I joined wanting to help campaigning and door knocking and organising an election"</p> <p>"I joined the party after watching the leaders' debates in 2010 - I wanted to try to help, to get involved"</p> <p>"There is also a nice feeling that you are among others that feel that way, and that you are not a lone voice."</p> <p>"We thought it's a good way of getting to know people and being involved in the community"</p>
Selective incentives (outcome)	<p>"And I also just think it was good for me as well to kind of broaden my horizons"</p> <p>"I'd always imagined that I'd be working in London in the political sphere"</p> <p>"I couldn't actually have any other paid work really whilst it was going on, so there had to be a bit of an investment in the next stage"</p> <p>"I think it's interesting and I think it opens up doors"</p>
Social Norms	<p>"My mum was always a Labour supporter...we went on a lot of demonstrations, CND demo's, demo's on local authority cuts"</p> <p>"I'd been involved heavily in that election because my father was an agent and our house was always used as a committee room"</p>

	<p>"I was in the union because of the miners' strike and my Dad was a miner and I was politicised through the strike."</p> <p>"My parents had always been fairly political, left-wing"</p>
Expressive /altruistic	<p>"You get swept away in the emotion of it. It's why people join after the election."</p> <p>"I wanted to make a statement that this is what I believe"</p> <p>"I thought I ought to become a member and ... I ought to commit to being a member of the Labour party"</p>

One notable addition to this pattern of incentives is the party leader as an incentive; whether as the embodiment of a set of values or because they represent change in the party. For some interviewees, whilst the background conditions (social norms) and development of political values (collective incentives) followed the same pattern, a change in leader provided the final nudge to join. Though this is seen across different leaderships ("I was a big fan of Neil Kinnock actually"; "I re-joined when Ed Miliband was selected"), it was particularly notable amongst newer joiners.

"I'd been fairly disenchanted with the Labour Party for a few years and when he [Jeremy Corbyn] came along I thought "Wow, Yes!" (#23, member < 1 year)

"And then I came back and he [Jeremy Corbyn] wins. That day I joined the Labour party. Because I thought, what's the point being outside of it and you've got the opportunity to be part of shaping something. So I joined that day" (#27, member 2 years)

"I actually only became a paid-up member after I first saw Jeremy Corbyn on the first television interview before he was elected" (#28, member 2 years)

The party leader as a motivating factor is not specifically highlighted in the general incentives model texts but the opposition party's leader is mentioned and categorised under collective negative incentives ('Mrs Thatcher has been an excellent recruiting-sergeant for the Labour Party!' (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992)). However, in subsequent analyses using the general incentives framework, the leader of the party has been picked out as a significant motivating factor. Whiteley et. al. (forthcoming) note the appeal of Jeremy Corbyn as a specific factor in Labour party recruitment post 2015.

Motivations relating to the leadership of the party have been classified as ideological incentives (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2015) and as an ideological incentive specifically related to

party goals ('to follow the political project of the party leader') (Sandri et al., 2015). In other analyses the leader has been seen as an expressive incentive ('because of impressive personalities at the top of the party' (Spier and Klein, 2015)).

Offering leadership as a separate category however, demonstrates its importance in members' motivational structures. 'Belief in the leadership' has been found to be the third most important motivation for Labour members, second only to positive and negative collective incentives (Bale et al., 2018).

For those who saw the leader as a motivating factor in these interviews, indeed as the catalyst for their signing up as members, the leader was seen most often as a proxy for their values, someone they could relate to, or as a vehicle for change in the party. For these reasons, leadership as a motivation is linked to positive collective incentives, policy goals and values, but is also indicative of a change in the party. The change in the party that leadership change represents can create new selective process incentives for potential joiners. The change gives potential members a reason to sign up and get involved, catalysing the idea that their involvement (process incentives) will help achieve their political goals (collective incentives).

Whilst the party leader played a role in the joining process for some of the members interviewed, the opportunity to select that individual (political rights/intra-party democratic processes), did not feature in the majority of members' accounts of their paths to membership. Indeed, of all the motivations that party members describe in their joining narratives, political rights were of least interest to the majority of members. However, for a couple of newer members (post-2015), selection rights had provided the catalyst or prompt for joining. More recent studies that have picked out leader selection as a separate incentive (particularly with members of the Labour party post-2015), find that such rights are an important motivation (Bale et al., 2018). This suggests that the incentives offered are shaping the types of member who joins. The role of political rights as incentives is explored in more depth in chapter 7. The rest of this chapter explores the incentives that have led these party members to active participation.

5.4.2. Selective outcome incentives and party culture

The interviews suggest that selective *outcome* incentives in particular have been underplayed in most membership studies to date. Selective outcome incentives (material

benefits), most notably career or skills building opportunities, were significant in these interviews with party members, predominantly, though not exclusively, those who were younger (under 25) and/or had been members for less than five years. These members talked about the opportunities and access that active party membership could afford them. The focus was rarely on elected positions (though these might have featured in the background as a future goal) but on more realistic immediate career opportunities such as working for an MP, for the party, or simply gaining new skills. For most of these newer or younger members the election gave them a specific moment in which to engage with active political participation, get access to party processes and gain experience:

"I was thinking what do I want to do - there's an election going on, it would be really interesting to find out how it works. And also talk to people who were working in that area and see what they do. And it was massively helpful for that." (#04, member <1 year)

"I was quite keen in a way because I had been quite impressed to see how some volunteers had moved on to run boards and stuff like that. And that appealed to me from a quite self-interested perspective; I thought this is probably quite a good opportunity to practice my leadership skills." (#09, member < 1 year)

Interviewees tended to initially downplay their career aims noting that they didn't have ambitions in that area. Yet whilst not initially open to admitting to selective outcome incentives, extended discussion revealed their significance. In describing their routes to membership, for most interviewees, a selective outcome incentive featured. This suggests that admitting to political ambitions is undesirable in the party context.

"I knew I'd need to be a member of the party to work for [Party representative] anyway. So yeah, I guess in a way when I did join the party I did have designs on it being useful to my career; I guess it was just a natural step to doing whatever I was going to do next." (#02, member < 1 year)

"I can't say I have any political ambitions of my own but working in Parliament looks fun and interesting." (#07, member 2 years)

It is interesting to note that party members are not initially open to admitting to selective outcome incentives. Often interviewees initially gave other reasons for choosing to join the party. Mostly these were collective incentives based on ideological views, drawing on party values and negative associations with other parties. Only after some hesitation were selective incentives revealed. One interviewee directly noted the problem of discussing career aims in a party political environment:

"I definitely don't want to stand as an MP but I have been told that even if you do, you shouldn't say for another ten years!" (#01, member 2 years).

That interviewees who had clear selective motivations for joining offered collective incentives when initially questioned suggests that responses to such questions are shaped by an expectation of the appropriate response within party culture. Indeed, this confirms the view that the reasons party members give for joining are shaped by what is socially acceptable (Scarrow, 2015; Seyd and Whiteley, 1992). Whilst members might join for personal benefits, other reasons for attachment to the party may be arrived at later in response to party norms. This would explain the dominance of collective or values-based incentives in surveys which restrict responses and cannot draw out other potentially former or underlying motivations.

Only by exploring how members arrived at the party, what they do as party members and what they feel about being a party member, is the importance of selective incentives revealed. Seyd and Whiteley were right to suggest (1992, p.76) that selective outcome incentives may have been underestimated in their surveys. Though some studies have suggested that there is a propensity to admit to career motivations amongst younger members (Bruter and Harrison, 2009; Young and Cross, 2007), it would seem that in general, member surveys may be under-representing these incentives. Whilst it should be acknowledged that the timing and recruitment of these interviews may have encouraged a focus on the recent election and opportunities the election campaign afforded, selective incentives were not confined to recent joiners. In fact, members recalled joining to assist with elections dating back to 1966 and those who joined outside of election years also discussed selective outcome and process incentives.

5.4.3. Active non-members and joining

The relationship between activism and membership is also exposed by taking a more in-depth look at member attitudes. Party member narratives reveal that political interest, membership and activity do not always occur in the expected order. For the majority of these members, political interest *and activism* have preceded party membership.

Many of the members interviewed had first volunteered for the party as non-members. This supports the growing literature recognising the contribution of non-member supporters and increasing opportunities for non-member activity (Cross and Gauja, 2014; Fisher et al., 2014; Scarrow, 2015; Webb et al., 2017). These supporters and new members are clearly an asset to parties who need an active base to provide volunteer support and to fill elected positions, but attracting and retaining active support outside of membership

calls for a review of the way parties are structured and the opportunities they offer. It suggests that the growing availability of online, centralised, and easy access membership (Scarrow, 2015) is essential for interested new recruits, and that engaging activists as supporters is also valuable, but that more hands-on political experiences and ways to be involved with party activity would be necessary outside of election periods to keep them involved.

Members' initial experiences of party structures suggests their valuable political experience is not going to be found in local party meetings:

"Weird branch meeting, weird people ... everyone talking in acronyms. It's based on a structure when people didn't even have telephones or cars" (#05, member 5 years).

"We went to a couple of meetings and some events. It was a fairly desultory bunch of people, it was quite old - just the old staggers - so I never got involved again" (#20, member >20 years)

"The branch Chair said 'it's good to have so many people' and I said 'Yes, but they're never going to come again because we've got all this to get through before we get to item number 10' and he said, 'yes but they'll learn what branch meetings are like' and I thought 'yes, they will, and they'll never come again!'" (#27, member 2 years)

The majority of these selective incentive-focused members came to the party independently, joining via the website. This supports other membership studies which find party members to be largely self-starters (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Scarrow, 2015; Bale et al., 2018), not having been recruited by existing members. However, many were influenced by their friends who had ideologically similar views or who made attending the first party events less intimidating.

Previous studies have shown the importance of family and friends in introducing new young members to political parties (McCulloch, 1990; Cross and Young, 2008) and there was evidence of both political socialisation through family and the importance of ideologically supportive friendships in members' joining narratives within these interviews. However, the act of joining itself was largely an individual act with only one member reporting being recruited by another party member. Many in fact found the process of joining particularly difficult: *"Before I was a party member I could not tell you how to get involved in the party. You know, not through lack of trying" (#02, member < 1 year).* This is a finding supported in previous work on the Labour Party over two decades previously (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992, p.85).

A significant number of interviewees had also previously been members of, or supported another political party:

"I think I flirted with the Liberals at the time, I think I went to a couple of party meetings"

"And of course, once upon a time I was a Lib Dem"

"I've been to a couple of Green party meetings ... I know a lot of Green people and occasionally I nominate the person"

"I just kind of voted Green and thought, I could join ... but I'll always vote for you and put a poster up"

This pattern of activism outside of membership and involvement with other parties suggests that many members have an interest in politics, political careers and political activity and, secondary to that, choose which party fits best. For many, the initial reasons they give for joining appear to be reasons for joining *this* party rather than for joining *a* party. This suggests that political interest is often a prior motivation to identification with party ideology and that a strong partisan ID is not a necessary precursor to membership.

"I decided I actually wanted to join the party as well but that kind of came secondary to wanting to work on the election campaign." (#04, member < 1 year)

"I was kind of looking for a way to be more involved in politics in general and the Labour Party at the time was the best match for me." (#16, member 2 years)

For some interviewees it was a case of supporting the party that most aligned with their values at the time. As parties changed, so too which party they lent their membership to: *"I could go Green or Lib Dem or Labour. I waver around"*. It would be a mistake to assume that all active party participants always strongly identify with the party.

This would also explain the dominance of collective motivations in surveys. Collective motivations, relating to the party's goals and ideology, may be arrived at later in response to party norms.

This is good news for the multi-speed party. A more flexible approach to membership can attract active supporters when they feel most aligned to the party. However, it also requires a change in how support is viewed. Lifelong loyalty and commitment cannot be a requirement if parties want to attract these participants who are politically active but not always for the same party. It would also mean relaxing rules about previous activity for other parties.

5.4.4. Implications for multi-speed membership

The descriptions party members give to explain their routes to joining the party challenge the usual understanding of the relationship between membership and activism, and the nature of partisanship. They suggest that widening affiliation options to capture potentially active but less attached supporters (even if short term) is an organisationally valuable move. Strong partisan attachment and membership are not necessary components of activism and the multi-speed membership model captures that dynamic. However, a change in party culture is also needed to embrace these dynamics. The traditional model of lifelong commitment through membership (exemplified in rules that banned people who had supported other parties in the past from joining up as registered supporters) and valorisation of strong ideological commitment to party values (and corresponding disdain for selective outcome motivations) run against this new model of organising and indeed, may dissuade the more loosely attached type of active supporter.

The multi-speed party may also successfully expand support without directly affecting the incentives that attract active members. Selective outcome and selective process benefits are shown to be important to party members. A wider and more loosely affiliated support base does not necessarily have an impact on these selective incentives. A wider supporter base is unlikely to affect selective outcome incentives which are largely exclusive to members (commitment in the form of membership and particularly active membership is still the gateway to jobs and voluntary positions in the party). Nor is a wider supporter base likely to prevent active members from deriving benefits from the process of participation such as meeting with other likeminded people (unless new supporters were not 'likeminded'). The multi-speed membership model, with opportunities for non-member supporters, ease of joining and looser affiliation options, can draw on the activism of non-member supporters whilst also offering a gateway to membership. Yet sustaining the support of those attracted by active opportunities, outside of election periods, is a challenge for parties. This suggests such support is likely to be transitory.

Moving to a model of wider affiliation does have the potential to change the composition of the party. Making it easier to engage with the party in an informal way may result in an active but more fluid and less reliable support base: one more likely to walk away when the political mood changes. For multi-speed parties, accepting the fluidity of the support base is the price to pay for wider engagement.

Results: Section Two

5.5. What next? The bonds and barriers of party membership

The previous section suggested that changing the affiliation structure may have benefits for attracting non-member active support and creating a gateway to membership. The looser structure captures a more fluid partisan support whilst not directly impacting on the incentives for full membership. It does suggest, however, that some change to party culture may be required.

In this next section I explore how party membership develops for members over time. All of those interviewed had been active at some stage in their membership, sometimes continuously or on and off, but all had been inspired to do more than just pay a membership fee. Indeed, at some point, all of those interviewed had been 'high-intensity' participants in the party. These are the very participants that parties might be expected to want to hold onto. Knowing what happens after joining for these members gives an insight into the membership experience: how it develops, how it changes members. In doing so, this analysis facilitates an assessment of what might change as a result of a multi-speed strategy.

Interviews exploring party membership and political activity over the course of a lifetime enables not only a more nuanced assessment of incentives but a lens through which to view how party membership develops. In this study, analysis of longer-term members' conceptions of the value of party membership revealed the importance of socialisation and social ties, both of which influence members' relationship with the party and their activities within it. Yet socialisation and social networks within the party, whilst activating and retaining party members, may also create barriers discouraging more loosely affiliated supporters from becoming or remaining active. As parties turn towards multi-speed models of membership and affiliation, the role of contact and socialisation in relation to what party members do takes on additional significance.

Recall evidence of memberships dating back (in some cases), a number of years, requires some sensitivity. Initial reasons for joining are likely, not only to be inaccurately recalled, but to have changed over time. The motivations a person attributes to their party membership now will undoubtedly have been shaped by experience. As one interviewee

reflected, *"The early '90s to now is a very long time and my views changed significantly, motivations changed significantly, and all sorts of things changed over that period"* (#17, member 23 years). In this respect it is difficult to distinguish interviewees' initial motivations for joining from their motivations for staying. However, examining how longer-term members (re)cast their membership in light of that experience, how they describe their movement either in-and-out of the party, or how it might have changed over time, revealed significant processes.

This research supports the idea that contact and socialisation have a positive relationship to activism. Whilst this study suggests that membership is not a necessary condition of activism, I find that membership does, over time, create bonds that encourage participation, and 'high-intensity' participation in particular.

5.6. Results

5.6.1 Socialisation

Open analysis of party member narratives²¹ revealed the importance of socialisation in lowering the barriers to activity and in keeping members active. This analysis has highlighted not only the importance of socialisation in inducting new members into the party, but the specific content of that socialisation process and its relationship with activity, particularly activity defined as 'high-intensity'.

Socialisation is a well-established concept in sociology, psychology and organisational studies. In its broadest sense it is the 'way in which individuals are assisted in becoming members of one or more social groups' (Grusec and Hastings, 2008). Transferring this to a political party context, the most pertinent comparison is with work of organisational theorists. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define organisational socialisation as 'the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role' (p.211, 1979).

Yet whilst a typical organisation would employ informal and formal, intentional processes of socialisation for employees (inductions or 'on the job' training for instance), the party political setting is different. Members are not employees, nor are they necessarily

²¹ The theme of socialisation emerged from the data during open coding.

volunteers. It is up to party members themselves whether they take an active role and, to a large extent, which activities they choose to engage in. There are some parallels with the socialisation that occurs within trade unions, but whereas unions often employ specific programmes of socialisation (formal orientation, personal invites to meetings) (Fullagar et al., 1994), parties generally take a less formal approach (if they take any specific approach at all). As noted in the previous section, members interviewed in this research had not experienced any specific induction process. The party does not appear to employ any specific socialisation tactics and indeed new members had found navigating the party structures and procedures initially very confusing.

Yet despite this, I found that socialisation was strong in the party context, in particular, the learning of language and of skills relating to party activity. Learning these specific types of rules and norms appeared to reduce the barriers to participation and in doing so make activity for the party more likely.

5.6.1.i. Language, skills and knowledge

The importance of language and knowledge in the party context emerged from this data. Language appeared to operate in two distinct ways within the party context. There was the technical language associated with party structures and organising, and also a sense of more informal party-specific language: the ways of discussing issues and values. Language was seen as helping create an impression of the party as a separate and enclosed world but also a world which members could enter once they had learned the language.

Knowledge also emerged as a theme, operating in much the same way as language by providing a key to entering the party world. Knowledge was also linked to activity: a lack of knowledge creating a barrier to being more actively involved but greater knowledge facilitating activity.

Figure 6: Socialisation (language, skills and knowledge) – category and properties

Socialisation		
Category (explanation of behaviour)	Language, skills and knowledge <i>Creating an enclosed world</i>	
Category (behaviours)	Shared language	Party-specific knowledge and skills
Properties of category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party-specific terminology • Party-specific ways of discussing issues • Sense of exclusion / closed world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge linked to participation • Concern for lack of party knowledge (esp. in canvassing) • Recognition of need for party specific knowledge and different levels of knowledge amongst volunteers
Examples from data	<p>“you need to know the language”</p> <p>“And if you don’t know the language and don’t know ‘point of order’ and all that stuff, your voice isn’t heard”</p> <p>“Like any relatively closed system there’s a lot of jargon and assumed knowledge”</p> <p>“I think there’s a language: ‘the proletariat’, ‘petty bourgeoisie’ - why don’t they say ‘me’ or ‘shopkeeper’”</p> <p>“I think it’s quite an enclosed world”</p> <p>“you do become institutionalised”</p>	<p>“I went [] and again I found it all very confusing. And then I didn’t do anything again.”</p> <p>“[I was] educated in the structures of the party [in order to stand]”</p> <p>“It was a whole different language and nobody bothered explaining it [] and so I kind of took myself off”</p> <p>“I was a bit nervous about getting started ... I was thinking I would have to be strong on policy”</p>

Many members reflected on how alien the language of the party had seemed when they first joined. For example, invitations to CLP meetings were shunned by new young members who had no idea what ‘CLP’ meant. For some this had prevented them getting further involved initially:

“It was a whole different language and nobody bothered explaining it. So, I took myself off and thought ‘I’ll do my own thing’.” (#10, member >20 years)

Not knowing the technical language appeared to prevent members practically from actively participating. The party-specific language (often linked to party structures)

created a barrier to participation, with new members confused as to how things worked and what they were supposed to do. There is also some evidence that party-specific language is not limited to technical aspects of membership but that there are also shared ways of discussing issues. In this sense language is conveying shared values, or shared ways of seeing the world:

"I think there's a language: 'the proletariat', 'petty bourgeoisie' - why don't they say 'me' or 'shopkeeper'" (#24, member 54 years)

This party-specific language, both technical and value driven, creates a community but may also unintentionally create an enclosed community. It can be exclusionary, creating the sense of the party being a world apart:

"I think it's quite an enclosed world and if you're not in it you don't really know what people do" (#04, member < 1 year)

Learning the language is a barrier to overcome for those wanting to engage but could also prevent more loosely affiliated or less engaged members and supporters from becoming active.

As well as language, interviews revealed how socialisation had assisted with the development of the skills and knowledge required for active participation. This had particular significance for one of the most important 'high intensity' activities: canvassing. Many members spoke of an initial reluctance to get involved in campaigning activity 'on the doorstep'. It was primarily through not knowing what the process entailed that many were reluctant to get involved.

"What made me nervous was I was thinking I would have to be strong on policy, so to be honest it wasn't what I expected as it was more of a data-gathering exercise than it was about trying to persuade people. [then] I felt more happy about being regularly involved." (#09, member < 1 year)

"To start off with I never went canvassing. I just don't have the confidence. I just don't want to go and knock on somebody's door ... but then I got involved with []'s campaign and thought 'yes this is really effective' and you learn so much on the doorstep" (#27, member 2 years)

Many interviewees mentioned an initial reluctance to canvass voters. This suggests that new members and supporters prefer lower-intensity party work, such as delivering leaflets, that does not entail situations where their policy or party knowledge may be tested. Though most members had overcome their initial reluctance and found it to be a more positive activity than they had anticipated, how far supporters and members are

socialised into party norms and values is a consideration, not just for skills-based knowledge, but for party coherence. More seasoned campaigners highlighted the problems of a lack of local policy knowledge and lack of party skills in newer members:

"The new member said "I think X"; that's not the position of the party locally and I felt she was not representing the party properly on the doorstep, and I felt I had to censor the new member. I could see it was off-putting but I didn't want the person [on the doorstep] to think it was the party's position" (#15, member 7 years)

"They're not very competent. No charring skills - not knowing when to stop a discussion." (#30, member >40 years)

The extent of party socialisation is a consideration for parties that want to involve supporters more in party activity and particularly the more valuable 'high-intensity' type of activities.

Shared language and skills clearly have a role in party activity. Parties need volunteers and therefore have an interest in making participation as open as possible. Yet the knowledge gained through contact over time is a useful tool in making that participation effective. Socialisation enabled party members and supporter-turned-members to learn the necessary skills to take part in 'high-intensity' activity.

Comparing this to the literature on organisational socialisation, there are clear parallels. The literature on organisational socialisation demonstrates the impact of early socialisation of employees on their attitudes and behaviour, their activity and loyalty. Organisational socialisation is positively linked to employee motivation and commitment (Kelley, 1992), job satisfaction, commitment and organisational identification (Ashforth and Saks, 1996). Likewise literature on socialisation in trade unions finds that early union socialisation experiences affect union attitudes (Fullagar et al., 1994), that those who are most socially integrated in the union are most likely to participate in strike and contract ratification votes (Mcshane, 1986) and that the most highly active union members are those who have a higher number of active union friends (Flood et al., 2000). For both paid and unpaid participants in organisations, socialisation has a clear link to activity and attitudes.

There is little literature, however, on socialisation in a party political context, despite the obvious parallels with other organisations and trade unions. Two exceptions to this are Granik (2003) who finds that socialisation is a valid construct in a single party political setting and that socialisation has a positive relationship to activity and attitudinal

commitment, and Dodson (1990) who, in a panel study of national convention delegates find that socialisation is a product of increased affiliative ties and helps sustain the activity of certain types of activist. Looking at conventional and unconventional delegates (defined by their position on traditional party norms), Dodson finds that over time, less conventional activists had adopted more traditional party norms. The importance of this process of socialisation to party viability is set out by Dodson:

“The socialised unconvensionals may have become psychologically a party of the party, they valued the party and therefore (consciously or unconsciously), grew more willing to accept norms that constrained individual autonomy for the good of the group ... to the extent that parties can provide an environment where insurgent, unconvensionals feel a part of the organization and value the organization, the party experience can be a socialization experience that helps to increase the probability of transmission of norms that further organizational viability” (Dodson, 1990).

Active participants in the interviews analysed here had, over time, adapted to traditional party norms. They had got over the barriers and invested in learning the rules to become members of the club: an investment that can be seen as contributing to their active involvement. Like any club, the shared language, rules, knowledge and skills creates a bond and sense of belonging. Yet the creation of an enclosed world with a shared language and specific set of skills, whilst important for cementing and activating existing memberships, can also act as a boundary, preventing others from joining in. This is clearly a consideration for parties moving to multi-speed membership and suggests that parties may need to give more thought to formal socialisation processes.

5.6.1.ii. Convergence of ideas

An additional theme emerging from the data was the convergence of ideas and shared beliefs. These interviews suggest that, at the local level, socialisation can emphasise ideological congruence.

Figure 7: Socialisation (convergence of ideas) – category and properties

Socialisation	
Category (explanation of behaviour)	Convergence of ideas
Category (behaviours)	Ideological congruence
Properties of category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarity of views amongst party groupings/CLPs • Shared views are valued by party members • Solidarity through shared views
Examples from data	<p>“there would be very little movement from the set opinions, they would reinforce each other’s beliefs a lot”</p> <p>“they were very, very hostile to anybody who’s on the left of the party”</p> <p>“I didn’t quite dare speak openly in case I said the wrong thing”</p> <p>“shared values and people who you could have conversations with which were shared”</p> <p>“I think they’re used to going to meetings [] and thinking worthy thoughts []. And I think in a way, you’ve got to pitch to people who don’t necessarily have such a coherent and cohesive set of messages or beliefs.”</p>

The ideological positioning of the local party was noted by many interviewees either positively or negatively. It is possible that the shared language also seeps into shared views. These interviews suggested the presence of a link between socialisation and ideological cohesiveness:

“A lot of my friends were in the Labour Party. There was a massive social connection as well - shared values and people who you could have conversations with which were shared.” (#17, member 23 years)

“I was influenced by the people who were around at that time” (#29, member 24 years)

This supports Whiteley and Seyd’s (2002) argument that the development of group solidarity and the convergence of political ideas are important outcomes of socialisation. Likewise, Huckfeldt and Sprague suggest that socialisation ‘strengthens political boundaries between groups’ (1995, p.78) by bringing members’ views in line with the dominant view. Campbell et al. (1960) observed this effect in social groups: “when primary groups engage in political discussions and are homogeneous in basic member viewpoints, the attitudes of the individual must be continually reinforced as he sees similar opinions echoed in the group” (1960, p.293). Whilst this observation was not

directed at political parties, it clearly has an application in a party political context. In this way, socialisation creates ideological cohesiveness which in turn could create a greater incentive for activism. A sense of a strong shared set of values would certainly enhance the solidary incentives for activity.

Yet whilst this outcome could be beneficial for activity, for new members or supporters, the strength of shared views could be exclusionary. A similarity in ideological positioning could create a barrier for those who might broadly align with party values and wish to dip into party activity, but who may not want to join the family and be assimilated into it. Whilst important for activating existing members, these socialisation processes can become a barrier to recruitment should newer members and active supporters not feel equipped with the right knowledge or have views which are not wholly in tune with the local party. As one former supporter reflected:

“But then you go to the Labour party and there would be very little movement from the set opinions, they would reinforce each other’s beliefs a lot...I did think that they made it difficult for each other to move away from set views. It didn’t leave much room for other opinions. And I didn’t always share the views.” (#08, member <1 year)

“The levels of jeopardy in talking about politics and policy in the Labour party can be quite off-putting sometimes. And I noticed that as a new member. I didn’t quite dare speak openly in case I said the wrong thing. I now notice me doing that to others. And I think it’s kind of unavoidable...You have to be quite brave to say things which are going against the grain and you have to be brave to admit a lack of knowledge about things. Like any relatively closed system there’s a lot of jargon and assumed knowledge. People start talking in a language because it’s a short hand and people new to it are excluded.” (#15, member 7 years)

5.6.2. Social ties

Alongside these socialisation effects, a major theme emerging from the data was the link between the party and members’ social groups or networks. Social ties were a recurring theme in members’ narratives about their relationship with the party. Two key features of this theme were the strong links between members’ social lives and their party lives (the two had become intertwined to the point that the party was part of the fabric of their lives), and the relationship between these social ties and party activity.

Figure 8: Social ties – category and properties

Social ties		
Category (explanation of behaviour)	Party members linked to the party through social networks	
Category (behaviours)	Party as fabric of life	Party activity influenced by social ties
Properties of category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship groups are predominantly party members • Members are connected to party through different routes (e.g jobs, other networks) • Party as a community • Work and politics intertwined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendships make party activity easier • Change in party connections affects activity • Collective activity valued • Work and party intertwined
Examples from data	<p>“Most of our friends were in the Labour party”</p> <p>“They work together, they associate together, they go out together, they socialise together.”</p> <p>“It was great to feel back in that Labour family of people”</p> <p>“Being a member of the Labour party not only made new friendships moving to a new area but also got me employment”</p> <p>“I think people just like belonging”</p> <p>“it’s a good way of getting to know people and being involved in the community.”</p> <p>“It was a very cliquey feel. And there was almost like this little suspicion of me as a new member.”</p> <p>“It was my main social life”</p>	<p>“That’s why people go, because their friends go”</p> <p>“We moved cities and I didn’t reconnect with the party ...so we didn’t really get involved”</p> <p>“There’s also a lot of people that I was in the party with who left who are [now] coming back so that’s a comfort thing as well”</p> <p>“[I] was quite active then but it was the social life for me as well”</p> <p>“I then went to work for [MP] so had a [LP] network ... so that was when my career started linking me in”</p> <p>“Through work experience I got more involved”</p>

5.6.2.i. Social networks: Party as fabric of life

For nearly all, but particularly for longer-standing members, the social contacts that developed through party membership and activity were seen as cementing their relationship with the party. The party had become part of the very fabric of their lives:

"And I do find, because I've been a party member for 26 years, that most of my friends are party members. Not exclusively. But my best friends are from the Labour party and I've got to know them through the Labour party. It's not true for everyone. But if you spent any time here on a regular basis you'd see the same people who socialise with the same people as well - and it just becomes part of your life." (#06, member 26 years)

"When I moved here I did get more involved and a lot of our social life, or a lot of people we know, come through the Labour Party... I think we probably just thought, we've come here, we don't know people, it's a good way of getting to know people and being involved in the community." (#20, member >20 years)

"We moved here from X and I saw the party offices, and I thought that would be a good way to meet people" (#30, member >40 years)

Party members' friendship groups were heavily comprised of fellow party members. The links with the party through these friendship groups had extended beyond party activity into social activities. There was also a strong overlap between party links and members' work. In some cases this was working directly in politics but for others it was realising their political values through other types of work: work where they were likely to be in contact with other party members and in some cases, work which had been found through connections in the party.

This supports McCulloch's (1990) analysis of party member motivations which notes, 'The activity was not only meaningful to the participant as a means to an end, that is, as a means to achieving the goal(s) implicit in the declared motivation, but had also become meaningful in itself' (p.513). McCulloch highlights how party activity can grow from being part of an individual's life to becoming 'his or her way of life' (1990, p.514) particularly for smaller groups of volunteers where the demands on each individual are greater (something that is clearly still a problem for activists: *"And then I started going to branch meetings and was flattered when they made me branch secretary in the way that all [new members] are made branch secretary when they don't know what they're doing!" (#06, member 26 years)*).

5.6.2.ii. Social networks: Party activity influenced by social ties

Social links had, for these members, a connection to party activity. As one member reflected, when these connections broke down, their activity decreased:

“Party colleagues I knew well drifted out. New people had come in, and I had perhaps less social contact with the new people... So, my Labour Party work changed from being attendance at meetings, collecting subs, helping in a practical way, to only helping out at election time ... and carrying on the subscription.” (#12, member 43 years)

Yet, such was the strength of these ties that, for some members, the social network had continued even after party activity ceased. Though interviewees tended to report different levels of activity at different stages of their lives, the party-based social connections appeared more stable, remaining with members who had ceased to be active. Some members recalled how the Labour Party had helped them make friends when they moved to new towns. Some had even sought out the local party in order to meet people and build friendships. This social network kept members engaged with the party even in periods of their lives when their activity had decreased, leaving the door open to future activity.

Social networks also provided an element of safety or comfort in engaging in party activity. For some newer members, friendships provided a reason to get involved or a helping hand to make the first meeting or conference less intimidating.

“I mostly [got involved] because a couple of my friends were going to conference and I thought that sounded interesting” (#07, member 2 years)

Most members in this research had found the party on their own (though some had been supported in their early activity by friends) so the strength of these social ties suggests that new networks are forming within the party rather than existing networks being replicated.

The local nature of party membership is also important to note. Whilst the party is national, for most members the connection is local. In an anthropological account of British party conferences Florence Faucher-King (2005) notes how party members at national gatherings socialise with those they know from their own constituency (2005, p.38). Most face-to-face party activity is locally based and helps to reinforce the social elements of membership.

In the party context, these tight, local bonds appear to stretch beyond party activity into the social networks of members' lives. In this way the social context of party membership appears to take on the appearance of a 'primary group'. The 'primary group', first defined by sociologists as a group small in size and close in physical proximity which has a psychological closeness (Cooley, 1909), was developed to be applicable to contemporary

groups including trade unions and defined by smallness, long duration and physical and social nearness of its members (Davis, 1965). The notion of a primary group also captures the ideological closeness and socialisation processes noted earlier. In a primary group, 'the members completely identify with the norms and attitudes of the group and view social relationship as just as important as the objectives of the group' (Perline and Lorenz, 1970).

If party membership is approaching a 'primary group'-type of social formation, even partly, then it has significant implications for multi-speed membership organising. These bonds are important for member activity and also for retaining members in the face of change. However, there is also a negative side to these social networks. The extent of these strong ties can also act as a boundary, making it harder for new members to feel welcomed. This is a problem for parties seeking to attract active but more loosely attached supporters. Whilst social networks sustain activity amongst members, they may also be dissuading others from getting more involved.

5.6.3. Socialisation and social ties: conclusions

This research shows that socialisation and social ties are crucial components of party membership. Whilst there is a vast literature on socialisation within organisations, and to a lesser extent trade unions, socialisation within parties is little researched (bar two notable exceptions (Dodson, 1990; Granik, 2003)). Yet the precise content of socialisation in parties has not been studied. The interviews analysed here suggest that language, skills and ideology are key components of party socialisation and would benefit from further analysis.

The learning of skills, convergence of ideas, the forming of group solidarity and the creation of a social networks are important, both for active participation and for realising some of the benefits of membership. In their analysis of 'high-intensity' participation, Whiteley and Seyd (2002) demonstrate a link between socialisation (understood as face to face contact) and activity. They conclude that, 'the most powerful factor influencing high intensity participation ... is the contact variable' (2002, p. 143). They note that contact is necessary but not sufficient, as many party members can be in regular contact and not participate regularly, but that without contact the socialisation process is inhibited and the likelihood of activism reduced. Without contact, uncertainty about what might be involved in activity for the party increases the 'costs' of deciding to get involved; party members simply don't know what party activism entails. In addition, potential benefits may not be

realised: selective outcome incentives such as gaining access to office or other opportunities cannot be realised from a non-active position in the party; nor is it possible to realise selective process incentives, the goal of spending more time with 'likeminded people', without actually spending time with them; and expressive motivations, the emotional attachments, can exist only in the abstract and cannot be reinforced without contact (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Activity is therefore a condition of achieving many of the benefits that might have motivated joining, and socialisation through contact influences activity.

This research supports those findings and adds depth to the specific nature of socialisation in a party political context. Socialisation in its various forms not only keeps members active but provides a way back into the party for those who have left. The shared networks, language and skills remain even when party membership lapses. Socialisation and social ties helped members build a relationship with the party, making exit harder: *"You develop, I think very quickly, an emotional attachment. One of the things is you begin to develop friends in the party and those friendships become hard to break"* (#16, member 2 years). This link between socialisation and exit is explored further in the next chapter.

For long-standing members in these interviews, the party had become part of their way of life. The central and important role of the party in active members' lives was secured by socialisation and cemented by social ties. These bonds supported the activity of those involved but could also prevent activity from newer or more loosely attached members and supporters.

Understanding the specific nature of party socialisation and social networks helps in assessing the impact of changes to the membership model. Knowing how, where, and what sort of bonds form between parties and their members gives us a platform from which to assess how, where and indeed, whether, those bonds are broken by opening the party beyond party members.

5.6.4. Implications for multi-speed membership

Informal processes of socialisation within the party provide new party members with the tools needed to take part in activity for the party, they also create bonds that encourage activity and potentially lead to greater ideological cohesion. However, these bonds can also create a barrier, excluding those who do not fit in, don't speak the language, and don't

already hold 'membership of the club'. The ideological views, languages and processes (formal and informal) of the local party were noted by many interviewees, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. This negative side to socialisation has implications for parties trying to branch out to a wider group of affiliates. For parties following a multi-speed model and seeking to engage supporters in activity, there is a potential tension here.

Socialisation is not however a one-way process and new members also have scope to change the party norms. How much a large influx of new members can disrupt the norms, values and ideology of the existing local parties is a crucial question for the multi-speed party but this would of course require new members to be sufficiently engaged to stay long enough to effect change, and strong existing social bonds make this harder.

5.6.5. Conclusions

Analysis of the relationship between active party members and their party reveals a complex pattern of motivations. It highlights the importance of selective incentives in persuading members to join, highlights the fluidity in the relationship between membership, activism and partisan identification, and it adds depth to our understanding of the value of social connections and contact in sustaining active participation.

This research supports the idea that members and potential members are responding to a range of opportunities and incentives for joining and remaining active participants in party political activity. Within this, two dynamics are revealed to have particular significance: opportunities for personal benefit and long-term socialisation effects.

These incentives and benefits are important for attracting members keen on active participation and for keeping those members active in the long term. It is clear in this case that the multi-speed party that opens up to supporters does not directly negate the value of membership, primarily because members are responding to incentives that are unaffected by a change in affiliation options. Providing opportunities for non-member activism not only harnesses the volunteer power of supporters but can also act as a gateway to membership. Socialisation within the party also has beneficial impact on activism, keeping those already in the party active and engaged (or providing an easy route back in for those who leave). The problem is that these incentives tend to be exclusive to members and that is potentially a problem for parties trying to widen their

base. The incentives that keep members in the party and active within it may also create a barrier to those seeking a looser attachment.

The results also suggest that party members may not be as partisan as expected. The incidence of non-member active support and party switching suggests that party support is already more fluid than previously recognised. This fluidity provides a potentially rich source of volunteer support for parties who open up participation in party activity but also a less stable one, and one that requires a significant shift in party culture.

Taken together these findings suggest that taking a multi-speed approach to membership and affiliation is strategically sound, but may only be taken so far. The fluidity of modern partisans suggests that an open approach to support is necessary, but sustained activism (particularly in 'high-intensity' activity) relies on processes of socialisation which may be exclusionary to newer and more loosely affiliated participants or potentially undermined by the multi-speed model. The supporter may find that the strength of processes of socialisation amongst the membership create a number of barriers to their active participation. Likewise, the processes that bond members in the long-term and encourage activity could be disrupted by a widening and loosening of affiliation.

The party members who sustain party activity, that stand for election, attend meetings and provide volunteer support for election campaigns, are an important resource: one that parties have a clear incentive to retain. Whilst moving to a multi-speed membership model can attract a larger constituency of support, this may have a long-term impact on organisational capacity. Understanding the relationship between active members and their party and how this might be affected by a move to a wider affiliation model is vitally important for parties wishing to recruit and crucially, sustain, an active support base.

In the next section I look at the next phase of membership: loyalty and exit. And I consider how these too may be affected by a move to multi-speed membership.

Chapter 6: Exit, voice and committed incongruence

The previous chapter suggested that the multi-speed organised party can successfully appeal to both members and supporters, capturing the fluidity of party support to bolster activism when needed. But organising in this way is a balancing act: retaining the loyalty of the membership base whilst making an attractive offer to supporters. As long as the multi-speed party wishes to retain a stable and loyal membership base (if it does), knowing why and when members exit the party, and the impact of multi-speed organising on member exit, is important.

Party membership numbers suggest that far from being a lifelong commitment or a one-off activity, party membership is more like a revolving door (Pemberton and Wickham-Jones, 2013). Parties see increases around key moments and opportunities (General Elections, leadership challenges) and outside of these opportunities, experience declines. Multi-speed membership parties may be comfortable with this fluidity because they take a functional approach to support: it is what activists do rather than what type of affiliation they hold that is important (Scarrow, 2015, p. 206). And as long as supporters can be mobilised when needed, whether they hold a membership card or not is immaterial. Yet whilst a fluid support base might be desirable, a highly fluid *membership* base is a different proposition.

Parties rely on their volunteer base for more than delivering leaflets. Party members are also the party's source of candidates and holders of voluntary positions in the organisation (such as local party chairs and secretaries). They are also generally those who invest the time in learning the skills for party political work and engage in more high-intensity activity. As long as parties rely on their membership to take up these roles and lead on volunteer activities, organisational stability would appear to rely on maintaining some degree of loyal membership base. Collective and selective benefits, crucial for attracting active members, can also be disrupted by a large amount of fluidity in the membership base as argued in the previous chapter. Whilst the multi-speed party may want to capitalise on the fluidity of party support, it would not be organisationally sound to do so at the expense of member loyalty.

6.1. Exit, voice and loyalty (and ideology) in multi-speed Labour

In taking an open inductive approach to understanding the relationship members have with their party, one of the central themes to emerge was the idea of ideological change. The idea of change in the party featured in all interviews either in reference to the current changes in the party or reflecting on changes in the past. Ideological change also featured prominently in members discussions of exit and loyalty.

The notion of ideological change is particularly closely linked to the consequences of multi-speed organising in the Labour case. Multi-speed changes in rules have led to the election of a leader from the left of the party whose ideology is seen as a radical departure from previous leaderships. This raised an interesting additional research question in understanding the implications multi-speed organising: How does ideological change affect exit, voice and loyalty?

Hirschman's (1970) theory suggests that customers experiencing a decline in quality or services from a private firm may take their custom elsewhere (exit) or voice their displeasure whilst remaining loyal to that firm. Loyalty in this calculation acts as an inhibitor to exit. In the marketplace, organisations need to balance exit against voice, not reducing quality or service beyond the point that exit replaces voice. In a party political context, the organisation (party) will be restricted in its policy positioning by the need to avoid the discontent and exit of party members.

Labour's positioning in the period of this research would suggest that the direction of travel is towards the member/customer, but the membership of the Labour party is not a homogenous group. This period in the party's history has exposed the extent of factionalism in the party and has seen some very high-profile members of the party exercising their voice in dissent. For some members this change in the party would represent a 'decline in service' of some magnitude and an exit of party members might be expected. Yet the numbers of members leaving has not been significant.²² Why would members remain loyal when their party appears to no longer represent their values: why

²² Membership reached a peak of 554,000 in July 2016 dropping to around 517,000 in March 2017. Party analysis of declines in membership in early 2017 suggest 60% had fallen into arrears immediately following the leadership election and 40% had joined for the General election in 2015 and failed to renew their membership after the first year (25% failed to renew after the 2010 General Election year). Only 992 people actively resigned in the same period and reports suggest that the party's approach to Brexit was the main reason for this. Though we do not have a detailed account of membership flows in and out, this suggests that the decline in membership following the leadership election is not significantly greater than previous membership drops in non-election years and that the results of the leadership election did not see a mass departure of long-standing party members.

do members stay when the exit/voice/loyalty equation points to exit? This period of change in the party presents an ideal moment to explore party member exit, voice and loyalty and its relationship to multi-speed organising.

6.2. Exit

6.2.1 Exit as a process

The extensive literature on reasons why members join parties is not matched by literature on exit, with just a few exceptions (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2016; Bale et al., 2017; Wagner, 2017). Kosiara-Pedersen's (2016) study finds a range of reasons for potential exit amongst Danish party members, with political disagreement (measured by party members' perception of distance between their views and the party's on economic and values dimensions) and party responsiveness (measured as satisfaction/dissatisfaction with intra-party democracy) being the most important. 'Tiring', 'boring' and 'not enough activities' as well as 'a lack of emotional attachment' are also reasons for exit. Whiteley and Seyd's (2002) analysis of exit finds some parallels with the general incentives model used to explain high-cost participation. Selective incentives are important as are expressive incentives, and party performance has an influence (though leadership performance does not). They find that rather than resulting in burnout, high levels of activism inhibit exit (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002). Bale et. al. (2017) also find that leavers are more likely to be less involved in high-intensity party activities.

To explore reasons for exit behaviour further, these interviews asked members about times they had either left, or considered leaving, the party and about whether their attitudes had changed in light of recent changes in the party. An inductive analysis of the data reveals the dynamics of members' attachment to the party and the circumstances around members' exit. Considering movement in and out of party support over time, as these interviews have done, makes it possible to analyse exit as a process. This approach has uncovered not just the reasons given for exit but the background conditions behind exit decisions.

6.2.2. Exit and re-joining

Though interviewees in this study were selected on the basis of being current and active members, a number of interviewees had at some stage left the party [interviews: 10, 11,

14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 30]. Though this research did not seek out members who were currently ex-members, at the time of interviewing, one interviewee had just left the party and another was contemplating exit.

Notably, even some members who currently held, or had held, elected office or elected positions within the party had left and re-joined at one or more stages in their lives. This observation is a useful reminder that party membership can change over the course of a lifetime. Those that find themselves taking up positions in the party have not necessarily always been loyal stalwarts. Just as those that engage in high-intensity activity are not necessarily members nor supporters of only one party in their lifetime. This fluidity suggests that movement in-and-out of the party is not only based on having a looser type of affiliation or being a looser type of supporter. People's levels of commitment and activity changes. Members, and even members engaged in high-intensity activity at some stage, can find themselves exiting.

This movement within members' own lifetimes supports the idea of party membership as a revolving door. There are moments that prompt members to leave just as there are moments that prompt members to join, but this is better viewed as a continuum. Party membership, levels of activity, and indeed how party members feel about their party, can and does change for individuals. Classifying party members into types can lead to a false sense of static. As one active member put it: *"It's how people are – they are on things and off things depending what the other circumstances in their life are. And there are factors in the organisation that turn them on or off"* (#03, member <1 year).

Taking a qualitative approach to understanding party membership has helped to reveal the on-and-off nature of individuals' relationships with the party. This chapter will also consider what 'factors in the organisation' may be pressing the off-switch for members.

6.2.3. Reasons for exit

Interviews looking at party membership over the course of a lifetime allows for an analysis of exit as a process rather than a static event. It is possible to discern not just the reason(s) members attach to their exit decision, but the background conditions that may have influenced that decision. Members who had left the party had done so for very specific political reasons; in every case, members highlighted one specific policy (or leadership action) that they recognised as the prompt for their decision to leave the party.

However, this moment was, for all members who had exited, also preceded or accompanied by a decline in activism, lack of social contact with the party and fellow members, and in some cases, dissatisfaction with the workings of intra-party democracy.

For members who had left the party, the point in which they had done so was one in which their activity for the party was either minimal or non-existent, and they were not in regular social contact with other members. A lack of social and participatory links with the party, coupled with negative views of party organisation create a ripe environment for exit. This is the reverse of the social ties/activism dynamic highlighted in the previous chapter.

For all members who had made an exit decision however, one key policy or leader action had provided that catalyst. These policies represented a value change too far, and they were personal and specific to those members. For these members it was not a sense of broad party-wide value shift but a specific policy which encapsulated a shift in values.

"Brown was Chancellor and he was really pushing PFI bigtime" (#14, member 36 years)

"Blair's speeches were something else, so I lapsed" (#25, member 57 years)

It wasn't necessarily the 'big' decisions (War, Clause 4) that provided the final straw for members, but something that was personal. Members even recognised that they had not been moved by the things that were expected to have moved them.

"Never the big things, never the invasions. It's often been something small that's tipped me over the edge." (#24, member 54 years)

Whilst members who had left were very clear about what they considered to be the tipping point, there were other aspects in their relationship with the party at that time which provided the conditions for exit

6.2.3.i. Reasons for exit: Activity, socialisation and exit

Members who had left the party tended to have lost links with the party before exiting. They were neither active nor in regular contact socially with other party members:

"I wasn't doing anything so there wasn't anything to leave, then suddenly you thought 'I can't keep giving my money to these people'" (#11, member >20 year)

"I don't see how I can still be part of this and sort of knock on doors for people and deliver stuff, 'cos it was in the middle of children, so I wasn't that active" (#14, member 36 years)

"I think I just wanted an excuse to leave. Because I wasn't active - I was going to be a supporter but I couldn't see any point in being a member. They wouldn't have noticed my absence" (#20, member >20 years)

It is likely that the relationship between active participation and satisfaction with membership goes both ways. Members who had left the party were not active at the time of exit but it is also true that members' activity levels had at times declined *because of* dissatisfaction with the party, (though not always ending in exit).

"I'm not active politically now in the way that I used to be. And that's partly disillusionment through the Blair years" (#13, member 49 years)

The relationship between socialisation and active participation was explored in the previous chapter. Socialisation, in different forms, was shown to be key to encouraging active participation. And of course, active participation helps reinforce the socialisation processes by bringing members into contact and reinforcing shared language, views and values. These twin factors may also help explain why some members choose exit and when. Socialisation provides an important *catalyst* for activity within the party but it may also be the glue that prevents exit. Ware (1992) argues that solidary incentives are more likely to produce loyalty. Certainly, for the members who had left the party, that social connection was on a low ebb at the time of their departure:

"Because of the Suits, it just felt a whole different world, so as much as those initial meetings had been dull as ditch-water at least they were led by real people that did real jobs and suddenly there were all these posh suits and slickness that I didn't feel connected to." (#10, member >20 years)

Loyalty, socialisation and activity together create a barrier to exit. Socialisation and activity strengthen each other and make exit harder. Likewise, remaining loyal over a period of time helps social bonds develop and gives members time to develop the skills and experience for activism. These links are important considerations for the multi-speed membership party.

Parties wishing to maintain stable and active grassroots organisations (which a multi-speed party might not necessarily want to) would need to consider what effect opening up the organisation to more loosely attached supporters could do to the availability of solidary benefits and correspondingly, levels of activism.

A decline in social connections and activity create conditions that make exit easier. When members perceive that a specific policy decision runs against their values providing a catalyst for exit, these background conditions make it less likely that they will stay. Perceived ideological distance, inactivity and a lack of social connection together provide the perfect conditions for exit but there is an additional ingredient (a feature of the multi-speed party) that appears to facilitate exit. Centralisation and the ease of joining afforded by online and digital options (the central features of a multi-speed party), whilst making it easier to join, also make it easier to leave.

6.2.3.ii. Reasons for exit: Centralisation and exit

For members who had left the party at some stage, whilst they were motivated by political reasons, their exit was not heralded by a resignation letter or declaration but by the rather more prosaic action of failing to renew a direct debit.

“And then when it comes to renewal time I haven’t done it. It’s partly due to laziness. I would have done it in the old days when [name] came to the door and collected money” (#24, member 54 years)

Moving membership administration to the party’s head office was part of the party’s modernisation in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s. It meant that new members could join up directly with the central party, gave HQ access to membership lists and strengthened the links between members and the central party enabling direct communications (Russell, 2005). But removing face-to-face contact can have a negative effect on members’ relationship with the party. The contact with other party members through the collecting of subs under the previous arrangements added to social processes. As one member who formerly carried out this role noted:

“I used to be a local group organiser, [it was] a neighbourhood in the sense that we all had a patch, we used to take newsletters round, collect subs, talk to people and you knew your patch and you knew your members in that patch” (#12, member 43 years)

Accessibility (making it easy to join) and centralisation (affiliating directly with the central party) are two of the three key features of the multi-speed party (Scarrow, 2015, p. 136). The fluidity in members’ relationship with their party, seen in the easy movement in-and-out of membership, suggests that the multi-speed party has much to gain from opening up to all types of affiliate and making it easier to join the party (most of the recent members interviewed in this research had found their own way to the party, via the internet). By centralising and modernising, the multi-speed party is able to tap into a larger resource of

potential members and supporters making it easier to join but by default, also makes it easier to leave the party: easy entrance also means easy exit.

Whilst it is inconceivable today to consider managing the joining process by anything other than an online function, something has been lost in the change. Whether social media and other online channels have replaced this social connection is not within the scope of this research but it is clear from these interviews that socialisation and the development of social ties are crucial part of party membership and can be realised in many ways, including through the mundane task of collecting membership fees.

6.3 Voice

The second of Hirschman's trilogy, voice, is presented as the alternative to exit: the discontented customer raises their concerns rather than take their custom elsewhere. For party members there are many ways of expressing their discontent, within party channels and externally, and indeed a third option of neither voicing their discontent nor exiting.

Van Haute (2011) suggests that there may be a difference in how activists and more passive members 'voice' their discontent. Involved party members may use internal party channels to criticise the party but would be more reluctant to do so to the 'outside world'. But for members who are more passive, the option to voice discontent in party meeting is unavailable and therefore they might be more likely to make public their discontent (van Haute, 2011).

In a party political context, however, voice is an ambiguous concept; disagreement and debate are, after all, a part of the very nature of politics. But discontent is interesting. To understand exit and the processes that lead to exit (or loyalty), it is important to understand member discontent.

6.3.1. Discontent and (non-)voice

Party members' descriptions of their progress towards exit reveal not only the catalysts and background conditions of this process, but are also revealing of just how much discontent and value change members are willing to stomach before contemplating leaving. This section considers the role of discontent in party membership.

In a survey of Belgian party members, Van Haute (2011) finds that 34% use at least one negative adjective to describe their party (when asked to provide three adjectives). Common categories of negative opinions define the party as weak, not democratic, not reliable and having a gap between the party elite and party on the ground (2011, p. 173).

All member interviewees in this research appeared at odds with their party in some way. It is hardly surprising that in interviews lasting an hour or more, members found time to highlight at least one thing that annoyed them about their party. Negative views therefore cannot, in this research context, be taken to represent what van Haute terms 'discontents'. Examining party member concerns does however reveal where the tensions lie and how much party members will put up with before contemplating exit. In-depth interviewing can reveal not just when party members choose exit, but how far they can be pushed before considering exit: how discontented these discontented members can get. The variety and strength of party members' negative views shows just how much members are willing to accept:

"I've learnt to expect very little from them over the years because organisationally they've been a bit of a disaster."

Members' negative opinions fell into four categories: Communications; organisational structures; personalities and local/national division; and value change.

Many members found something organisationally infuriating. Common negative attitudes were based around practical organisational issues such as communications. Members found the emails they received annoying, particularly so for longstanding members who might recall a more personal approach.

"Also for normal party members who are involved in a lot of activism, get a bit upset by the donation email because they say 'I already do all this for the party, I donate at events..' (#01, member 2 years)

I keep getting different emails about different things to different people and ones that ask 'would I like to join now' and I'm like ..! (#13, member 49 years)

Party meetings and organisational structures provided another rich seam of frustration:

"It's been a tremendous release not to have to go to party meetings and listen to all those prats." (#25, member 57 years)

"The other meeting I went to was [] and it was full of a bunch of cantankerous old farts who wouldn't shut up" (#09, member <1 year)

For some party members, meetings failed to provide the same political excitement and engagement they felt during campaigning activity. Often this was linked to the sense that the real power existed elsewhere and they were keen to experience greater internal democracy.

"It didn't feel like active politics, it felt like a few blokes shuffling power around; well, most of it was, wasn't it?" (#11, member >20 years)

As with any organisation, frustrations often focused on individual conflicts. These were sometimes between the local and national party or between the local party and candidate.

"A lot of the time ego gets in the way of actually running a successful event" (#02, member <1 year)

"If you want to get to crux of why people leave or stay, it's about personalities" (#05, member 5 years)

The fourth and final category of negative opinion is unsurprisingly value change. Many members felt considerable dissatisfaction with the ideological positioning of their party currently, or at some stage in the past.

"What does the Labour party stand for now? I don't know if I know." (#02, member <1 year)

"I thought the party had lost its way in terms of the values I held. So I wasn't driven and motivated to .. I wouldn't say I felt moved to be part of it because there was nothing to be part of really." (#13, member 49 years)

Whilst members were colourfully vociferous in their analysis of problems in the party in these interviews, it was clear that they did not consider making public their discontent. Those who had left had not done so by resignation but had drifted away. Some of the members in these interviews who had felt uncomfortable about the changes in the party felt that they had been able to *"shut up and get on with it!"*. This reflects Van Haute's (2011) suggestion that activists, those socialised in the party 'family', whilst being a source of criticism within the party, are less likely to voice their discontent outside it. This is another consideration for the multi-speed party. More loosely attached affiliates and supporters who join at specific moments and do not stay long enough to develop social bonds may be more likely to criticise the party publicly. It is possible therefore that discontent may be more likely to be voiced outside the party when members are attracted by short-term opportunities.

6.3.2. Discontent and ideological incongruence

Value change within the party and the resulting ideological dissonance was clearly a major factor in party members' decisions to leave and is a significant source of discontent for existing party members. Recent literature has revealed the significant extent of ideological incongruence in parties (van Haute and Carty, 2012; Kölln and Polk, 2017): a perceived gap between party members' views and those of the party they belong to. Van Haute and Carty (2012) call these members 'ideological misfits'. They find that one in six members of Belgian and Canadian political parties see themselves as ideological misfits (defined as members who place themselves in a different place on a left-right scale to their party). Kölln and Polk's (2017) survey of Swedish party members finds two-thirds to be not perfectly congruent with their party (measured on a 10-point left-right scale).

The presence of high levels of ideological incongruence amongst party members, particularly in party systems that have a broader range of political parties than the UK, suggests that ideological incongruence is a major aspect of party membership. Yet it is an under-theorised area of party membership studies. Whilst we know how many party members see themselves as ideologically different and some sense of who they might be in terms of activity, we don't know why these members stay with their parties. Kölln and Polk, (2017) find that ideological incongruence is associated with higher probability of exit. Given this relationship, those who decide to stay are even more interesting.

Many members in this research perceived the values of the party to be different from their own (significantly different in some cases), but many also demonstrated an acceptance of those differences. They recognised that their party was broad in its appeal and that they could not expect perfect congruence of values.

"It would be bizarre if we all agreed with everything all the time" (#07, member 2 years)

"I can live with the division I think because that's healthy" (#20, member >20 years)

"I have a long history in the party. The right and left factions have always been in the party. I'm used to that" (#30, member >40 years)

Nor do members necessarily want or hope for perfect congruence:

"I don't think I would vote for a party because they're saying everything I think. Corbyn's brand of socialism isn't mine" (#19, member 3 years)

"I'm also very conscious of not floating in and out of the party as and when it agrees with me. It's not like I want the party always to be in agreement with me" (#15, member 7 years)

It is clear from interviews with party members that members often see a vast difference between their values and those that their party seems to be representing. Yet many accept this as a part of party membership, a part of politics. It is perhaps inevitable in a party, like Labour, that has traditionally tried to appeal to a broad range of values, that those values may fail to align with their supporters at one time or another. The catch-all party necessarily sacrifices a degree of member congruence for wider support. As Hirschman (1970) theorised, in moving to the median voter, parties risk member discontent. Van Haute and Carty (2012) find that mass parties of the left in their study (of nine Belgian and Canadian parties) have 'disproportionately' large numbers of these party member misfits. They suggest that the more radical party members in these parties of the left may see no viable alternative despite their party being more centrist than they would like. This reasoning could also be applied in the British context as Labour has historically dominated the left of politics and other parties have struggled for success under the electoral system. Exit in Hirschman's model, after all, requires an alternative opportunity to be available. The breadth and extent of ideological discontent in these interviews would support this view.

Members not only recognised a difference in their values and the values the party seemed to represent nationally, but also with the perceived values of their local party.

"I did mention Jeremy one day [at a meeting] and got a sharp intake of breath And I thought 'Oh, this is interesting - we do not like our leader'" (#23, member <1 year)

Some members see an ideological difference between the party at the local level and the national party, and associate with one and not the other. It is a differentiation that has not been made in studies of ideological incongruence.

"I associate very strongly with some figures in the Labour party but I don't kind of like the party .. just me personally, I don't always agree with what HQ says" (#07, member 2 years)

"I think because party politics at a national level is, and can be, very different from party politics at a local level, what we've done now is get very engaged locally" (#11, member >20 years)

The 'decoupling' of the local and national party is a consideration for the multi-speed membership party. Scarrow (2015) argues that multi-speed organising strategies can help local operations by identifying local volunteers for these local campaigns: the central

control of supporter information can be utilised to connect volunteers back with the local party. And this was indeed a strategy used to significant effect in the 2015 election campaign.²³ Yet, there is also the potential to heighten division: ‘to the extent that new affiliation modes remain focused on national party brands and the personalities of national leaders, they could contribute to a vertical decoupling of partisan mobilising’ (Scarrow, 2015, p.214). If supporters and new affiliation types link directly to party HQ and do not come into contact with the local party, these divisions could be intensified. Members highlighted this sense of separation between the different ‘faces’ of the party. In situations where leadership support is greatest amongst those not connected to local parties, the multi-speed party could exacerbate the local/national divide.

Party members can be annoyed with the way the party communicates with them, frustrated with the individuals involved at the top of the organisation, disappointed in the structures of the organisation and find, on occasion, that their values don’t match those the party appears to be representing, yet not only remain members of that organisation but engage in work on its behalf. Transferring this situation outside of party politics it is hard to imagine a customer of a high street firm remaining loyal to that company in the face of such terrible customer experience. The customer who receives annoying emails, dislikes the company bosses and the way the company is run, as well as at times finding themselves at odds with the morals of that firm, is highly unlikely to offer to work for them voluntarily. Yet party members do just that.

It is a useful reminder that the relationship party members have with their party differs greatly from the relationship consumers have with private firms. The customer experience of party membership leaves a great deal to be desired, yet these organisational quality issues do not have a bearing on exit in these situations. They are peripheral for party members, something that is accepted as part of party membership.

Even more surprising than the breadth of negative opinions was the strength of emotion in some of the responses, from members who despite these views, were still carrying their membership card:

“I’m ashamed to be associated with it”

“So that made us very angry, but I was still involved in the party at that stage”

²³ Author’s observation during participant observation phase of research on the 2015 election campaign

"I feel probably the most politically homeless I've ever felt, in that the Labour Party does not feel like the Labour Party I thought I'd joined."

Despite viewing their party in negative terms and feeling themselves apart from the party ideologically, these discontented members are still *members* of their party. In spite of grievances, negative opinion and ideological distance, party members were not calculating their exit strategy. The next section considers loyalty and seeks to explain the reason member 'misfits' endure.

6.4. Loyalty

Loyalty is seen as the 'unsold' (van Haute, 2011) or 'residual' (Ware, 1992) category in Hirschman's trilogy. In the exit/voice calculation, loyalty effects an 'exit tax' potentially making voice a more attractive option. Hirschman's (1970) use of 'loyalty' appears to be akin to brand loyalty but his discussion of group identification, family and tribe, appears to suggest something more (Dowding et al., 2000). In Whiteley and Seyd's (2002) exit model, loyalty is measured as expressive attachment potentially conflating two different concepts or attitudes. Without definition, 'loyalty' risks becoming a vessel for any behaviour that doesn't fit in the rational framework. To unpick the different concepts that underpin member loyalty, I use it here to simply mean continuous membership: the opposite of exit. In doing so (effectively taking loyalty as the dependent variable), the conditions and attitudes underpinning member loyalty can be explored.²⁴

Value change is the crucial catalyst prompting member exit, but members who have remained loyal for years have also seen the party's ideological position move away from their own at some stage. These party 'misfits' have remained loyal to a party that appears not to represent their values. Their loyalty has remained constant through leadership change and perceived value shift (even those who left had experienced a great deal of ideological incongruence before doing so). This raises the question of what exactly these members are being loyal to.

Members interviewed in this research see a difference in the party's values and their own; they also see a difference in the party at the national and local level. This suggests that

²⁴ This differs from Kölln and Polk's (2017) analysis which operationalises loyalty as 'their propensity to vote for another party'.

party member misfits may be making a distinction in what aspect of the party they are staying loyal to.

In analysing member loyalty, a significant conceptual difference emerged in terms of where members placed their loyalty and the type of attachment they have to the party. Below I outline the different categories of 'loyalty' emerging from the data.

Figure 9: Loyalty as expressive/instrumental attachment – categories and properties

Loyalty (non-exit)			
Category (explanation of behaviour)	Loyalty as expressive attachment		Loyalty as instrumental attachment
Category (behaviours)	Membership as identity	Membership as responsibility and ownership	Membership as functional
Properties of category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional attachment to party Party forms part of self-identity Linked to socialisation and social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loyalty to <i>ideal</i> of party (values based) Responsibility to <i>ideal</i> of party 'Holding on'/'hanging in' Linked to investment and to work (see social ties) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loyalty to goals/outcomes Loyalty to values (own) over party attachment Absence of aspects of expressive attachment, e.g, self-identity. Linked to fluidity in-out, multiple partisan memberships
Exit behaviours	Linked to loyalty (non-exit) when values perceived to have changed		Linked to exit when party values perceived to have changed
Examples	<p>"It was almost like being welcomed back home"</p> <p>"I think I'm more emotionally connected this time"</p> <p>"You develop, I think very quickly, an emotional attachment"</p> <p>"I don't see an alternative for me"</p> <p>"It's become who I am. I am a Labour Party member and I am a card-carrying Labour Party member"</p>	<p>"You had a pride in that, which was not necessarily associated with the party at that time"</p> <p>"The massive cost of leaving the party is that it loses you all of the capital and commitment that you've built up"</p> <p>"In a way it was me saying, I'm not going to let you have this party"</p> <p>"I do think that it is the history and an idea of that [history] and of how it [the party] should be."</p>	<p>"There's lots of things you can do which you couldn't as a non-member"</p> <p>"The only reason I stayed in the Labour party was because I thought x was a project that could help change Labour"</p> <p>"[I thought] I would stick with the best Opposition that there is. And that's the Labour Party."</p> <p>"At the moment I think I can continue that relationship up until the point when those values are put to the electorate."</p> <p>"It's the impact that this would have. It makes anything possible"</p>

The significant theoretic distinction emerging from this research is the difference between type of party attachment measured by which aspect of the party members feel loyal to and the nature of their connection. These distinctions also appear to be able to shed light on exit behaviours. I label these *expressive* and *instrumental* attachments. These terms have been used in a range of other contexts but here they are applied uniquely to the member-party connection.

The concept of expressive or emotional attachment in this analysis takes two forms: membership as a sense of self/self-identity, and membership as ownership of, or responsibility to, the party. These emotional attachments appear to inhibit exit behaviour and explain how members remain in the party despite perceived shifts in values/party goals.

The nature of members' expressive attachment is further refined by considering that the object of members' loyalty may differ. Amongst those with expressive attachment to the party, it appears that their loyalty is based on a version of the party that may not correspond to the party as it exists in reality. They are emotionally attached to the *ideal* of the party: the party as they imagine it should be. This can be either the notion of the party they have assimilated as part of their identity or the party that they feel they have invested in at one time or other. That initial investment creates a sense of ownership of the party which members hold on to in hope that the party may return to their ideal of it in future. In a sense it is a loyalty to the party as organisation, but it is a version of the party that may not correspond to reality. This group are likely to be loyal to values but they needn't be the party's perceived values at that time, rather they may be seen as the party's 'true' values.

These aspects of expressive attachment clearly also have a link to aspects of socialisation and social ties discussed in chapter 5. Party socialisation and social ties developed through friendship networks and work help create and reinforce the sense of responsibility and ownership to the party. Likewise, those networks reinforced the idea of the party as part of members' self-identities.

In contrast to this expressive attachment, some members placed a greater emphasis on the party's goals and values and how these related to their own goals and values. These members expressed doubt about their ability to remain in the party through change. They linked their membership to expected outcomes and a shift in values was seen as good

reason for exit. A change in direction in the party was a reason to leave or seek membership of a different party. This links to the aspects of fluidity in party membership and fluidity within some party members' partisan behaviour (previous memberships with other parties (see section 5.4.3)). These members had a loyalty to values and outcomes, instead of the party as an organisation. Those with this more instrumental attachment may not have the sufficient investment and social ties to see the party as part of their identity or something they have a stake in through ownership and responsibility.

The links between expressive and instrumental attachments and socialisation and membership fluidity also suggests that neither of these attachments are set in stone. As with party members' movement in-and-out of active participation, the nature of their attachment could change: socialisation may help move party members from instrumental to expressive attachment.

Exploring member exit and members' attachment to the party has revealed different objects of loyalty and types of attachment. The discovery that some members had remained loyal despite significant changes in leadership, and arguably values, as well as remaining in the party when they had perceived the party as not pursuing the goals they valued, when they had developed significant ideological incongruence and also perceived that incongruence, is a puzzle. But the distinction between expressive and instrumental attachment, and the idea of remaining loyal to the *ideal* of the party rather than the party itself, developed in this research, helps explain this inconsistency. Below I explain these concepts in detail.

6.4.1. Loyalty as expressive attachment

This research finds loyalists amongst those who are dissatisfied with the current leadership and those who were dissatisfied with leaders of the past. Leadership for most was not the focus of their party attachment. Though a few members cited the party leader as a factor in their reasons for joining, or as a symbol of the value change that caused their exit, leadership change was not a *catalyst* for exit. The party's leadership was sometimes seen as an embodiment of party values but members also disassociated the leader from the party.

Party members have also remained loyal even when they see the party as diverging from their values (a change in the party's 'purpose'). In these circumstances it is hard to see

how loyalty could attach to either the values they see the party representing (which they perceive to have changed) or their own values (which they would consider to be different from the party's). For loyalists, there must be something else that helps to explain their perseverance.

Analysis of loyalists' narratives suggests that it is emotional or expressive attachments that are key to understanding that loyalty. Many members described their connection to the party as an emotional attachment.

"I really felt comfortable – it was almost like being welcomed back home" (#12, member 43 years)

"You get swept away in the emotion of it" (#06, member 26 years)

"So, in a sense it was very, very personal" (#13, member 49 years)

The strength of these expressive attachments had a clear bearing on their decisions to remain loyal in the face of value change:

"Maybe something's gonna happen and I will just have to leave and it will be a relief in a way because I won't have to worry about this stuff, but I think I'm more emotionally connected this time." (#20, member > 20 years)

You develop, I think very quickly, an emotional attachment. One of the things is you begin to develop friends in the party and those friendships become hard to break. But I think it is something I would give up with a very heavy heart (#16, member 2 years)

We know that expressive attachment is a motivating factor in joining a party (Whiteley et al., 1994) and partly explains exit in the literature (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2016). However, expressive attachment can be understood in different ways and can attach to different objects. These interviews suggest that members make a distinction between the central party and party on the ground (section 6.3.2) so when questioned about attachment, what part of 'the party' do members think about?

Delving further into the nature of members' expressive attachment to their party reveals two important themes. Members' party attachments were expressed as loyalty from a sense of responsibility and ownership and also, as a commitment based on self-identification.

6.4.1.i. Expressive attachments: Membership as identity

For some loyal party members, the party has become part of them as much as they are a part of the party. Members have assimilated the party as part of their self-identity and this attachment has endured even when the party changed. Some members simply couldn't consider exit as it would mean rejecting part of their identity.

"I think my loyalty was cemented in 1972 ... It wasn't loyalty to something in particular because certainly the Labour Party changed over the years and I may have agreed with something more in 1983 than in 1993 but it was almost by that time, something of who I am, my identity - this is me, this is who I am. It's part of me and of how I've lived my life." (#12, member 43 years)

"It's become who I am. I am a Labour Party member and I am a card-carrying Labour Party member." (#22, member >20 years)

"I need to stay in [the party]. I feel like it is part of my life. It would be almost like a bereavement to leave; it's such a part of my identity." (#29, member 24 years)

Members' identification with the party was not simply a matter of party identification as understood as 'the party you feel closest to', but in a sense of converging with the party: the party becoming part of a member's self-identity. Again, this links back to socialisation and social ties within the party. Members' sense of themselves as identified with the Labour Party would be reinforced by those social connections.

For members who felt the party was a part of their identity, the party would need to change significantly in order to break that connection. Members felt the party would need to change beyond recognition, shifting further to the right or left than it had ever previously done.

"if the Labour Party went even further, past Corbyn or back past Blair, I might think again" (#12, member 43 years)

"The Labour Party would have to be awful for me to leave" (#30, member >40 years)

6.4.1.ii. Expressive attachments: Membership as responsibility and ownership

Members who remained loyal in the face of ideological dissonance also described their attachment in terms of 'hanging in'. It would seem that some 'misfits' are staying loyal to the party in the hope of future change or a belief that they have a responsibility to direct the party back to where it should be. They are remaining loyal to the party they think Labour *should* be:

"I just stick with it. It's better. Something's got to be better than the alternative" (#24, member 54 years)

"I beat myself up and said, no, we've had more difficult times than this. Christ, we had Gaitskell! And you hung on in there, so you better go back in and hang back in there. So, I did." (#25, member 57 years)

Members felt they could sit back and wait until the party changed, and they felt they had a responsibility to do so. These members were loyal to an *ideal* of the party and expressed a sense of responsibility for keeping that idea alive. This also explains why leadership change doesn't always prompt exit: members were able to disassociate the party from its leader, waiting for a leader that better represented the party as they believed it should be.

This sense of responsibility was also expressed as ownership: *"I made a conscious decision. It was my party not his. In a way it was me saying, I'm not going to let you have this party" (#13, member 49 years)*

This helps explain how members can remain loyal to both their personal values and to a party that doesn't appear to represent those values: it is a loyalty to an ideal of the party. Within a broad-based party like Labour, this is not an unobtainable ideal. The election of a left-wing leader at the time of interviewing had given some members a sense of justification that their 'hanging in' had paid off:

"It was huge. I felt quite vindicated ...Because the left had stuck about and kept plugging away at things" (#19, member 3 years)

Investment in membership was also mentioned in the context of processes of socialisation (identified in the previous chapter). Members felt they had invested in learning the rules of the club and building friendships within it:

"The massive cost of leaving the party is that it loses you all of the capital and commitment that you've built up" (#15, member 7 years)

It is also worth noting that for many exit was simply not considered an option. Some members felt a sense of ownership of party values but for members who were in elected positions, they had a responsibility and ownership of the party as organisation.

6.4.2. Expressive vs instrumental attachment

Loyalty and attachment are intimately linked, but loyalty is more than identifying with the party. Members remained loyal through periods when they would be unlikely to describe

themselves as ‘identifying’ with the party; indeed, through periods in which they were deeply antagonistic towards the party. By examining party attachment in more depth (party members’ connection to, and breaks with their party over the course of their lives) these interviews have revealed the exact nature of that attachment and how members can remain loyal as ‘misfits’.

Most party members find aspects of the organisation irritating. Some feel very negatively about their party. At points, most members have seen their party represent values they do not associate with. These findings coupled with the pull of the centre-ground in ‘big tent’ politics of the catch-all party, suggests that at some point, most members would experience being a party ‘misfit’. In some cases, the combination of ideological distance and a lack of social and participatory connection has seen members drift away from the party. For others, however, the same circumstances have not led to exit.

Mapping members’ movements in-and-out of the party, and the way they conceptualise and frame their relationship with the party, has revealed that the critical factor in keeping members in is expressive attachment. For those who have stayed loyal to the party when all other factors point towards exit, it was the emotional pull of the party (not necessarily what it is, but the idea of it) that has prevented them leaving.

Those members who did leave, had done so at a time when they did not feel the same emotional attachment. They saw a distinction between the party’s values and their own, and did not see the party as the vehicle for progressing those values. Members highlighted this more instrumental approach:

“We always said that the Labour party’s a necessary but insufficient vehicle – you needed to go beyond it. But it was necessary, that was the key point, that it was necessary. I guess when I left [], I didn’t think it was necessary anymore.” (#17, member 23 years)

Making this distinction between expressive and instrumental attachment helps explain why some members remain loyal to an organisation that does not appear to represent their values and others exit under the same circumstances. Members who have an instrumental view of party membership would be inclined to find a new vehicle to further their values if the party was felt not to be progressing their causes. Those with an expressive attachment would be disinclined to associate themselves with another party, even if that party more closely matched their values. Importantly, these attachments are

not set in stone. Members who had previously taken a more instrumental approach to their membership had gone on to develop an emotional attachment.

Delving into the expressive/instrumental distinction also helps explain why some members join and don't participate, whilst others participate without feeling the need to formally join. The former may have a predominantly expressive attachment linked to their identity which sees simply 'being' a member as an adequate expression of their identity. Those with more instrumental attachment may see the 'card carrying' aspect of membership unnecessary (*"I don't join things in general" (#08, member < 1 year)*).

This insight into members' relationships with their party adds depth to our understanding of exit and loyalty. Making the distinction between expressive and instrumental attachments, and exploring their precise nature, helps explain the presence and perseverance of ideological misfits in parties. For multi-speed membership parties, this distinction is important.

6.4.3. Implications for multi-speed membership

Multi-speed parties benefit from making joining the party easier and more remote (via online channels and directly to the central party), ensuring supporters can attach themselves to the party with minimal effort. This approach would also make it easier for those with an instrumental attachment to join as-and-when they feel the party is the right vehicle to further their values (and also to leave when they feel the party is not the right vehicle for their goals). In doing so, the multi-speed party can pick up new members and tap into new support bases. However, to maintain a stable membership base, it is necessary to provide the right environment for expressive attachments to develop.

As earlier chapters have shown, there is a difficult relationship between processes of party socialisation and the multi-speed approach. Socialisation may create a difficult environment for multi-speed organising to thrive: new supporters may be dissuaded from active participation by the strength of existing social networks amongst members, or find it difficult to integrate into the enclosed party world created by its specific language and rules. Conversely, the important processes of socialisation that keep members involved and active could be eroded by the fluidity and change in membership that a multi-speed approach embraces. Likewise, strong expressive attachment may be affected by significant change in the party. The emotional link may be severed by significant change in party

membership and conversely, the strength of members' emotional attachments may make it difficult for the party to fully embrace a more fluid multi-speed model. However, this research also suggests that these expressive attachments provide a ballast to change: they keep members in, even when there is significant ideological and party change. Expressive attachments may therefore provide the glue to keep the party going when all else is in flux.

6.4.4. Conclusions - Party membership as committed incongruence

The previous chapter looked at the links between socialisation and activism, and suggested that processes of socialisation had a positive impact on levels of active participation. This chapter has shown the role of these social links and activism in preventing exit. Exit is driven by a change in values (members highlighted specific policies that provided the catalyst for their exit), but a decline in activity and lack of social connection create the conditions that make exit possible. There are positive links between loyalty, socialisation and social ties, and activity, but these are facets of party membership which may be eroded by centralisation: a key characteristic of the multi-speed party.

Whilst the multi-speed party may be able to attract active support around internal democratic opportunities, and the big electoral contests, it may also want to maintain a more stable and skilled membership base for party activities outside of these high-profile moments. To maintain this balance, the multi-speed party would need to ensure that organisational changes do not impact on socialisation processes.

However, when it comes to attracting high-intensity participants (those who are willing to stand for election and take on time-intensive roles within the party), fluidity in party membership is not necessarily a problem. Many of those who had left the party had, at other stages in their lives, also taken on key roles. Movement in-and-out of the party is not the preserve of more loosely attached members. Providing members with the right opportunities when they have the time to commit is more important than a lifetime of commitment; just as attracting supporters when they want to get involved is more important than issuing them with a membership card.

Value change is central to member exit but many members who feel ideologically apart from their party remain loyal. It is likely, given the changing policy environment, movement in-and-out of government, and the range of ideological standpoints that catch-all parties try to encapsulate, that many members will find themselves at odds with the

direction of their party at some point. It is likely that at some stage everyone, if they stay, will become a party 'misfit'. Understanding why these member 'misfits' remain is of value if parties want to maintain some stability in their membership base.

This analysis reveals that party members are often discontent and predominantly discontented about value change. Ideological incongruence is a significant feature in party members' experience but is largely accepted as part of the nature of party membership. Though the multi-speed party may be comfortable with a more fluid support base and may see little distinction between membership and non-member support, there are compelling reasons to maintain some stability in the membership base. Understanding exactly why members can remain loyal in the face of significant change in the party reveals the factors that may help multi-speed parties do just that.

Analysing member exit (and loyalty) has highlighted the role of expressive or emotional attachment in keeping members in the party. Some members remain loyal under conditions that would be expected to prompt exit (value change, a decline in social contact and decline in participation). The fundamental difference for these loyal members is expressive attachment. Self-identification with the party and/or commitment to an *ideal* of the party, encourages members to 'hold on'. Members are not necessarily remaining loyal to the party but to a sense of self, or to the party as they want it to be. Refining how we understand expressive attachment helps to explain how members can remain loyal to a party that they feel no longer represents their values, and this could help operationalise expressive attachment in quantitative analysis of exit. Members are also making a distinction between different levels of the party organisation in their attachments (local, national, leader, other representatives). This is a distinction that has not been explored before in the context of ideological incongruence and exit.

Chapter 7: Members vs supporters – expanding affiliation and political rights

This in-depth supply-side analysis of party membership (why party members join, how their relationship with the party develops, and why they remain loyal or not) has revealed new aspects of party membership and allowed conclusions to be drawn about the impact of moving to multi-speed membership. Chapter 5 highlighted that two of the most significant perceived benefits (selective incentives and solidary bonds) are not directly affected by expanded affiliation. Chapter 6 revealed that members with a particular type of attachment can withstand significant change within the party before considering exit. These findings suggest that changes to the party brought about by looser affiliation options and easy access components of multi-speed membership, may not disrupt the traditional membership model. This chapter now looks more directly at the impact of the final component of multi-speed membership: the extension of political rights to non-members.

This research has found that social bonds and selective outcome and process incentives are important for prompting joining (or re-joining) the party, and for becoming active and staying active in the party. The problem is that they tend to be exclusive and that is potentially a problem for parties trying to widen their base. However, parties are expanding affiliation more often through the expansion of political rights, not solidary or material ones. Scarrow (2015) argues that parties' declining ability to offer material and solidary incentives means political incentives such as voting rights and policy input are an increasingly important offer: though few parties highlight specific reasons to join on their website, those that do highlight opportunities to participate and influence policy (2015, p.161).

The multi-speed party pursues a dual strategy of retaining traditional membership whilst expanding other affiliation options which suggests there is potential for conflict. Parties wishing to recruit and retain members might be advised to limit intra-party ballots to the long-term membership, whilst those seeking to mobilise a wider constituency of support would want to expand them (2015, p.212). These political rights can be used to attract new affiliates or reward and encourage member loyalty, but not both at the same time. To date, however, we do not know whether the multi-speed model of expanded affiliation and

rights does in fact create the expected tension, and whether it can have an effect on existing member motivations and attachments.

7.1 Multi-speed membership and ‘narratives of legitimacy’

Scarrow (2015) argues that when member rights and privileges are extended to a wider group of supporters, questions about the distribution of influence arise: the change brings into question the party’s ‘narrative of legitimacy’. Parties that have grown out of a cleavage representation model, defending group interests and using membership to reinforce links to the groups they represent, have particular difficulties with the shift to a ‘multi-speed’ model of representation. In such parties, the widening of affiliation presents a significant shift in the party’s notion of political legitimacy, that is, who the party represents and who should define its values (Scarrow, 2015).

The Labour Party’s response to the first outing of the new supporter rules suggests that this change did challenge the party’s narrative of legitimacy. By the end of the summer of the first leadership contest under multi-speed rules, members of the Parliamentary Labour Party had called for the election to be halted amid fears of entryism. This fear of non-legitimate supporters signing up (known registrations included high-profile Conservative supporters who created a spoof ‘ToriesforCorbyn’ campaign, and members and former candidates of other parties such as the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition and Left Unity (Wintour and Perraudin, 2015)) saw the party begin a process of ‘rigorous due diligence’. This process involved full-time members of staff as well as MPs and their constituency staff ‘vetting’ supporter sign-ups using social media and local constituency knowledge to detect and report anyone who was deemed not a genuine supporter. The party issued a list of seven criteria they used for rejecting registered supporters including: if the applicant had nominated candidates in recent national or local elections, if the applicant’s reason given for applying to vote was deemed unacceptable, or when statements made by the applicant on social media appeared to run against party aims and values. In practice this proved a difficult process with one member allegedly reported for failing to attend a constituency BBQ (Bush, 2015), a suggestion not upheld.

The problems defining who should and should not receive a ballot highlights the multi-speed nature of partisan attachment and the problems of moving to a multi-speed affiliation model within a party traditionally representing group interests and designed around a collective interest representation. Whilst the process of vetting supporters in the

Labour leadership contest may have been primarily motivated by a desire to avoid the result being subject to legal challenge, it highlights the difficulty parties like Labour can face when trying to layer new, wider affiliation models on top of traditional collective, member-based structures.

The Labour Party's process of vetting supporters enrolling in the leadership contest can be seen as a process of drawing a boundary around who is legitimate and who isn't: an attempt to rigidly define what it means to support a party. Yet for most parties the notion of membership is blurring, and the nature of support is increasingly fluid. The struggle in the Labour Party can be seen as a struggle to accommodate the notion of a fully open contest, responding to the more fluid supporter environment (and encouraging it), within the structure of a party which formerly expressed interests through a rigid system of collective representation. For parties like Labour this change is an uncomfortable one because it challenges who the party is responsible to. Opening up and 'reaching out' contains an implicit shift in responsiveness from the interests of the committed to the wider electorate, and from group interests to individuals.

These tensions in the party appear to confirm the multi-speed hypothesis that expanding rights challenges the narratives of legitimacy within a party. However, it is not clear whether the discomfort at the elite level is replicated in the membership. Does the expected tension between supporters and members replicate this elite level conflict?

7.2. Members vs supporters

This analysis looks at attitudes towards, and evaluations of, the new supporter scheme²⁵ in the context of what motivates members and how they view their own membership of the party. Contrary to expected outcomes I find there to be significant support for registered supporter status and external involvement in leadership elections. Whilst organisationally a move towards multi-speed membership suggests a conflict in the status of different affiliates, from a member perspective, the conflict appears minimised.

²⁵ Interviews with party members were conducted after the new supporter structure had been introduced in the Labour Party and both during, and after, the first leadership contest using the new rules. The interviewees were asked their opinion of the new supporter scheme and where necessary, details of the scheme were given. The explanation of how the scheme worked was given in neutral terms but reference was made to the cost of joining as a supporter as it was at the time of interviewing (£3).

Drawing on member interviews, I offer three possible explanations for members' positive attitudes towards open intra-party democracy in the party. Firstly, the role of financial costs in member-party transactions is explored and members' reactions to the scheme analysed in terms of their relationship with the party. This analysis finds that members stand in a reciprocal relationship with their party, willing to trade off loss of personal benefits for the benefit of the party as a whole. Secondly, I analyse the impact of widened affiliation in terms of member motivations and perceptions of wider party benefits. This analysis reveals that political rights do not feature significantly in the incentive processes that are driving active party members towards membership. Thirdly, the place of political rights in the context of the party itself is explored. I argue that the collective traditions of the party, whilst undermined by the transition to individualised participation, are also making that transition easier.

7.3. Results

7.3.1. Beyond cost-benefit

Expanding plebiscitary intra-party democracy beyond the membership of the party would appear to lessen the value of membership and we would therefore expect to see a negative reaction to the introduction of the supporter scheme from members. Yet for the members interviewed in this research, some positive assessment was offered by most. Most of the members who assessed the scheme positively did so from the party's perspective. They made a judgement according to what would benefit the party as organisation, rather than what would benefit them. That is not to say that members could not see the potential problems in the scheme (*"I thought it was undemocratic"*) or that they were happy with the outcomes. They tended to articulate but then discount their personal views. Whilst expressing some concern, they (re)evaluated the change from the party's perspective, considering the potential benefits for the continuity and strength of the party.

"I suppose there's a tiny bit of me that says, if they have the same rights as me, why am I paying ten times the amount they are. But the majority of me thinks – but this is what's healthy for the party and we run the risk of ossifying and being set in our ways and not allowing other people in that can bring new ideas and fresh blood and bums on seats and feet on pavements and knuckles on doors... And so for a grumpy old cow like me to say 'ohh they have the same rights as me and I pay x amount per year' it's just a bit silly really, because we're not a club, we should be a living, breathing, rejuvenating party" (#06, member 26 years)

"I think personally I feel a little awkward with it because I think for me there isn't the level of commitment and buy-in that I would look for in the movement but I equally accept there's a strategy to build a mass party and to reflect changing times then I think you've got to embrace it. So, I personally feel discomfited by it but actually I think it's probably, as a strategy, probably the right thing to be doing at this time." (#13, member 49 years)

Though many admitted that there was an element of selfishness and protectiveness over their party and their place within it, they tended to put aside their personal feelings and self-interested position to take the wider view. Members articulated conflicting personal and party-focused opinions: part selfish, part altruistic, demonstrating a dual attitude towards this change in their party. Members had a selfish preference for preserving the party they knew and an altruistic preference for the broader success of their party. In thinking about party organisation, it would appear that the altruistic preference governs.

Giving members space to reflect on their views during these interviews allowed for a more detailed assessment of their attitudes. Whilst some members initially expressed some discomfort with the supporter scheme, they tended to re-evaluate, thinking beyond narrow personal cost-benefit assessments. These responses suggest that members' commitment to the party is such that they put the benefits for the party as organisation above their own interests. Whilst this could also be conceived as a very indirect way of achieving personal benefits (people like to feel part of successful organisations and movements) it suggests a more reciprocal relationship. This dual altruistic/selfish stance also mirrors the selective and collective incentives structures outlined earlier. Members can be drawn to the party on both individual and solidaristic motives and would therefore also be expected to have both personal and group-based responses to party change.

This altruistic-selfish stance towards the supporter scheme was the same for both new and longer-standing members, as well as those that had originally become active as supporters themselves. Such was the surprising uniformity of this response that it was necessary to search for deviant cases. Two groups of member would be imagined to be more likely to react negatively to the change: long-standing members and those not in favour of the leadership candidate who won under the OMOV-plus-supporters scheme. Long-standing members, those who have built up social connections and given many hours of voluntary service to the party, might be more protective of the party against 'outsiders' whose commitment fell short of their own. Likewise, they may also feel that their long years of service should earn them greater returns. Particularly given the long history of battles within the party for greater membership rights (see Russell, 2005),

members might rightly object to their expansion outside their number when finally achieved. Members with longer memberships were sought in the second round of interviews to interrogate this finding.

The search for deviant cases in the second round of interviews served to confirm the trend. Those that had a long-standing commitment to the party were supportive from a party perspective, though with some acknowledgement of personal feelings. Additionally, those who were not pleased with the outcome of the leadership election, looked past the result offering a positive analysis of the scheme, again from the party perspective. The two wholly negative responses to the scheme raised an objection to OMOV in general (in favour of assembly-based party democracy) and concerns from a union perspective.

When considering the impact of party organisational change on existing memberships, the influence of this altruistic preference is significant. It is clear from these interviews that party members are inclined to make assessments of party change from a collective position: for the good of the party. This is perhaps unsurprising in a party that venerates these values. However, in the context of party change, it would appear that a basic cost-benefit reading of member preferences is too narrow.

Another recurring theme was the idea of supporter status as a route to further commitment. Many interviewees expressed a desire for the supporter scheme to act as a gateway to full membership or more activism (even without full membership):

"If people want to become a supporter as a stepping stone to membership then that's good" (#19, member 3 years)

"I can see the point, that it is a sort of commitment without it being a total commitment. So maybe it is a way in. On the other hand maybe it is delaying any real commitment which is what we want" (#21, member 54 years)

These views reflect members' own experience of membership, as linked to commitment and activism. They were more comfortable with supporter status as a route to a level of commitment and activism commensurate with their own. In this there is a potential conflict between members' aims and party aims. The multi-speed model would see looser supporter status as something distinct. Multi-speed parties take a functional approach to support: it is what affiliates do rather than their affiliation status that counts (Scarrow, 2015, p.206) and movement in-and-out of party support is accepted as a normal feature of participation and engagement. For more committed activists, personal aims for a similarly

committed support base may run against party aims for a wider and more loosely attached base. This change of culture is a potential source of tension.

However, some members took a distinctly instrumental view of the scheme. The electoral and linkage benefits of involving supporters in leadership choice were raised by a number of interviewees. These members suggested that the membership (defined by more than one interviewee as “weird”) was not always best at making such decisions, particularly in a strategic electoral sense.²⁶

“Surely they’re the very people you want. If you’re asking as big a group as possible, who would you like to lead us, or [] if we chose that person as our leader would you elect them” (#09, member <1 year)

Those that took an outcomes view were happier to see supporter status as something separate from membership: it has a separate purpose and therefore a different level of commitment was to be expected (*“I feel that being a party member is only significant to other people in the party” (#02, member 1 year)*)

Some members saw the increase in numbers as a positive outcome for the party, *“I was quite pleased when we had this huge influx [of new supporters]. We had huge excitement and many are still here.” (#30, member >40 years)*

Both the members who viewed the supporter scheme as electoral strategy and those that saw it as a gateway to further commitment and activism, overlooked the financial angle. Actual financial costs were of little to no significance to members in these interviews. Despite explicit reference to financial cost of joining as a supporter when questioned, all except two participants failed to mention financial inequity in their responses. Members appeared largely unconcerned that someone could get the same intra-party rights as them for as little as a fifteenth of the price.²⁷

This supports Whiteley and Seyd’s contention that actual party financial costs are trivial or ‘below the threshold of saliency’ (1992, p.78). This is probably especially true in a party like Labour which, following a multi-speed approach, has at various times reduced the cost of membership, introducing £1 joining offers and reduced fees for certain groups.

²⁶ Many of these interviews took place before the result of the first leadership contest in 2015.

²⁷ At the time of interviewing, full adult party membership was £46.50 and reduced membership (students/young people/unwaged) £12 per year.

However, it also suggests that party members have a relationship with their party that cannot be understood on a basic cost-benefit understanding. Interviewees' tendency to overlook the financial inequality contained within the £3 supporter scheme corresponds with another recurring theme that members see party membership dues as donations. Party membership was simply not seen as something purchased. This emphasises the idea of membership being an attachment rather than an exchange.

Party members' willingness to take personal views out of the equation and to discount the actual cost inequity of the supporter scheme, suggest that simple cost-benefit assessments are of limited value in a party membership context. Whilst parties are seeking to attract new participants by reducing the costs of joining or offering temporary or 'light' membership options (Kosiara-Pedersen et al., 2014), this research suggests that actual costs are not a barrier to recruitment. Indeed, in Labour's experience, raising the fee to vote in the second leadership election from £3 to £25 appeared to do little to diminish the number of supporters signing up. Responding to declining memberships by addressing the costs alone, would do little to reverse the trend.

These findings suggest that, whilst the party that pursues a multi-speed approach to membership may shift the balance of power towards those who have less of a connection to the party, those that do have an established relationship may be willing to accept this loss of power in return for the success of their party. Were the move towards multi-speed membership perceived to be affecting the party negatively however, the response might be different: *"It should be an opportunity, if it wasn't all combined with utterly disastrous electoral prospects"*.

7.3.2. Activists and active incentives

By expanding plebiscitary intra-party democracy, parties place a focus on political rights as incentives to attract new participants. The expansion of these rights to non-members would appear to be taking away from existing party members by sharing their rights with those who have less of a connection with the party. However, it may be the case that intra-party democratic rights simply don't hold much worth in members' assessments of the value of their membership. This research suggests that, considered in the context of what motivates active party members to join in the first place, intra-party democratic rights have little value on their own.

In the detailed exploration of active participants routes to party membership in Chapter 5 (the values, ideas, context and events that led them to join the party) intra-party rights featured in only two members' joining narratives. Political rights also failed to feature in the current concerns of these party members. Intra-party democratic opportunities may have been a catalyst for signing up for some, but they were replaced by other incentives for continued membership. In interviews I found little evidence that these rights were valued above other benefits by active members: new, long-standing, or supporter-turned-members.

Even though the leadership election (and for some, the London Mayoral primary) had placed a focus on selection within the party at the time of interviewing, many interviewees were unaware of what rights they and others had, or how they worked.

"My overall thought is, 'Do I feel empowered to participate in Labour Party elections'? Well clearly I am important in a sense because I'm getting all these emails from people and phone calls. On the other hand, I don't understand what the value of my participation is" (#03, member <1 year)

"I definitely wouldn't have paid £3 to have those rights" (#08, member <1 year)

Though political rights are clearly attractive (over 200,000 new (or returning) members and supporters joined to vote in the 2015 leadership selection, 121,000 supporters signed up for the 2016 vote and the previous leader selection in 2010 also saw an increase in membership) these rights would appear to have little value to members who have been, or are involved in, high-intensity activities: those that sustain the party during elections, outside of election periods, and within representative institutions.

That active opportunities are valued by active members is perhaps unsurprising, but it is an important consideration for parties that need to sustain an active volunteer base. Political rights were barely mentioned in active members' narratives. Even when questioned directly, it would appear that they were of little value compared to other forms of engagement: they played little to no role in drawing these members to the party. This is not to say that members would be unconcerned if they were taken away, but that compared to other benefits, political rights had not been instrumental in persuading active members to join in the first place. This would seem to support Seyd and Whiteley's findings in their analysis of high intensity participation (2002), that an increase in opportunities for plebiscitary participation is 'self-defeating' if the aim is to sustain an active grassroots membership (2002, p.147). They found that following previous reforms to the Electoral College, expanding the opportunity for intra-party democratic

engagement, the Labour Party experienced an increase in membership but a decline in average rates of active participation.

It is a paradox of participation within political parties that whilst greater political rights are desired, and increasingly granted, members do not always take them up (Gauja and van Haute, 2014). A more nuanced understanding of the routes people take to party membership and the different ways they connect to and engage in party activity revealed in Chapter 5 suggests an answer to this paradox. The incentives that draw active party members to the party and the place of plebiscitary opportunities within this pathway suggests that for committed activists, political rights are important perhaps only symbolically.

The incentives that have led people to active membership would appear to be unaffected by a change in intra-party democratic rights. Selective outcome incentives and selective process incentives require active participation to be realised. To gain access to selective outcome benefits such as career opportunities or new skills, members need to get involved in party activity. Those serious about careers in politics would need to demonstrate commitment and this would require not only full membership but a substantial amount of active participation. Likewise, realising selective process benefits would require some engagement with activity: one cannot benefit from 'meeting likeminded people' if one does not meet with them. These benefits cannot be supplanted or substituted by atomised plebiscitary participation.

Moreover, selective process benefits are not directly affected by reaching beyond the membership. In Olson's scheme of collective goods, these are benefits that have 'jointness of supply': one person's consumption does not diminish another's (Olson, 1995). Similarly, expanding voting rights is unlikely to affect the bonds formed amongst those engaged in campaigning together. In other words, the sharing of political rights with supporters would appear to leave the value of members' selective process and outcome benefits unchanged. For collective incentives too, the extension of voting rights on its own does little to affect these ideological motivations. Were these rights to extend to policy development (being considered at the time of writing as part of a wider programme of change in the party, but not yet enacted), collective incentives could be affected.

It would appear that the expansion of political rights takes little away from active party members because such rights are not necessarily highly prized in the first place and can't

diminish the things that are. As one party member put it, *“to feel like new people take something away from you is sort of against the spirit of a political party”*. It would appear that the multi-speed party can take a dual approach to membership and support because these two groups of affiliates potentially have different incentive structures. Active members, attracted by selective benefits, value active opportunities. Those initially attracted by plebiscitary participation may not. However, these members and supporters may come to value other party ‘goods’, such as those derived from active participation, if parties can provide an environment in which to make that happen.

Yet whilst an increased supporter base may leave selective incentives untouched, a substantially increased *membership* base might not. Unlike supporter involvement, an increase in membership could increase competition for party positions and potentially expand local groups beyond those members considered ‘likeminded’, directly affecting members’ selective benefits. Though members attracted by plebiscitary opportunities may be less interested in taking on formal roles in the party that go beyond voting, there is a potential conflict if they do become active. For some of the members interviewed, the seeds of this potential *intra-membership* conflict had already taken root (though perhaps only in the short term):

“I think if I’m completely honest, I’m a little bit anxious about being a party member now because of what’s happened in recent times and the increase in membership.”
(#12, member 43 years)

“I can live with the division I think because that’s healthy but [] a lot of it is quite a slap in the face, [] I do feel that there is a dismissiveness of the people who have put in a lot of the legwork.” (#20, member >20 years)

7.3.3 Multi-speed membership and collective traditions

Another possible explanation for members’ support of expanded intra-party democratic rights can be found in the history of democracy in the party. As noted in Chapter 4, the British Labour Party, unlike other European social-democratic parties, has not always had an individual membership base. Members were not allowed to join as individuals until 1918. Before that point, most Labour Party members participated through their unions or as members of the affiliated Independent Labour Party (Tanner et al., 2000). As such, the party structures have always reflected a collective affiliation approach. Moreover, trade union affiliation has always dwarfed individual membership numbers in the party.²⁸

²⁸ Though records of membership are notoriously inaccurate (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001; Scarrow, 2002), individual membership of the party reached a peak of just over a million members in 1952,

Individual Labour Party members have, as their intra-party democratic rights expanded, always shared these rights with other affiliates. Accordingly, Labour Party members have not enjoyed exclusive rights to intra-party democratic functions in the same way as members of other mass membership parties.

The leadership election immediately prior to the introduction of the new supporter scheme is a good example of the role played by member and affiliate votes in leadership contests. Though union influence was widely seen to have been reduced by earlier reforms (Quinn, 2004b; Russell, 2005), the 2010 leadership election saw the union-favoured candidate triumph over the candidate narrowly preferred by the Parliamentary Labour Party and member sections of the electoral college (Jobson and Wickham-Jones, 2011). The union vote has played an important role in Labour leadership selections even after modernisers sought to reduce it. In this context, the expansion of intra-party democratic rights takes on a different dimension.

The multi-speed membership strategy of appealing to both affiliates and members is, in the British Labour Party, familiar territory. Whilst the expansion of intra-party democratic rights to a wider group of affiliates would be expected to create a tension within a mass *individual* membership party, a party which has always been open to affiliation might be expected to respond differently. Reforms to intra-party democracy within the Labour Party could be seen as more of a threat to affiliated membership than individual membership. Members, having never enjoyed exclusive rights, had little to lose. In interviews, members highlighted the role of the trade unions under the previous voting system and concern was expressed about the role of the union vote in the 2015 contest.

"I suppose if they sign up as a supporter there is a degree of conscious choice and they've take an interest in the party and so why shouldn't they elect the leader or help elect the leader as it would really be no more disproportionate than union members having two votes" (#02, member <1 year)

For Labour Party members particularly, the expansion of rights to supporters is not taking away from them but is instead an expansion of rules that have traditionally meant their democratic rights are shared.

dropping under half a million for the next fifty years, whilst affiliated trade union memberships remain in the millions.

The shift to supporter affiliation is however different in form to affiliated membership. It represents a further shift to individualised and atomised participation over collective assembly-based decision-making. The move to an 'opt-in' for union affiliates at the same time as the supporter scheme was introduced represents a shift in the same direction. These changes are significant, they represent a change in the nature of the party (Faucher, 2015), in its very identity (Watts, 2017). It is a shift from being a party of interest representation to a party of individual concerns. The use of open plebiscitary intra-party democracy has shifted who the party is responsive to, changing the party demos. And yet, whilst the multi-speed membership strategy has taken Labour further away from its collective traditions, it is the history of the party, its collective traditions, that would appear to be smoothing the path of this latest transformation.

The concept of membership and the rights attached to membership take on a very different shape in this mass party that has never truly been a mass membership one. The sharing of democratic rights with supporters who do not share the same formal commitment is a marginalisation of member rights that were never exclusively held.

7.4. Conclusions

This chapter has assessed the impact of expanding political rights on existing, active members of the party, highlighting the supply-side consequences of multi-speed membership.

Party members' support for a scheme that would appear to directly affect the value of their membership has been explained by looking beyond a simple cost-benefit reading of members' relationship with their party. Members readily put personal concerns aside in favour of the wider benefits to the party. Committed members are willing to discount their personal views if there is a larger electoral or organisational benefit. For these members, party membership is not something 'bought' but rather a reciprocal relationship (explained here through the concept of a dual altruistic-selfish stance).

Members' lack of concern for expanding political rights beyond their number can also be explained by reconsidering the motivation structures outlined in Chapter 5. Selective benefits such as career opportunities or those derived from participation itself, cannot be supplanted by the expansion of plebiscitary intra-party democracy alone. An expanded

membership base on the other hand, does have the potential to disrupt this balance. The Labour Party's multi-speed experiment led to a tripling of membership and was here, rather than with the notion of supporter status, that tensions were felt.

From this research it is clear that tensions in the model are reduced if the changes are perceived to be of benefit to the party as a whole. Tensions are also reduced for those with a more instrumental view, if the change is perceived to be electorally beneficial. And tensions are reduced for those whose primary motivation is active participation beyond intra-party democracy. Some of these factors can however be disrupted, if the changes are not seen as electorally beneficial or should a growth in membership (instead of supporters) beginning to affect the benefits of high-intensity participants and the socialisation processes that support their engagement. There is also the potential for tension arising from differences in ideological view. Though ideological tension has certainly been a factor in Labour's multi-speed experience, this has not necessarily been a tension between members and supporters (the leader preferred by £3 supporters was also supported by 49.6% of members). Had the balance been different, the expected tension between categories of support, and the authoritative weight given to them, may have occurred. However, it is also worth remembering that such ideological tensions have existed within Labour's electoral college prior to the introduction of a more multi-speed model. The previous leadership election saw union affiliates' first choice win over the candidate preferred by the majority of the membership. The existence of these tensions prior to the changes helps explain why tensions arising from new rules are reduced.

Whilst expanding political rights has successfully expanded the number of party supporters, it has not had the corresponding negative effect on member status. Indeed, the growth in membership numbers since the rule change suggests that the concept of membership has not itself been adversely affected by the change to intra-party rights; membership of the party is still seen as valuable even when a less formal (and cheaper) supporter option is available. This supports the idea that there is more to membership than rules, fees and rights (as Chapter 6 has elaborated). Members are not greatly concerned that their political rights are being shared with others and it is perhaps the history of affiliation within the Labour party that explains this dynamic. Labour's collective traditions may be contributing to making their very erosion more palatable to members.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

In a speech to the Special Conference that would ratify multi-speed changes in the party, the then party leader said, *'I was talking with somebody in Westminster in July, just after I announced these reforms, and they said to me in a classic Labour Party way: "What if all these new people did come into the party, where would we be then?" I'll tell you where we would be: We would be a much better party for it'*. Two years later the party had a new leader, a three-fold increase in membership (more than all other UK parties combined) and a significant increase in member-based revenue. In membership terms a 'better party' had emerged as predicted. But this change in the party has not been straightforward.

Starting at the critical moment that the British Labour Party adopted a model of multi-speed membership that went beyond the boundaries that most other parties have been willing to go to, this research has sought to answer the question facing the Labour Party in its new organisational shape: what happened and what does it mean for the party? This research has sought to explain how the change came about and its impact, and in doing so, what it means for party organisation in future.

Taking the framework of multi-speed membership, this thesis has explored these changes in the party. Multi-speed membership is the lens through which the party's organisational changes have been analysed and, in doing so, this research has added to the understanding of multi-speed organising more generally. It has expanded our understanding of how party membership works and the nature of the member-party relationship in today's partisan context. This nuanced understanding of the relationship between parties and their members has facilitated a more detailed assessment of the impact of changing the membership model.

8.1 Multi-speed Labour

The Labour Party has provided a critical case with which to test and expand the multi-speed theory. The experience of the Labour Party in the period of this research shows that the move towards multi-speed membership, and beyond traditional membership, is not without consequences. As Scarrow (2015) hypothesised in the idea of multi-speed membership, changes to membership and affiliation structures have the potential not only

to create tensions but to fundamentally shift the party. Layering new, more open, affiliation options on top of traditional collective, member-based structures brings into question the source of authority within a party and challenges the concept of membership and where it fits within a party's notions of representation and legitimacy.

Multi-speed changes suggest that loyalty and commitment are no longer the principal standards of membership. These ideals are giving way to a greater fluidity and flux and potentially sacrificing party cohesiveness and continuity in the process. There are implications too for party participation, potentially shifting to individualised participation over collective. Multi-speed organising is ultimately a balancing act in which parties attract new support within a more fluid membership and supporter environment by opening up intra-party rights to non-members, whilst at the same time convincing traditional members to stay within the party and continue to contribute to campaigning and financing the party. It is a balancing act which would initially seem challenging to sustain.

This research has revealed the specific nature of the challenging multi-speed path Labour is walking down, seeking to explain why a party would adopt a multi-speed membership approach and what the consequences are. It has demonstrated that many aspects of multi-speed membership in theory are supported by multi-speed membership in action within the British Labour Party. We see a layering of new affiliation on top of traditional membership structures and the challenge to the party's 'narratives of legitimacy' as a result. This has indeed resulted in questions over where authority resides and new tensions in the supply-side model. Unusually this shift in authority has led to a new party organisation forming, with significant shifts in power and tensions as a result.

Yet this case study has also discovered how the multi-speed balancing act may be successfully negotiated. By revealing the exact nature of party members' relationship and commitment to the party, this research reveals the path to multi-speed success.

Summary of findings

8.2. Why adopt multi-speed membership?

On the demand side of the multi-speed question, the reasons the Labour Party has adopted new models of affiliation match the combination of political economic and ideological

considerations suggested by Scarrow (2015). The party is moving with the general tide of intra-party democratisation, seeking to attract support with expanded political rights. The desire to expand affiliation was linked to the general decline in membership numbers and the financial implications of membership decline, suggesting the party still sees member support as an important resource. There is also strong evidence of contagion in the party system. These membership environment explanations (drawn together under the category of an 'ecology of membership') are important in driving the party towards expanded affiliation options.

Whilst changing structures to accommodate multi-speed membership organising, the party can also be seen to be influenced by its party type: its origins as a cleavage representation party. The narratives of legitimacy within the party have exerted a conservative influence as well as an enabling one. A narrative of legitimacy around mass membership was both the starting point for reform and the way in which these reforms have been 'sold' to those whose support was needed to ratify the change. The promise of improved participatory and representational linkage (important legitimising factors within cleavage representation parties) were key to promoting multi-speed reforms to membership and affiliation. And yet it is also the historical structures of the party that have reduced the tensions that would be expected to arise from expanded affiliation. Labour's historical trade union affiliation structures, whilst constraining the leadership of the party have also reduced the impact of the change with the notion of non-member rights having been established from the very birth of the party.

Environmental and structural explanations of change are not sufficient, however, to explain the totality of multi-speed membership change within the British Labour Party. A 'purposive action' understanding which includes leadership decisions and external moments of impact is also needed to fully explain why the party adopted a multi-speed model of organising. Whilst environmental and party-type explanations explain the gradual movement towards multi-speed membership, the exact moment that the Labour Party adopted a more extreme version of open plebiscitary intra-party democracy (the moment the party went further beyond members than most cleavage representation-type parties have previously been willing to go) was the result of a specific external shock that, when filtered through the usual political economy logic, forced the leader to act. However, it is unlikely that party elites would have made such a decision if the path had not already been laid out by the environmental shifts that preceded it. Significantly, it was the

environment created by the initial supporter reforms that truly opened the door to the latter, more far-reaching, reforms.

This examination of organisational change within the Labour Party, employing an ecosystem model of change, has shown that a multi-level and interactional model, including and linking environmental factors, structural and party-type considerations, and purposive-action factors, and accounting for pressures of both change and continuity, is necessary to fully explain the drivers of multi-speed membership change. Recognising not only the role of party actors in responding to change but also in shaping it, and the complexity of the decisions they make, adds to our understanding of party change.

By using the introduction of multi-speed organising within the Labour Party, a new model of multi-speed party change has been developed which provides a framework for analysing multi-speed change in other parties.

8.3. What are the consequences of multi-speed membership?

8.3.1. Members and their party

Taking a comprehensive and detailed look at why the most active party members join reveals a process of participation that, whilst including a range of incentives and motivations, puts greater emphasis on the selective process and selective outcome benefits of membership than quantitative research has found. These incentives provide the catalyst that moves political interest (developed in early family socialisation (social norms) and through the formation of values (collective incentives)) into active membership. Parties moving to multi-speed organisation, and wishing to maintain an active campaigning membership base, will need to consider how the expansion of political rights and potential growth in support can avoid disrupting selective process and outcome incentives. Given that these benefits are largely achieved through active participation, they are likely to remain untouched by changes in intra-party democratisation alone.

Looking at member motivations, attitudes and activities in depth has revealed a number of membership dynamics in the party that potentially facilitate a smooth transition to multi-speed organising. There are aspects of party membership, hitherto unrecognised, that reduce the expected tensions between traditional membership and looser affiliation. It is clear from this research that active party members are politically motivated but not as

singular in their party attachment as might be assumed. Recognising the distinction between choosing 'this' party and choosing 'a' party as the site of political activity, this research highlights how members have often developed political interest and engaged in political activity before coming to the party (sometimes having been active in campaign groups, sometimes in other parties). These members are prompted to join *this* party when an opportunity arises or when their interests are momentarily aligned with the party. In other words, partisan identification does not necessarily precede party membership. The multi-speed organised party can reap the benefits of the political interest and active support of members who may have been attached to other parties in the past, by making it easier to join and get involved at the point in which their interests coincide with the party. But to reap these rewards, parties must also lower the bar to those who have not been exclusive in their partisan activity in the past. It is this switch to a more fluid and individualised type of political engagement that cleavage parties are likely to struggle with most. Having been formed on the basis of a collective identity and shared goals, departing from the notion of exclusive support is particularly difficult for this type of party, and the Labour Party is a good example of these challenges (Garland, 2016).

Accessibility, one of the pillars of the multi-speed party, facilitates ease of entrance to the party (and its corollary: easy exit). Membership figures over time suggest that there are significant fluctuations around elections and leadership change. A looser, wider model of affiliation with lower bars to entry could therefore enable the party to gain from these fluctuations, boosting campaigning resource and financial support when most needed. However, there are also potentially negative implications. This research suggests that the strongest forces shaping party members' activity and engagement, once within the party, stem from processes of socialisation and the development of social ties. The analysis presented here reveals the value of solidary benefits in partisan activity; these are benefits that do not come through particularly strongly in survey data.

Members' socialisation into party culture, language and values appears to have a positive impact on their party activity. Likewise, the development of personal, social ties with other party members (ties which often extend beyond the party to influence their social lives in work and at home) would appear to influence party activity, as well as members propensity to stay in the party or return to it. These solidary processes have implications for party organisation. They provide the glue that keeps members involved, and the elastic that enables and encourages them to return to membership after a lapse, or return to active membership after a period of inactivity. Familiarity through shared language,

known rules, shared values and most importantly, social connections, kept party members active and attached to the party, even throughout periods of absence.

Whilst we don't know exactly how many new party members are in fact returning party members, these processes of socialisation certainly suggest a boomerang effect in addition to the revolving-door effect. Whilst the multi-speed party can successfully navigate and benefit from the in-and-out of a revolving-door party membership base, it may struggle with the boomerang effect. These processes of socialisation provide party cohesion and organisational strength; they ensure members have an incentive to continue with their activism outside of key campaigning moments such as elections. Those members socialised within the party carry with them the skills, knowledge and commitment that enables the party to operate 'on the ground'. Large changes in membership have the potential to disrupt socialisation processes as tentatively indicated in this research. Old social connections may be replaced by new social connections and new networks, or they may be replaced by a more fluid and transitional type of membership base that does not exhibit the same levels of socialisation. If the latter is true, this has important implications for party organisation.

The multi-speed party may need to pay more attention to formalising induction and socialisation for new members and supporters. Though the dispersed and localised nature of most party activity makes this difficult, some formalised programme of induction (currently absent or at least of varying quality in the Labour Party case) might ease the potentially disruptive effects of multi-speed organising.

8.3.2. Party change and membership as committed incongruence

Party change is not a new phenomenon: parties change leaders, change policy, change structures, create new wings and factions, and occasionally change into new parties. The British Labour Party has been through many phases of modernisation and the party has changed significantly within the lifetime of many members. Yet some members have weathered all of this change, even when it has challenged the very values that drove them to membership of the party in the first place. The pervasive presence of party member 'misfits' (those whose ideology is odds with that of the party they support) is an area of membership study that has received little attention to date.

This research has explored the attitudes and attachments of member 'misfits' and discovered an explanation for the phenomenon. By refining and developing the distinction between expressive and ideological attachment, and linking it to exiting behaviours, I have shown why some members may remain within the party despite ideological dissonance. Expressive attachment provides a significant amount of elasticity in the party-member relationship which ensures the connection holds, even during periods of significant change. This analysis suggests that party members may be making a distinction between the party as it is, and the party they think it should be. They may also have internalised their membership to the point that it is part of their self-identity. These new ways of understanding how members feel about, and relate to, their party helps explain why party members stay when the party feels ideologically distant. In contrast, members may have a more instrumental attachment. This instrumental approach is more rigid; the party-member connection is cemented to the achievement of value-based goals and a change in party direction breaks this connection.

This distinction is important for understanding the party-member relationship and has implications for the multi-speed party. Expressive attachment and socialisation are linked and they have implications for member activity for the party. For continuity in membership, parties would want to preserve the socialisation processes that help grow and reinforce expressive attachment.

This research has found new dimensions of the party-member relationship which help explain the curious phenomenon of party member 'misfits' and provides a framework for further research.

8.3.3. Intra-party tension?

Looking at the supply side of the multi-speed membership picture, this research has explored the suggested tensions arising from this 'layering' of affiliation types. From the membership perspective the expansion of affiliation and rights does raise issues, but these are not the main source of tension. Members have an understanding and attachment to membership that goes beyond a cost-benefit exchange. They are able to rationalise their discomfort with the changes to affiliation by viewing it from the party perspective. I have characterised this as an 'altruistic-selfish' dichotomy: a personal desire for exclusive rights, balanced by a commitment to what is best for the party as a whole. This dual preference is employed by members in discussing the personal impact of change and has a

dampening effect on the expected tension arising from sharing their intra-party democratic rights with supporters. By understanding the party-member relationship as a commitment that extends beyond a cost-benefit exchange, the expected impact of multi-speed membership is revised. As long as members see the introduction of new affiliation options and extension of rights as a benefit to the party (and the party's electoral chances), they are likely to be more willing to accept the change. This suggests that communicating the value of multi-speed membership to members from both the political economic and ideological perspective is essential in managing the shift.

Another explanation for this unexpected acceptance of multi-speed membership change is revealed in the analysis of what party members value most about their membership. Active members appear to be mostly ambivalent about political rights. The expansion of such rights to supporters may not create a tension for active members as these rights are not the most valued aspect of their membership. However, a challenge remains for multi-speed parties in converting those initially attracted by political rights (a group that grows so long as parties continue to offer these incentives) into other spheres of activity.

The structures and history of affiliation within the Labour party, the unique way it has developed out of a collective model, itself may also ease the expected multi-speed tensions. The Labour Party in Britain may be more able to move further towards multi-speed organising than others simply because it has always contained an element of wider affiliation, and these affiliates have always had access to intra-party rights. Labour Party members in Britain have always been part of a form of multi-speed membership (many having held more than one type of affiliation themselves).

Contribution

8.4. Multi-speed membership success?

Taking a qualitative approach to the analysis of party membership and the effects of multi-speed organising has expanded and added depth to our understanding of the processes and relationships underpinning party membership organisation. This case study has contributed not only to the party membership literature, but in revealing how members come to join and become active, it adds to the literature on political participation more generally. Understanding the implications of multi-speed membership adds to the growing

literature on intra-party democracy and intra-party conflict, and contributes to the literature on party organisation more widely.

This research has placed people in a central role, recognising and exploring the role of ideology and individuals in party decision making, recognising the patterns, processes and complex decision-making procedures that people make, their values and emotional attachment to organisations, the attitudes that bind, and those that break ties.

Understanding party membership as more than a fee and a set of rules and rights, as more than a simple exchange of cost for benefit (on both the demand and supply side), has facilitated a deeper understanding of the impact of party change. It has established not only whether there are tensions arising from multi-speed membership, but where exactly those tensions lie and how they might be overcome.

Drawing from a unique set of interviews, conducted as multi-speed changes in the Labour Party were being enacted, this research has provided an insight into the effects of party change on those most affected by it. This qualitative approach has added depth to existing quantitative research in this area, and provided a more detailed picture of what drives party membership. It has also provided new ways of categorising and understanding party membership that could be tested quantitatively in future. The fluidity in party members' initial political attachments, found in this research, also strongly suggests that (as many Labour members are formerly members or supporters of other parties) the structures of membership, motivations and attachments would have application in other parties.

The findings presented here are complimentary to a quantitative approach, revealing aspects of the dynamics of party membership that could add to quantitative models. Future membership surveys exploring exit could usefully include questions that add expressive and instrumental attachment variables. The specific nature of these types of attachments found in this research (such as the concepts of membership as self-identity, responsibility and ownership) could be utilised to help shape survey questions. The motivation structures revealed here also provide a framework for understanding the process of joining which could help quantitative analysis of joining. For instance, questions that pick up on the background conditions for partisan activity could be separated from questions concerning the events that provide the catalysts or triggers for joining. This could help address party culture effects in survey responses.

By taking an explanatory and exploratory approach, this research has confirmed many aspects of the characterisation of multi-speed parties, but has also gone further, developing a more detailed understanding of multi-speed membership in action. This case study has taken a holistic look at both the supply and demand perspectives on multi-speed membership. The ecosystem of the party has been explored to assess exactly how the multi-speed membership model developed and what the implications are. This analysis has revealed the ways parties may mitigate the expected tensions inherent in the multi-speed model.

The Labour Party has been drawn to the multi-speed model of organising by many of the same factors that affect parties across the political spectrum and across different party systems. Changes in the membership environment which have encouraged the Labour party to seek support outside of the membership are common to many party systems and have indeed encouraged other parties in a similar direction (Scarrow, 2015). Indeed, the role that contagion (both within and outside of the party system) has played in creating an environment for change for Labour suggests that other parties may be experiencing similar effects. Understanding the consequences of pursuing these changes in the Labour Party has revealed where other parties and other studies might usefully focus their analyses.

In this way, though perhaps unintentionally, Labour has led a change in party organising that may come to be more widely used by those facing similar membership challenges. The current political climate points towards a continued expansion of multi-speed organising. This is unlikely to be restricted to parties from the same family as strong contagion effects suggest a party system impact. At the time of writing, as membership of the Labour Party stands at well over half a million. Other parties, particularly Labour's main opposition the Conservatives, are facing declining membership numbers. Having experimented with other forms of intra-party democracy (such as primaries), other parties may also adopt more open affiliation. Recent developments have seen the Liberal Democrats in the UK initiate a member consultation on party democracy which recommends a registered supporter scheme with rights to leader selection (Liberal Democrats, 2018). The multi-layered, leader and elite-centred model of change developed here would provide a useful framework for analysing the drivers of those changes. Whether such change can be accommodated within the party's 'narratives of legitimacy' is unknown. What this research reveals is that fitting within such narratives is an essential component of multi-speed change; essential for both legitimising and facilitating reform.

For Labour, at this point in time, the answer to whether multi-speed membership has been a success is a resounding 'yes', at least from the point of membership strength. The multi-speed tightrope could be said to have been negotiated successfully. The party has attracted new support without appearing to lose substantial numbers of existing members. The increase in membership, member-based finance, and 'on-the-ground' campaigning resource is a significant win for the party. However, greater fluidity and greater disruption to processes of socialisation may come to have far reaching consequences for the party in future. Over time the new party members may come to be the old and the boomerang of party membership may continue as it has for those members interviewed here. But this research suggests that an alternative scenario is also possible, one in which membership becomes increasingly fluid at the expense of party bonds.

The move to multi-speed membership has of course not been straightforward for the Labour Party. Factionalism within the party continues and members of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) still operate with the threat of sharper deselection rules hanging over them. The membership has gained in strength perhaps at the cost of its elected representatives. And yet the Leader of the party is also shored up by the strength of membership support. When the Labour Party introduced a plebiscitary mechanism for leader selection in the early 1990s it was at the expense of the activists who were seen as a liability electorally. The wider membership was seen as a ballast for the leadership against those who sought to pull the party in a different direction. In a strange twist this pattern has repeated with the move to even greater plebiscitary intra-party democracy again empowering the leader and wider membership – this time at the expense of the PLP. It was perhaps, however, not the intended result when these changes were introduced. As hypothesised in the theory of multi-speed membership, these changes have challenged lines of intra-party accountability, but the tension here is not between members and supporters but rather the party's members and its elected representatives.

This extraordinary period in the history of the party, in which membership has grown three-fold making Labour larger than all other UK parties combined; a period which has seen the birth of a new political organisation whose membership is larger than some other UK parties and the election of a leader whose position puts him significantly further to the left of the party than his predecessors; this is the result of multi-speed membership. Whilst Corbyn's popularity would have seen him win enough votes amongst the membership and affiliated trade unionists without the addition of £3 supporters, it is

unlikely, without the change in rules, which saw power pass from the PLP to the membership with the introduction of OMOV, that he would have succeeded. He certainly would not have been elected under the Electoral College which gave a third of the vote to MPs. The surprising energy his campaign achieved throughout the first leadership contest also owes a great deal to the inclusion of non-member supporters. Multi-speed membership then is, and is the cause of, the most remarkable change within the Labour Party for decades. Whether this has resulted in a 'better party', as its former Leader suggested when seeking approval for these changes, however, is a contested matter.

100 years on from the decision to allow individual membership of the Labour Party, the Labour party has once again initiated a radical change in party affiliation. In the centenary year of that decision, Labour Party membership stands at a forty year high, more than all other British parties combined. The party has achieved this, in part, by making another radical change to party affiliation. By opening up the party, embracing a wider model of affiliation, and crucially, expanding intra-party rights, the Labour party has once again embraced a new model of party organisation.

As the Labour Party embarks on a review of party democracy which seeks to make changes in many areas of party organisation (including policy-making, leader selection, union links, regional structures, the National Executive, candidate selections and the participation of members and supporters) the multi-speed membership transformation is by no means finished. The party may move further towards a multi-speed model or, having dived into an extreme version of it, the party may seek to return to more familiar and comfortable cleavage party terrain. Yet whilst the notion of total loyalty and commitment from a stable membership base may be attractive, I would suggest this is a mistake. The multi-speed partisan, fluid in their commitment, choosing 'a' party rather than 'this' party, as and when they feel, is likely to be a feature of party activity in the future, and they will need a multi-speed party in which to (albeit perhaps temporarily) make their home.

Appendix

Table 1: Case study units

LEVEL	Total System	Intermediate Units		Individuals
Unit	British Labour Party	Leadership/Executive	Constituency Labour Party/ Individual campaigns	Party members / supporters
Case type	Single critical case	Subunit	Embedded Subunits	Multiple cases
Data Source		Party elites and decision-makers	Constituency Organisers, volunteers. Operations, systems (incl. technology)	Party members (high-intensity activists)
Method		Interviews (semi-structured) Documentary evidence	Interviews and observation	Interviews (life-history/biographical, semi-structured)
Sampling strategy		Purposive - positional and reputational criteria	Theoretical/ convenience	Theoretical (elements of snowball)
Properties/ type of data	Organisational change as evidence through strategies, ideologies, attitudes and behaviours of those within it.	Ideologies, beliefs, Decisions and justifications Strategies	Relationships Structures Processes	Attitudes Values Motivations Relationships Activities

Table 2: Interviewees

No.	Gender	Age	Length of membership at time of interview	Continuous membership	Position at time of interview	Constituency	Activity at time of interview
1	F	18-25	2 years	yes	None	Midlands	active
2	M	18-25	<1 year	yes	None	London	active
3	F	36-45	<1 year	yes	None	London	active
4	F	18-25	<1 year	yes	None	London	active
5	M	18-25	5 years	yes	Party staff (local)	Midlands	active
6	F	36-45	26 years	yes	Party staff (local)	London	active
7	F	18-25	2 years	yes	None	London	active
8	F	46-55	<1 year	yes	None	London	passive
9	M	36-45	<1 year	yes	None	London	passive
10	F	46-55	>20 years	no	BLP position	NW	active
11	M	46-55	>20 years	no	None	NW	active
12	F	56-65	43 years	yes	None	SE	passive
13	M	56-65	49 years	yes	None	SE	passive
14	M	46-55	36 years	no	Councillor	SE	active
15	M	26-35	7 years	yes	Councillor	London	active
16	M	26-35	2 years	yes	None	London	passive
17	M	46-55	23 years	no	None	Scotland	Left
18	F	36-45	4 years	yes	Councillor	SE	active
19	M	18-25	3 years	yes	None	Scotland	active
20	F	56-65	>20 years	no	None	SE	active
21	M	>75	54 years	no	None	SE	active
22	F	66-75	>20 years	no	None	SE	active
23	F	66-75	<1 year	yes	None	SE	active
24	F	66-75	54 years	no	None	SE	passive
25	M	66-77	57 years	no	None	SE	passive
26	F	26-35	19 years	yes	None	SE	passive
27	M	56-65	2 years	yes	None	SE	active
28	F	66-75	2 years	yes	None	SE	active
29	F	36-45	24 years	yes	None	London	active
30	F	56-65	>40 years	no	None	SE	active

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